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# UK response to Covid 19: International aid and diplomacy

## Summary

- 1 Preparing for a pandemic
- 2 Funding in 2020 and 2021
- 3 Impact of spending reductions
- 4 Ending the pandemic: manufacturing and technology
- 5 Diplomatic efforts

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## Summary

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, most governments, including the UK's, have emphasised that “no one is safe until everyone is safe.”

The UK Government has provided aid and used its diplomatic leverage to help control the pandemic and limit its impact on health and wider society.

This briefing describes the aid and other forms of support provided by the UK Government in response to the pandemic, the impact of aid spending reductions, debates on increasing global supply of vaccines, and evaluations of UK efforts.

### Was the UK and world prepared?

The Covid-19 pandemic was not the first threat to global health, the most recent being the [Ebola virus in West Africa in 2014](#). Evaluations of the UK Government's aid response to that virus were [broadly positive](#), but noted the world was [slow to react](#) and more could be done to support core health systems so that they are better prepared for such outbreaks.

UK aid on health has supported a [range of activities](#), including disease prevention, basic health infrastructure and reproductive health. The UK has [been the largest donor to Gavi](#), the vaccine alliance, since its establishment in 2000. Gavi has supported the development of health systems and vaccine campaigns in low- and middle- income states.

From 2010 to 2019, [around 10 percent of UK Official Development Assistance \(ODA\) was spent on health](#). These figures exclude contributions to the core budgets of multilateral organisations but do include bilateral and other multilateral funding.

### UK Government spending

In 2020, the UK Government [committed £1.39 billion](#) to tackle the health, humanitarian, and socio-economic effects of the pandemic. Around [two-thirds of this](#) (£829 million) has supported the development and distribution of vaccines, tests and treatments.

In 2021/22, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office will spend [£1.31 billion on global health and security](#). This includes commitments to the World Health Organization (WHO) and Covax, the global initiative to secure fair access to Covid-19 vaccines.

Most pandemic-related aid spending [is classed as ODA](#) and means that the Government is likely to pause or reduce other aid programmes to stay within its target of [spending 0.5 percent of Gross National Income \(GNI\) on ODA](#) in

ODA refers to aid intended to promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries. Aid given must be reported to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

2021/22. In November 2020, the Government announced it [would not meet the UN target of spending 0.7 percent of GNI on ODA in 2021](#), citing the economic and fiscal impact of the pandemic on the UK. The UK has met the UN target every year since 2013.

The 100 million vaccines the UK is due to donate to other countries by June 2022 [will be in addition to the £10 billion allocated](#) as UK ODA in 2021.

Some reductions and termination of health aid programmes have [been announced](#). These reportedly include funding for research into [neglected tropical diseases](#), [essential healthcare in Bangladesh](#), and [sequencing Covid-19 variants](#) in South Asia.

NGOs have argued [UK aid spending on health is insufficient](#) to secure the global recovery from the pandemic and the delivery of core health services.

### Supporting vaccine manufacture and distribution

The World Trade Organization (WTO) estimates that in 2021 global [vaccine manufacturing capacity needs to triple from 5 to 15 billion doses](#). Countries such as India and South Africa, joined recently by France and the US, have argued the waiving of intellectual property rights on vaccines [will enable a ramping up of production](#).

Both the UK and [Germany](#) have so far opposed the move, arguing it would [undermine incentives for companies to innovate](#). In May, the UK [reportedly joined WTO discussions](#). The Government has sought to work with industry and multilateral bodies to [identify scope for increased manufacture globally](#).

### Diplomatic efforts

At the UN, the UK has [supported calls for ceasefires in countries such as Yemen and Ethiopia](#) to allow the delivery of humanitarian aid and administration of vaccines. However, ceasefires were [rarely observed](#). Commentors argue greater donations to Covax will [produce incentives to adhere to future ceasefires](#).

In 2021, the UK held the G7 Presidency. While the June 2021 Summit saw G7 leaders commit to [share 1 billion vaccines over the next year](#) and support for the WHO and global health security, the summit [fell short of hopes of NGOs](#) and bodies such as the [International Monetary Fund and WHO](#). They argued vaccines must be donated sooner and more funding committed to lower-income states.

### Future evaluations

In May 2021, the Independent Commission on Aid Impact announced a [review into the UK aid response to Covid-19](#). It will be published in Autumn 2021. This will focus on the credibility, coherence, and efficiency of aid spending.

# 1 Preparing for a pandemic

Since 2000, the world has had to respond to three coronaviruses—[SARS-CoV](#) from 2003, [MERS CoV](#) from 2012, and [Covid-19](#) from 2019. The largest outbreak of the [Ebola virus](#) also occurred from 2014 to 2016 in West Africa.<sup>1</sup>

This section briefly describes UK aid spending on health prior to the pandemic, how well UK aid responded to the Ebola outbreak, and the lessons learnt from that.

## 1.1 UK aid spending on health to 2019

From 2010 to 2019, the UK spent an average of £1.2 billion of ODA on health systems (2019 prices). This represented around 10 percent of UK ODA. Spending was focused on low and middle-income states. These figures do not include contributions to the core budgets of multilateral organisations (such as UN agencies), which may have also been spent on health and related areas.

### UK international aid on health

£ millions

	Cash terms	Real terms (2019-20 prices)	Percentage of total ODA
2010	781.0	920.1	9.2%
2011	946.2	1,098.2	11.0%
2012	1,076.7	1,224.8	12.2%
2013	1,273.5	1,422.7	11.2%
2014	1,233.0	1,358.7	10.5%
2015	1,032.1	1,128.2	8.5%
2016	1,054.0	1,124.4	7.9%
2017	1,292.9	1,355.0	9.2%
2018	1,320.5	1,353.0	9.1%
2019	1,430.9	1,430.9	9.4%

Note: These figures do not include UK contributions to the core budgets of multilateral organisations.

