

Treatments and Vaccines

We are rapidly assessing all available evidence around the potential of different medicines for use in treating COVID-19.

The quickest, safest way of getting answers about which treatments are effective is through clinical trials. Clinical trials are ongoing to assess the benefits of a number of different medicines in treating COVID-19.

We have funded six new studies into the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), including testing a vaccine, developing therapies and improving understanding of how to treat COVID-19. This first round of projects received £10.5 million as part of the £20 million rapid research response funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), and by the Department of Health and Social Care through the National Institute for Health Research. A promising new vaccine that has been developed by UK researchers will be supported through well-supervised pre-clinical and clinical trials. The researchers will also be funded to develop manufacturing processes for producing the vaccines at a million-dose scale, so that - if clinical trials are successful - a vaccine could be made available to high-risk groups as quickly as possible.

The Government has established a Vaccines Taskforce to bring together government, industry, funders and academia to make rapid decisions to put the UK in a position to accelerate vaccine development and manufacture. Government is also supporting international efforts to discover new vaccines. The UK is now the biggest contributor to the international coalition to find a vaccine, with £210 million UK aid funding committed to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), the international coalition to find a vaccine, announced on 26 March.

Temporary hospitals

Last week we announced that a new hospital in London will open to provide support for thousands more patients with coronavirus. The NHS Nightingale Hospital at the ExCeL conference centre in East London will be ready for use from week commencing 30 March. Opening this week, it will initially provide up to 500 beds equipped with ventilators and oxygen. The capacity will then continue to increase, potentially up to 4000 beds, should it be required.

Two new NHS Nightingale Hospitals will open very shortly in Birmingham and Manchester to provide care to thousands more patients with coronavirus. The hospital based at the NEC in Birmingham will start with up to 500 beds equipped with the capacity to increase beds up to 2,000 if needed. The hospital based at the Manchester Central Complex will provide up to 500 beds but could expand further to 1,000 beds for coronavirus patients across the North West of England. The new hospitals will provide support for patients from across the Midlands and the North West.

[Can we say we are looking at other areas please? There's lots of speculation – e.g. Harrogate Conference Centre. A bit more detail here would be helpful. Thanks]

Deploying returning clinicians and students

As part of the 'Your NHS Needs You' recruitment drive, an incredible 25,000 former professionals in England have come forward to help the NHS tackle COVID-19 and have started being deployed from last weekend (28-29/03). This includes over 9,000 doctors, 7,000 nurses and midwives and almost 7,000 allied health professionals and pharmacists.

Commented [HJ4]: This should technical say *with Covid-19* which is the name for the disease. [Many of us will have coronavirus eg as in the common cold]

Commented [NA5]: Can we say when?

Commented [SH6R5]: NHSE supplying

Commented [SH7]: NHSE supplying info

Commented [HJ8]: If care staff and returning care staff are not mentioned in all documents like this, we will end up with high levels of NHS staffing capacity and bed blocking. The out of hospital care sector, whether in care homes or domiciliary, will be critical in stopping patients appropriately going into hospital and supporting rapid discharge when acute bed capacity is critical. The two are inextricably linked but we alienate one very regularly