

Office for Life Sciences release report on Blueprint progress.

The Office for Life Sciences (OLS) was established last year to help support the UK's life science sector to continue to thrive. Their first major action was to produce the Life Science Blueprint in July. This report was described by Government as 'an ambitious and comprehensive package of actions to secure the UK as the location of choice for global Life Sciences investment in the future.'

The Blueprint was the result of several months of collaborative work by Government, industry (including ABHI) and academia, the report itself contained a set of actions designed to improve collaboration between industry and academia, strengthen the partnership between industry and the NHS, benefit patients, and enhance significantly the environment for medical biotechnology, pharmaceutical, medical devices and diagnostics businesses in the UK.

ON January 26th The OLS published their report *Life Sciences 2010: Delivering the Blueprint* which outlines the progress made in taking forward the measures set out in the Blueprint. In highlighting the importance of Life Science industry to the UK economy the document describes the sector as 'a world-leading, high-tech industry employing over 120,000 people and investing at least £4.6 billion in research and development (R&D) in the UK'. Also acknowledged is the importance of the medical technology sector, with 52,000 employs in around 2800 companies with a turnover of £10.6 billion.

The key measures in *Life Sciences 2010* all act to strengthen the lifeline from British life science discoveries to NHS patients and include:

- NHS Life Sciences Delivery Board: The Delivery Board announced in *Going for Growth: Our Future Prosperity* is tasked with improving the uptake and adoption of innovative medicines and technologies, to benefit patients.
- Quality, Innovation, Productivity and Prevention (QIPP): Industry has much to contribute in working with the NHS to bring its products and skills to address its Quality & Productivity challenge.
- Skills: The Industry-Higher Education Forum which brings together relevant stakeholders in life sciences higher education for the first time. The Forum will take a much needed strategic view of critical disciplines and skills gaps (e.g clinical pharmacology and in vivo sciences), vital for the UK to succeed in the global race for talent.
- Super Cluster: Unique in the UK, the creation of Capability Clusters, initially focusing on respiratory and inflammatory joint disease, will strengthen collaborative efforts between academia, the NHS and industry ensuring a holistic approach to the development of new therapies.

- Clinical research: The embedding of clinical trials into core NHS activity in the recently published *NHS Operating Framework* is a step forward; what we need now are specific performance targets.
- Regenerative medicine: The Technology Strategy Board is managing a £21.5 million programme to support key areas of commercial R&D and the development of R&D partnerships in Regen Med.
- Patent Box: This will help retain UK discoveries for UK development and manufacturing. We are keen to maintain dialogue with OLS and the Treasury on consortium relief proposals to encourage investment in SMEs.
- The Innovation Pass: This will enable certain medicines, which have the potential to deliver improved patient benefits, but that will struggle to show cost effectiveness at launch to reach NHS patients quickly. We look forward to working with OLS and government economists in the next phase to demonstrate the benefits of a broader definition of the value of medicines

The document closes by highlighting the areas where there is still much work to do- NICE methodologies; metrics on the uptake of cost effective medicines and medical technologies; payment by results and attracting additional investment into the UK.

Peter Ellingworth, Chief Executive of the Association of British Healthcare Industries (ABHI) said:

“The Office for Life Sciences has reinforced the role of the medical technology industry in the provision of innovative products for the NHS and delivering benefit to patients. For our industry the establishment of the NHS Life Sciences Delivery Board is a major development in the intelligent utilisation of medical technology to deliver benefits for the NHS – both for patients and for cost effective service provision”.

ABHI is working closely with the Government and our Life Science partners to ensure that medical technology manufacturers have a strong voice on in the OLS and that all work done takes into account the needs of our sector.

The document can be viewed at- http://www.dius.gov.uk/innovation/business_support/ols