Source: FCDO, [Statistics on international development: Final UK aid spend 2019](#), 24 September 2020 and earlier editions and Office for Budget Responsibility, [Public finances databank](#), 25 November 2020

<sup>1</sup> WHO, Factsheets: [Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome \(SARS\)](#); [Middle East Respiratory syndrome coronavirus](#) (MERS CoV); [Ebola](#), all accessed 6 July 2021

UK aid on health funded a [range of activities](#), including disease prevention, basic health infrastructure and reproductive health. A significant proportion related to medical research, averaging £147.2 million per annum from 2010 to 2017.<sup>2</sup> These figures also do not include funding to the core budgets of multilateral organisations.

### UK aid spending on investment in health systems

£ millions, not adjusted for inflation

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Health policy and administrative management	123.3	58.8	93.8	128.9	100.6	116.3	121.4	157.9	168.7	149.1
Medical education/training	-	0.5	-	-	-	0.0	0.1	-	0.2	1.0
Medical research	55.6	68.0	84.0	78.0	65.9	85.6	102.7	247.3	345.8	338.8
Basic health infrastructure	-	4.0	-	-	-	0.0	0.0	1.6	0.1	0.1
Health education	0.7	1.9	16.8	27.8	26.9	18.9	16.3	19.1	14.9	21.2
Health personnel development	3.6	2.0	1.9	2.2	6.3	4.1	3.1	13.8	11.9	9.3
Personnel development for population and reproductive health	0.0	-	0.9	0.9	10.0	6.8	7.9	23.8	17.1	14.6

Note: These figures are for bilateral spending or bilateral via multilateral – that is, spending for a specific programme or purpose, either directly from the UK or via a multilateral organisation. The UK also contributes to the core budgets of multilateral organisations. This may have been spent on relevant areas but are not included in the above figures.

Source: FCDO, [Statistics on international development: Final UK aid spend 2019](#), 24 September 2020

The UK has been a significant funder to Gavi, the vaccine alliance. Gavi works to [increase immunisation in poorer countries](#) for diseases such as polio and measles, through strengthening health systems, supporting routine immunisation and leading vaccination campaigns.<sup>3</sup>

From 2000 to June 2020, the [UK was its biggest funder](#), providing a quarter of total contributions, totalling £4 billion. In 2018, the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) judged that, with Department for International Development (DFID) encouragement, Gavi had [strengthened its investments in fragile and conflict-affected states](#) (such as Syria and the Central African Republic) and began to [emphasise greater equity](#) to ensure marginalised groups had access to vaccines.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> DevTracker, [Health sector breakdown](#), accessed 2 July 2021

<sup>3</sup> Gavi, [Facts and figures](#), accessed 5 July 2021

<sup>4</sup> ICAI, [The UK's work with Gavi, the vaccine alliance](#), June 2020, p2; Dev Tracker, [Gavi: Annual Reviews](#), March 2020 and March 2021

## 1.2

## Learning from Ebola

The 2014-2016 Ebola outbreak in West Africa was the [largest outbreak of the virus](#) since it was discovered in 1976.<sup>5</sup> At the [end of the outbreak](#), there were around 28,600 confirmed or suspected cases, and 11,325 deaths.<sup>6</sup>

The [UK's response](#) included the deployment of medical staff and epidemiologists, the construction of treatment centres, support for testing, and aid to support schools and the economy recover in impacted areas.<sup>7</sup>

In 2016, the International Development Committee (IDC) said the world, including DFID, [responded late to the outbreak](#). However, it judged that DFID, the Ministry of Defence, NHS England and Public Health England operated effectively once engaged in the crisis.<sup>8</sup>

The Committee recommended that the WHO improve its surveillance and early-warning system and that the UK should be prepared to act, regardless of whether the WHO had declared a [Public Health Emergency of International Concern](#). It also said DFID should strengthen health systems globally and be better able to disburse small amounts of money, quickly, at the start of a health crisis to help bring it under control.<sup>9</sup>

### Applying the lessons?

In response to the Ebola outbreak, the [Government undertook](#) to improve the detection and response to health emergencies and to tackle a “major cause” of the virus spread, namely weak health systems.<sup>10</sup>

In 2018, the ICAI [assessed the UK aid response to global health threats](#). It judged that the UK's aid programme generally contributed to strengthening disease surveillance and improving the resilience of health systems.

However, it [was concerned](#) by the lack of a UK-based exercise to rehearse how central government would coordinate and respond to future epidemic outbreaks overseas, including with DFID and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, and the Government not engaging sufficiently with knowledge dissemination.<sup>11</sup>

Following the ICAI review, the Government [strengthened investment in research](#) focused on tools to combat infectious diseases and committed

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<sup>5</sup> WHO, [Ebola virus disease](#), accessed 2 July 2021

<sup>6</sup> Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, [2014-2016 Ebola outbreak in West Africa](#), accessed 2 July 2021

<sup>7</sup> UK Government, [How the UK Government is responding to Ebola](#), accessed 2 July 2021

<sup>8</sup> IDC, [Ebola: Responses to a public health emergency](#), HC 338, January 2016, p3

<sup>9</sup> IDC, [Ebola: Responses to a public health emergency](#), HC 338, January 2016, pp8-9, 11, 14

<sup>10</sup> UK Government, [Ebola: Responses to a public health emergency](#), HC 946, April 2016, pp3, 5

<sup>11</sup> ICAI, [The UK aid response to global health threats](#), January 2018, pii, 31; ICAI, [Submission to the Foreign Affairs Committee \(FAC\) Inquiry “Global health security.”](#) December 2020, p3



additional personnel to Africa to support work on global health security.<sup>12</sup> In 2019, the ICAI broadly [welcomed progress](#) against its recommendations.<sup>13</sup>

While the UK Government had [plans to update and publish a refreshed global health security strategy](#), by December 2020 it had not been published.<sup>14</sup>

## 1.3

### Global preparedness in 2020

In May 2020, the WHO commissioned an [independent review of the international health response to the pandemic](#). The co-chairs were the former Prime Minister of New Zealand, Helen Clark, and the former President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

Their report, published in May 2021, concluded that the world was not sufficiently prepared to prevent or respond to a disease outbreak. It argued the international alert system [did not operate with sufficient speed](#), and once a Public Health Emergency of International Concern was declared, countries remained slow to act.<sup>15</sup> It found stockpiles of personal protective equipment and other medical supplies were [quickly depleted](#) and many low- and middle-income countries struggled to access funding to purchase more.<sup>16</sup>

