

ABHI STATEMENT ON VENTILATOR CHALLENGE

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 situation, the UK Government has issued a “ventilator challenge” to increase the number of products available to the NHS. The initiative is aimed, in large part, at manufacturers who do not currently make ventilators and associated products. This includes companies from outside the HealthTech space.

ABHI understands and endorses the need to increase the production of critical care equipment to support the response to COVID-19, and we applaud the government on its creative approach. ABHI member companies currently manufacturing these products are ready to support this programme, and partner with new entrants when this is appropriate and can expedite increased production.

Medical Devices are subject to robust regulatory scrutiny, and the process of introducing new products through the challenge must ensure that patient safety is not compromised. As well as a focus on new producers, existing manufacturers would welcome government support to expand their own, existing capacity. There should also be a clear and transparent process for the procurement of additional products.

ABHI will continue to work with members, the wider HealthTech industry, relevant Trade Associations, notably our member association BAREMA, the NHS and government, to support this national effort. We also recognise that such responses will not be limited to ventilators, and are already working to support the rapid dissemination of technologies in other areas such as diagnostic tests and personal protective equipment.

Critical supplies for the NHS can be coordinated through NHS Supply Chain to reach the locations where there is the most pressing demand.

FAQ's

What is the size of the UK's anaesthetic and respiratory sector?

The sector employs 3,499 people across 82 sites, with an annual turnover of £750m¹. A variety of UK companies manufacture ventilators, and there is a complex supply chain supporting them.

How are ventilators and associated equipment purchased by the NHS?

The NHS procures these technologies through the NHS Supply Chain central purchasing organisation with pricing set through competitive tendering. Further details on the preferred suppliers to the NHS can be found here:

<https://www.supplychain.nhs.uk/product-information/contract-launch-brief/anaesthesia-machines-ventilator-equipment-and-related-accessories/>

Can non-health manufacturers make ventilators?

See above statement.

1. Source: Bioscience and health technology database: annual report 2017