The [review recommended](#) that funding for global health security and health systems should look beyond ODA, to more stable financing. It said additional funding was needed for improving universal health coverage and pandemic preparedness. This included the establishment of an International Pandemic Financing Facility, with the capacity to finance ongoing pandemic preparedness and be able to front-load commitments if another pandemic is declared.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> [Evidence from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office \(FCDO\) \[to FAC\]](#), December 2020, p9

<sup>13</sup> ICAI, [Follow-up of: The UK aid response to global health threats](#), 2019

<sup>14</sup> ICAI, [Submission to the FAC Inquiry "Global health security."](#) December 2020, p3

<sup>15</sup> The Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response (IPPPR), [How an outbreak became a pandemic](#), May 2021, p16

<sup>16</sup> IPPPR, [Covid-19: Make it the last pandemic](#), May 2021, p27

<sup>17</sup> IPPPR, [Covid-19: Make it the last pandemic](#), May 2021, pp56, 57, 59

## 2 Funding in 2020 and 2021

This section sets out UK aid spending commitments relating to Covid-19, examples of country and programme spend, and how existing programmes were reorientated to address the pandemic and its consequences.

Section 3 discusses the impact of the Government's reduction in aid spending.

The UK has also [committed funds in response to the secondary impacts](#) of the pandemic, such as on health systems, gender inequality, and economies. Its response has been considered in an [IDC report](#).<sup>18</sup>

### 2.1 Total spending in 2020 and 2021

#### Headline spending allocations for 2020

In 2020, of the nearly £1.4 billion the UK committed, 90 percent was spent via multilateral channels. It focused on three areas.<sup>19</sup>

##### Vaccines, testing and research

Up to £829 million was committed to support the development and distribution of vaccines, tests and treatments. This included £548 million to Covax, the global initiative supporting fair access to Covid-19 vaccines.<sup>20</sup>

The Library paper [Covax and global access to Covid-19 vaccines](#) sets out how the initiative works and what support the UK has provided.

The UK also pledged £250 million to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI). This included funding for treatments for Covid-19 patients, manufacture of testing devices, public information campaigns to encourage handwashing, and the development of Covid-19 vaccines.<sup>21</sup>

In 2020, the UK made [£1.39 billion of new commitments](#)

to counter the effects of the pandemic (not including core contributions to multilaterals).

<sup>18</sup> [Written evidence submission from the FCDO in response to the IDC's inquiry into Covid-19](#), 2020; IDC, [Covid-19 in developing countries: Secondary impacts](#), HC 1186, January 2021

<sup>19</sup> UK Government, [Response to the International Development Committee's Covid-19 in developing countries: Secondary impacts](#), 25 March 2021, 'Introduction'

<sup>20</sup> FCDO, [UK meets £250 million match aid target into Covax, the global vaccines facility](#), 12 January 2021

<sup>21</sup> British High Commission New Delhi and Department for International Development (DFID) India, [UK pledges £250 million to fund coronavirus vaccine](#), 27 March 2020

## Economic response

In March 2020, £150 million was allocated to the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust. The Trust allows the IMF to provide grants for debt relief for the poorest countries affected by natural disasters or public health crises to re-focus their spending.<sup>22</sup>

UK funding included a direct £75 million grant, and £75 million contingent on demand.<sup>23</sup> To December 2020, 28 countries drew on the IMF fund.<sup>24</sup>

## Funding to support resilience and country responses

The UK allocated £312.3 million to support the global health response and build resilience in countries through funding UK charities and international organisations.<sup>25</sup>

This included £145 million in response to emergency UN appeals, including £15 million to the World Food Programme.<sup>26</sup> Up to £50 million was provided to support hand hygiene and behavioural change in 37 low- and middle-income countries, including Brazil and South Africa.<sup>27</sup>

## Spending Plans for 2021/22.

In 2021, the UK Government intends to spend 0.5 percent of Gross National Income (GNI) on ODA. This will be the first year since 2013 that the UK has not met the [UN target of spending 0.7 percent of GNI on ODA](#).<sup>28</sup>

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), responsible for 80 percent of ODA to be spent in 2021/22, has announced its spending will be focused on seven priority areas. This includes Covid-19 and global health, which will [receive £1.3 billion of the FCDO's £8.1 billion ODA budget](#). This is the largest amount allocated for any thematic area.<sup>29</sup> These figures are not directly comparable to previous years, as new thematic areas have been applied by the Department.

The FCDO announced [funding will focus](#) on commitments to Covax, Gavi, the WHO and on countries where need is greatest.<sup>30</sup> It has announced an increase in core contributions to the WHO, totalling £340 million over four years, and to Gavi a commitment of £1.65 billion over five years.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> IMF, [Catastrophe Containment and Relief Fund](#), 9 April 2021

<sup>23</sup> IMF, [UK boosts IMF's Catastrophe Relief Fund with £150 million](#), 11 March 2020

<sup>24</sup> PQ HL 10946 [[Debts: Africa](#)], 15 December 2020

<sup>25</sup> FCDO, [UK to host global summit with CEPI to speed up new vaccine development](#), 30 April 2021

<sup>26</sup> UK Government, [Response to the International Development Committee's Covid-19 in developing countries: Secondary impacts](#), 25 March 2021, 'Introduction'; PQ 53636 [[WFP: Coronavirus](#)], 9 June 2020

<sup>27</sup> HC Deb, [18 March 2021](#), c590 and HC Deb, [18 March 2021](#), c590 [correction]

<sup>28</sup> Commons Library, [The 0.7 percent aid target](#)

<sup>29</sup> FCDO, [UK ODA allocations 2021 to 2022: Written ministerial statement](#), 21 April 2021

<sup>30</sup> PQ HL269 [[Overseas Aid](#)], 1 June 2021.

<sup>31</sup> UK Government, [Integrated Review](#), March 2021, p94

NGOs argue that despite the prioritisation of global health, the potential reduction in programme spending on health will [hinder the global response](#) to the pandemic, the delivery of essential health services and prevention of future pandemics.<sup>32</sup>

### Redistributing Special Drawing Rights?

In August 2021, the UK is due to receive around £20 billion (\$28 billion) of [Special Drawing Rights](#) (SDRs) (a type of reserve currency that can be exchanged for national currencies) from the \$650 billion being issued by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).<sup>33</sup> SDRs are being provided to most countries to support them recover from the pandemic.<sup>34</sup>

The development site Devex report the UK may [distribute a third of these assets as part of its ODA](#). This would potentially mean further reductions in existing programmes, so the UK does not exceed the 0.5 percent ODA target.<sup>35</sup>

Gordon Brown, Prime Minister from 2008 to 2010, has argued the [G7 states could redistribute the SDRs](#) to low income countries to purchase vaccines.<sup>36</sup> The UK Government says it is [lobbying for the recycling of SDRs](#) to low-income states at World Bank-IMF meetings.<sup>37</sup>

## 2.2

## Adapting existing programmes

In response to the pandemic, [the merger of the FCO and DFID](#), and a reduced aid budget, aid organisations and private suppliers were required to make in-year adjustments to their programmes.

To March 2021, more than 300 existing bilateral programmes were modified to better support countries affected by the pandemic. The FCDO also paused or delayed some programmes to re-direct resource to focus on the crisis.<sup>38</sup>

For example, in 2021 in Nepal £40 million of bilateral spending was reprioritised to focus on water and sanitation to support 300,000 people.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Action for Global Health, [UK aid health cuts: 195 organisations call for reinstating aid as 40 percent cuts are set to hinder Covid-19 recovery](#), 13 May 2021

<sup>33</sup> Centre for Global Development [Can special drawing rights be recycled to where they are needed at no budgetary cost?](#), 21 April 2021

<sup>34</sup> IMF, [SDRs](#), 18 February 2021

<sup>35</sup> Devex, [UK to charge special drawing rights to aid budget-sources](#), 4 June 2021

<sup>36</sup> The Guardian, [Covid: More than 200 leaders urge G7 to help vaccinate the world's poorest](#), 6 June 2021

<sup>37</sup> HC Deb, [30 June 2021](#), c368

<sup>38</sup> UK Government, [Response to the International Development Committee's Covid-19 in developing countries: Secondary impacts](#), 25 March 2021, 'Introduction'

<sup>39</sup> PQ 5184 [[Nepal: Coronavirus](#)], 1 June 2021.

The UK also redirected funding for the [Global Agriculture and Food programme](#) to mitigate impacts on food supply chains and agriculture.<sup>40</sup>

## 2.3 Debt cancellation

In April 2021, the IMF reported 36 of 69 low-income countries, such as Somalia and Sudan, are already in debt distress or are at high risk of being so, impeding their responses to the pandemic.<sup>41</sup>

In April 2020, the [G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative](#) (DSSI) was established to offer a temporary suspension of government-to-government debt payments for up to 73 countries.<sup>42</sup>

From May 2020 to April 2021, DSSI delivered \$5.7 billion in relief to 43 countries. The suspension period runs to December 2021 and it is expected to provide up to \$7.3 billion of additional debt service suspension to July.<sup>43</sup>

The UK Government has supported the scheme, implementing suspensions for 11 countries, and its funding to the IMF's Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust also provides elements for debt relief.<sup>44</sup>

The IDC has argued the Government should consider [cancelling or suspending debt](#) due to the impact of the pandemic on lower income countries.<sup>45</sup> The Labour Party has [also supported this position](#).<sup>46</sup> In reply, the FCDO says it recognises that a [more comprehensive debt solution for some of the poorest nations may be required](#), and any restructuring or cancellation will occur on a case-by-case basis.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> PQ 4073 [[Africa and Asia: Food supply](#)], 27 May 2021

<sup>41</sup> Brookings Institute, [Debt distress and development distress: Twin crises of 2021](#), 17 March 2021; IMF, [List of LIC DSA for PRGT- eligible countries](#), 30 April 2021; IMF Blog, [Funding the recovery of low-income countries after Covid](#), 5 April 2021

<sup>42</sup> Reuters, [Fact box: How the G20's debt service suspension initiative works](#), 15 October 2020

<sup>43</sup> UK Government, [Response to the IDC report Covid-19 in developing countries: Secondary impacts](#), HC 1351, 26 April 2021, p11

<sup>44</sup> UK Government, [Response to the IDC report Covid-19 in developing countries: Secondary impacts](#), HC 1351, 26 April 2021, p11

<sup>45</sup> IDC, [Covid-19 in developing countries: Secondary impacts](#), HC 1186, 11 January 2021, para 51

<sup>46</sup> Labour List, [Labour clarifies policy on debt repayments for low-income countries](#), 27 January 2021

<sup>47</sup> UK Government, [Response to the IDC report Covid-19 in developing countries: Secondary impacts](#), HC 1351, 26 April 2021, p11; PQ 13193 [[Debts: Developing countries](#)], 11 January 2021

## 2.4

## Country support

The Government has said it will prioritise essential humanitarian assistance to areas worst affected by Covid-19.<sup>48</sup> However, for many countries that assistance came within a wider context of aid reductions (see section 3.3).

In addition to the support detailed below, globally the Government also offers access to its [New Variant Assessment Platform](#), which shares UK capacity to sequence virus for countries with no capability.<sup>49</sup>

### India and South Asia

UK support included providing oxygen generating units and ventilators to **India**. NHS England and NHS Improvement also established a clinical advisory group to support the Indian Government's response.<sup>50</sup> UK health experts have been sent to **Nepal** and the UK has funded a new oxygen plant.<sup>51</sup> Via the WHO, the UK has funded additional laboratory testing capacity in **Pakistan**.<sup>52</sup> Funding for **Afghanistan** was used to support its Covid-19 plan and £55 million was spent to meet humanitarian needs arising from the pandemic.<sup>53</sup>

The UK has not provided bilateral aid to **Sri Lanka**. Instead, support comes via the UK funding to the WHO, which provides technical guidance and support to maintain essential health services.<sup>54</sup> Existing programmes were also adapted: in 2020/21 the Conflict, Security and Stability Fund (CSSF) work was redirected to addressing disinformation against minorities in the country and rising sexual and gender-based violence.<sup>55</sup>

In June 2021, the Prime Minister of Nepal called for greater support, and the UK to share vaccines.<sup>56</sup> There have also been reports that unvaccinated Gurkha veterans, who have no right to reside in the UK but served in the UK Armed Forces, [have died from Covid-19](#) in Nepal.<sup>57</sup> The Government has [said while its priority remains the UK](#), it will “put in place the kind of vaccination provision programme that we would like to see as soon as we can.”<sup>58</sup> To date,

<sup>48</sup> PQ 186217 [[Middle East and North Africa: Internally displaced people and refugees](#)], 28 April 2021

<sup>49</sup> PHE and UK Health Security Agency, [New Variant Assessment Platform](#), 20 May 2021

<sup>50</sup> PQ 2477 [[India: Coronavirus](#)], 20 May 2021; PQ 6404 [[India: Overseas Aid](#)], 27 May 2021.

<sup>51</sup> FCDO, [UK sends life-saving medical equipment to Nepal](#), 27 May 2021; PQ 18562 [[Nepal: Coronavirus](#)], 23 June 2021

<sup>52</sup> PQ 4611 [[Pakistan: Coronavirus](#)], 27 May 2021.

<sup>53</sup> PQ 5185 [[Afghanistan: Coronavirus](#)], 1 June 2021.

<sup>54</sup> PQ 5187 [[Sri Lanka: Coronavirus](#)], 1 June 2021.

<sup>55</sup> PQ 5187 [[Sri Lanka: Coronavirus](#)], 1 June 2021.

<sup>56</sup> BBC News, [Nepalese PM calls on UK to provide vaccines as cases rise](#), 5 June 2021

<sup>57</sup> Daily Telegraph, [Retired Gurkha soldiers succumb to Covid as Nepal's plea for vaccines goes unanswered](#), 28 June 2021,

<sup>58</sup> HL Deb, [29 June 2021](#), c702

support has included [subsidised hospital treatment](#),<sup>59</sup> and supporting financing provided by the [Asian Development Bank and World Bank](#).<sup>60</sup>

### Africa

Bilateral programmes have been adapted to respond to Covid-19, including in the **Horn of Africa**.<sup>61</sup> UK ODA has also supported improved testing capacity and vaccine rollout in countries such as **Somaliland**,<sup>62</sup> and the Government has directly deployed UK medical experts in **South Africa** and **Zambia**.<sup>63</sup> For countries such as the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, the UK has provided oxygen concentrators and installed electricity infrastructure.<sup>64</sup>

The UK Government has provided advice to the **African Union** on vaccine deployment on the continent and £20 million in funding to its response fund, which provides equipment to member states to administer doses.<sup>65</sup> PHE have also worked with the African Centres for Disease Control and Prevention to enable assessment of Covid-19 variants and public health decision-making.<sup>66</sup>

### Middle East

In **Yemen**, the UK, together with the World Bank and WHO, will fund the rollout costs for 2 million doses allocated via Covax.<sup>67</sup> Vaccines for **Syria** are required to travel through UN-mandated cross border access, and the UK has used its position at the UN Security Council to call for the renewal of the UN Resolution allowing this. The Resolution [was renewed](#) in July 2021.<sup>68</sup>

Vaccines and medical supplies for **Gaza and the West Bank** are required to travel through Israel. The UK has raised the importance of timely access to Covid-19 vaccines for Gaza and the West Bank with the Israeli Government.<sup>69</sup>

### UK Overseas territories

In 2020, the FCO reallocated £15 million from the 2020/21 CSSF and £5 million from 2020/21 International Programme funds to support eligible Territories.

DFID also provided £30 million to mitigate the immediate and medium-term impacts of the pandemic in the three territories [eligible for ODA](#): Montserrat, Saint Helena (including Tristan da Cunha) and the Pitcairn Islands.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> HC Deb, [6 July 2021](#), c861

<sup>60</sup> PQ 29796 [[Nepal: Coronavirus](#)], 16 July 2021

<sup>61</sup> PQ 183514 [[Horn of Africa: Coronavirus](#)], 22 April 2021

<sup>62</sup> PQ 5186 [[Somaliland: Coronavirus](#)], 28 May 2021

<sup>63</sup> PQ 83815 [[Southern Africa: Coronavirus](#)], 8 September 2020

<sup>64</sup> PQ 17884 [[Africa: Coronavirus](#)], 25 June 2021

<sup>65</sup> PQ HL15055 [[African Union: Coronavirus](#)], 29 April 2021.

<sup>66</sup> PQ HL 582 [[Coronavirus: Screening](#)], 3 June 2021

<sup>67</sup> PQ 186210 [[Syria and Yemen: Coronavirus](#)], 28 April 2021

<sup>68</sup> UN, [Security Council extends use of border crossing for humanitarian aid into Syria \[...\]](#), 9 July 2021

<sup>69</sup> PQ HL 15080 [[Occupied territories: Coronavirus](#)], 29 April 2021

<sup>70</sup> PQ HL6373 [[BOTs: Coronavirus](#)], 10 July 2020

The Library's [Coronavirus: UK support to the Overseas Territories](#) describes further the support the UK Government has provided to the Territories.

## 2.5 Support for vaccines overseas

The UK has only provided vaccines directly to its Overseas Territories. Instead, it has provided financial support to Covax. At the G7, the Government also said it would donate 100 million doses by June 2022, most of which will be shared via Covax, and the remainder bilaterally. NGOs, the UN and WHO have argued the donations are [too few, and too late](#), and that the pandemic is [outpacing global vaccination efforts](#).<sup>71</sup>

The Library's [Covax and global access to Covid-19 vaccines](#) provides further information and evaluations of G7 and Covax efforts.

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<sup>71</sup> Reuters, "[We need more:](#)" UN joins criticism of G7 vaccine pledge, 12 June 2021; The Guardian, [Coronavirus outpacing vaccine effort, says WHO, after G7 doses pledge](#), 15 June 2021



## 3 Impact of spending reductions

This section describes the impact of the spending reductions on health-related programmes in 2020 and 2021, and evaluations by the ICAI.

### 3.1 ODA eligibility and impact

The Government plans to [class pandemic-related aid as ODA](#) in line with the common OECD definition of ODA.<sup>72</sup> This includes vaccine doses, though their value is currently being debated by the OECD.<sup>73</sup> This means some development programmes may be reduced or terminated to ensure it meets the target of spending 0.5 percent of GNI on ODA.<sup>74</sup>

In November 2020, the IDC argued the FCDO should switch its financial support for vaccines, therapies and tests [from ODA to other budgets](#) to free up additional resources to address the secondary impacts of the pandemic and alleviate part of the expected spending reductions.<sup>75</sup>

The FCDO [rejected the recommendation](#), stating the inclusion of Covid-19 research as eligible for ODA was supported by the OECD and addressed development needs.<sup>76</sup>

At the G7, the UK committed to share 100 million vaccines through Covax and bilaterally by June 2022. This will be classed as ODA but [will be in addition to the £10 million already allocated for ODA](#) in 2021.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> PQ 10464 [[Overseas aid: Coronavirus](#)], 10 June 2021; OECD, [FAQs on the ODA eligibility of Covid-19 related activities](#), updated March 2021

<sup>73</sup> PQ 18457 [[Coronavirus: Vaccination](#)], 25 June 2021

<sup>74</sup> PQ 770 [[Coronavirus: Vaccination](#)], 17 May 2021; HC Deb, [26 November 2020](#), c1018

<sup>75</sup> IDC, [Humanitarian crisis monitoring: Impact of Coronavirus \(interim findings\)](#), HC 292, 13 November 2020, paras 91, 96

<sup>76</sup> UK Government, [Government response to IDC report on humanitarian crises monitoring \(interim findings\)](#), 26 January 2021, p7

<sup>77</sup> Devex, [UK's 100m Covid-19 vaccine donation will be additional to aid budget](#), 10 June 2021

## 3.2 Reducing and reprioritising aid

Since the pandemic began, bilateral ODA from donor states has shifted towards supporting the global response to Covid-19. This has [reduced aid for sanitation, energy and conflict resolution](#).<sup>78</sup>

In addition, the UK Government has twice reduced aid spending. In 2020, the contraction in the economy due to the pandemic meant the monetary value of the 0.7 percent target was [reduced by £712 million](#) compared to 2019.<sup>79</sup> In 2021, spending will be [reduced by at least £4 billion](#) as the Government intends to spend only 0.5 percent of GNI on ODA, citing the economic and fiscal impact of the pandemic.<sup>80</sup>

In the first round of reductions, aid programmes were reprioritised based on where Covid-19 had already disrupted their implementation, where expenditure could be delayed to 2021 without practical impact, and whether they were directly related to the pandemic or manifesto commitments.<sup>81</sup>

In 2021/22, funding was prioritised in line with the [Government's strategic priorities for aid spending](#), which include global health security.<sup>82</sup>

## 3.3 Impact on countries most at risk

For 2020, the ICAI said the [reductions resulted in](#) “more drastic cuts than were needed” and that budget reductions were concentrated in 40 countries that were classed by the Government as highly vulnerable to the pandemic. These countries include Pakistan, Syria, Bangladesh and Myanmar.<sup>83</sup>

The ICAI estimated that in 24 of the 40 countries, DFID/FCDO total spending fell by £753 million, [being 22 percent lower](#) (£2.6 billion compared to £3.4 billion in 2019). On average, spending was £31 million lower in affected states. Only Sudan saw an increase in funding.<sup>84</sup>

These figures should be regarded as indicative, as it inflates planned changes with policy decisions in 2020. For example, reductions may have been already planned. Figures also refer to DFID/FCDO country spend, rather than fully attributable spend that includes that from multilateral contributions.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Development Initiatives, [How is aid changing in the Covid-19 pandemic?](#), 9 November 2020

<sup>79</sup> FCDO, [Statistics on international development: Provisional UK aid spend 2020](#), 8 April 2021

<sup>80</sup> Commons Library, [Reducing the UK's aid spending in 2021](#), June 2021

<sup>81</sup> ICAI, [Management of the 0.7 percent ODA spending target in 2020](#), May 2021, iv, para 3.22

<sup>82</sup> FCDO, [UK ODA allocations 2021 to 2022: Written Ministerial statement](#), 21 April 2021

<sup>83</sup> ICAI, [Management of the 0.7 percent ODA spending target in 2020](#), 20 May 2021, paras 3.12 and 3.27

<sup>84</sup> ICAI, [Management of the 0.7 percent ODA spending target in 2020](#), 20 May 2021, paras 3.12 and 3.27

<sup>85</sup> ICAI, [Management of the 0.7 percent ODA spending target in 2020](#), 20 May 2021, paras 3.12 and 3.27

## 3.4 Impact on pandemic-related programmes

In 2021/22, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) announced its ODA allocation from the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) would be reduced to £125 million, leaving a £120 million funding gap between allocations and commitments.<sup>86</sup>

The Guardian reported that affected programmes included one [sequencing Covid-19 variants in India and Bangladesh](#).<sup>87</sup> The FCDO said it would [maintain research partnerships for Covid-19](#), including the development of vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics.<sup>88</sup>

BEIS has said it will implement its R&D spending [in line with the Government's seven strategic priorities for ODA](#), which include Covid-19 and global health security.<sup>89</sup>

## 3.5 Impact on health programmes

The ability to respond to the pandemic is strengthened if countries have functioning health systems and fewer health challenges.

NGOs have reported that UK funding for wider health programmes has been cut or terminated. These include research into neglected tropical diseases,<sup>90</sup> support for health systems and workers in Sierra Leone,<sup>91</sup> and training and essential healthcare in Bangladesh.<sup>92</sup> Other vaccine programmes, such as Polio, have also seen FCDO spending reduced.<sup>93</sup>

In 2021, Sky News reports that UK plans to cut bilateral funding for water projects by 80 percent.<sup>94</sup> Cuts to UKRI have also impacted on research on [decontaminating water supplies](#) in Africa, and on malaria and [other infectious diseases](#).<sup>95</sup>

Many states face health challenges additional to Covid-19—the pandemic, for example, [disrupted routine vaccination efforts](#) in 68 countries.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> UKRI, [UKRI ODA letter 11 March 2021](#), 11 March 2021

<sup>87</sup> The Guardian, [UK's aid cuts hit vital coronavirus research around the world](#), 30 April 2021

<sup>88</sup> PQ 4726 [[Developing countries: Coronavirus](#)], 27 May 2021

<sup>89</sup> PQ 2427 [[Coronavirus: Research](#)], 26 May 2021

<sup>90</sup> Uniting Tropical Diseases, [Our response to the UK's cuts to foreign aid](#), 12 May 2021

<sup>91</sup> King's College London, [UK aid cuts hit King's vital global health programmes](#), 4 May 2021

<sup>92</sup> Concern, [UK aid cuts: A sledgehammer blow out](#), 10 May 2021

<sup>93</sup> PQ 733 [[Overseas aid: Poliomyelitis](#)], 20 May 2021

<sup>94</sup> Sky News, [UK plans to cut bilateral funding for water projects in developing nations \[...\]](#), 28 April 2021

<sup>95</sup> The Observer, [Britain's 'brutal' cuts to overseas aid put African science projects in peril](#), 28 March 2021; The Independent, [UK research into malaria set to be halted \[...\]](#), 30 March 2021

<sup>96</sup> WHO, [At least 80 million children under one at risk of diseases \[...\]](#), 22 May 2021

## 3.6

### Impact on other programmes

Some specific programmes have been paused or terminated due to the pandemic or the government's re-prioritisation of aid spending.

To prioritise Covid-19 related spending, in 2020/21 the FCDO [reduced the allocation for supporting human rights, democracy and the rules-based international system](#) to £8.5 million. The Department said this was to free up spending in 2020.<sup>97</sup> In 2019/20, the [budget was £17.66 million](#).<sup>98</sup>

In March 2020, some projects funded by the Conflict, Security and Development Fund and Prosperity Fund [were also frozen to free up spending](#).<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> FCDO, [Human rights and the rules-based international system: Objectives 2020 to 2021](#), 30 March 2021, section 6

<sup>98</sup> FCDO, [Supporting human rights, democracy, and the rules based international system: Objectives 2019 to 2020](#), 19 September 2019

<sup>99</sup> Devex, [DFID pauses "some new decisions" as aid budget expected to fall](#), 5 June 2020

## 4 Ending the pandemic: manufacturing and technology

Responses have also included diplomatic efforts, reforms to the global health infrastructure, and debates on strengthening vaccine manufacture.

### 4.1 PM's Plan to end the pandemic

In September 2020, the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, announced a [five-point plan to prevent future pandemics and recover from Covid-19](#):

1. **Prevention:** Setting up a global research network to spot new pandemics
2. **Production:** Increasing manufacturing capacity for tests, vaccines and treatments
3. **Prediction:** Designing a global early warning system
4. **Preparedness:** Agreeing global protocols for emergencies
5. **Partnership:** Reducing trade barriers (e.g. tariffs on soap).<sup>100</sup>

The five-point plan influenced the FCDO's priorities for ODA in 2021/22 and the Government's Integrated Review.<sup>101</sup> The IDC has argued the Government [should be more ambitious](#), and support a global health and nutrition strategy centred on the sustainable development goal of "ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages."<sup>102</sup>

It also recommended the FCDO [publish a long-term strategy](#) to tackle the longer-term effects of the pandemic on other development needs. The FCDO has no plans for a separate Covid-19 strategy.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>100</sup> FCDO and Number 10, [PM: World must unite to defeat Covid and prevent future pandemics](#), 25 September 2020; [Written evidence from the FCDO to the IDC](#), para 1.3

<sup>101</sup> [Written evidence from the FCDO to the IDC](#), para 1.3.1

<sup>102</sup> IDC, [Humanitarian crises monitoring: Impact of Coronavirus \(interim findings\)](#), HC 292, 13 November 2020, para 100

<sup>103</sup> UK Government, [Response to the IDC report Covid-19 in developing countries: Secondary impacts](#), HC 1351, 26 April 2021, pp4-5

## 4.2 Manufacturing capacity and increasing vaccine development

The World Trade Organization (WTO) has estimated vaccine manufacturing capacity in 2021 [needs to triple from 5 billion to 15 billion](#) and said more should be manufactured in Latin America and Africa.<sup>104</sup>

The Indian Government's decision to suspend vaccine exports in response to the pandemic [has produced shortages for Covax](#), the global initiative aimed at distributing vaccines to low- and middle- income states.<sup>105</sup>

In May 2021, G7 Leaders [committed to work with industry](#) to expand manufacturing at scale for affordable vaccines and Covid-19 products.<sup>106</sup> The UK Government is currently working with Covax, multilateral agencies and industry to expand manufacture. For example, at 30 June 2021 it funded a scoping exercise for increasing vaccine manufacture in Africa.<sup>107</sup>

The Labour Party has urged the Government to [identify and equip new facilities in more countries](#), and to commit new funding to ensure countries are able to finance such plans.<sup>108</sup>

The WTO Director General, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, has noted the [complexities in scaling-up and diversifying vaccine manufacture](#), citing the fact Pfizer's vaccines contain 280 components, produced at 86 sites in 19 countries.<sup>109</sup>

The UK is also due to hold a 2022 summit with CEPI to speed up new vaccine development. The UK and CEPI both support cutting the time taken to develop vaccines by two-thirds, to 100 days.<sup>110</sup>

## 4.3 Waiving patents and intellectual property (IP) rights

In October 2020, South Africa and India put forward an initiative to the WTO to [temporarily suspend rules on IP rights for Covid-19 vaccines and other related equipment](#). They argued that it would avoid barriers in accessing

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<sup>104</sup> Reuters, [New WTO chief calls for tripling of vaccine production](#), 1 March 2021; Independent, [WTO chief calls for diversification of vaccine production](#), 20 May 2021

<sup>105</sup> Reuters, [India unlikely to resume sizable Covid-19 vaccine exports until October](#), 18 May 2021

<sup>106</sup> FCDO, [UK secures G7 action to tackle global challenges and threats](#), 6 May 2021

<sup>107</sup> PQ 21806 [[South Africa: Coronavirus](#)], 30 June 2021

<sup>108</sup> Labour Party, [Labour's plan to transform global vaccine production](#), 20 May 2021

<sup>109</sup> The Guardian, [G20 urged to do more to support global vaccine distribution](#), 5 July 2021

<sup>110</sup> FCDO and Department of Health and Social Care, [UK to host global summit with CEPI to speed up new vaccine development](#), 30 April 2021

medical products and allow the scaling up of research, manufacture and supply.<sup>111</sup> It would be in place for three years.<sup>112</sup>

At the WTO, the UK has [opposed the waiver](#). In October, it argued that IP systems were a “key part of the innovation framework that allows economies to grow” and that it had not identified clear ways in which IP had acted as a barrier to vaccine access or treatments.<sup>113</sup> The German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, has also argued “creativity and innovation” are [supported by patent protection](#).<sup>114</sup>

As of late April, 60 WTO members publicly [supported the proposed waiver](#),<sup>115</sup> though over [100 members are believed to support it](#).<sup>116</sup> Further countries, including the US, Spain and France, have subsequently come out in support of a patent waiver.<sup>117</sup> In June, the European Parliament also called for a [temporary waiver](#) of IP rights.<sup>118</sup>

In the UK, the Labour Party has said the Government [should participate in talks on waiving IP on vaccines](#).<sup>119</sup> In May 2021, it was reported the Government was [now in talks on the waiver](#).<sup>120</sup>

In June 2021, G7 leaders [committed to “engage constructively” at the WTO](#) on IP rights and noted the impact voluntary licensing and technology transfer had made to global vaccine supply.<sup>121</sup> For example, in July the FCDO said a licensing deal [allowed the transfer of AstraZeneca’s technology to other manufactures](#) to establish twenty supply chains globally.<sup>122</sup>

The WTO has [warned the waiver will not be enough](#) to narrow the supply gap, stating that the licencing process should be improved instead, and greater support provided to boost manufacturing capacity.<sup>123</sup>

In July, the WTO Director said she expected during the month there would be [a “sensible answer” resulting from talks](#), which would help with transfer of technology and IP rights.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> WTO, [Members discuss IP response to the Covid-19 pandemic](#), 20 October 2020

<sup>112</sup> European Parliament, [WTO TRIPS waiver to tackle coronavirus](#), June 2021

<sup>113</sup> UK Mission to the WTO, UN and other international organisations (Geneva), [UK statement to the TRIPS council: Item 15 waiver proposal for Covid-19](#), 16 October 2020

<sup>114</sup> Financial Times, [EU leaders confront US over vaccine patent waiver demands](#), 8 May 2021

<sup>115</sup> WTO, [TRIPS Council to continue to discuss temporary IP waiver \[...\]](#), 30 April 2021

<sup>116</sup> Medecines Sans Frontieres, [Countries obstructing Covid-19 patent waiver must allow negotiations to start](#), 9 March 2021

<sup>117</sup> Gavi, [The US adds its support to patent waivers for Covid-19 vaccines](#), 7 May 2021; Human Rights Watch, [European Commission increasingly isolated on Covid patent waivers](#), 11 June 2021,

<sup>118</sup> European Parliament, [Parliament calls for temporary Covid-19 vaccine patent waiver](#), 10 June 2021

<sup>119</sup> Emily Thornberry MP for the Guardian, [Britain could steer a global vaccination programme—but where is the leadership?](#), 20 May 2021

<sup>120</sup> The Guardian, [Britain in talks to waive Covid vaccine patents \[...\]](#), 20 May 2021

<sup>121</sup> G7 2021, [Summit Communiqué](#), 13 June 2021, para 12

<sup>122</sup> HC Deb, [6 July 2021](#), c864

<sup>123</sup> Reuters, [Vaccine patent waiver will not be enough- WTO chief](#), 20 May 2021

<sup>124</sup> Devex, [WTO chief to G20- Donate 2-3B more Covid-19 vaccine doses](#), 6 July 2021

## 5 Diplomatic efforts

At the UN, the UK has supported calls for a global ceasefire to allow states and economies to concentrate on responding to the pandemic, allow the delivery of humanitarian aid, and enable vaccination campaigns. However, adherence to ceasefires has been patchy.

In 2021, the UK holds the G7 Presidency. In June, G7 leaders agreed to donate additional vaccines and support increased global manufacturing of doses.

### 5.1 Conflict resolution

In July 2020, the UN Security Council agreed an [immediate ceasefire](#) for at least 90 consecutive days in areas of armed conflict.<sup>125</sup> It followed an appeal in March by the UN Secretary General for a global ceasefire.<sup>126</sup>

The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project judged that the appeal in March had [little effect by May](#).<sup>127</sup> The IPI Global Observatory in October similarly [saw little reduction in violence](#).<sup>128</sup>

In February 2021, the UN Security Council agreed a resolution for ceasefires to allow vaccine delivery.<sup>129</sup> The UK called for the resolution as Chair.<sup>130</sup>

The International Crisis Group states the February resolution [may be more achievable](#), due to successful vaccination campaigns in the past led by the UN and WHO in conflict areas. These also relied on the creation of safe corridors and “days of tranquillity” to allow health workers to access conflict zones.<sup>131</sup> It also argues greater sharing of doses via Covax would [increase incentives for ceasefires](#).<sup>132</sup>

<sup>125</sup> UN, [Security council underlines support for Secretary General’s global ceasefire appeal \[...\]](#), 1 July 2020

<sup>126</sup> UN, [Secretary-General’s appeal for global ceasefire](#), 23 March 2020

<sup>127</sup> ACLED, [Call unanswered: A review of responses to the UN appeal for a global ceasefire](#), May 2020

<sup>128</sup> IPI Global Observatory, [The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on peace and conflict](#), 23 October 2020

<sup>129</sup> UN, [Security Council calls for increased cooperation to facilitate Covid-19 vaccine access](#), 26 February 2021

<sup>130</sup> FCDO, [UK calls for ceasefires to vaccinate people against Covid-19](#), 17 February 2021

<sup>131</sup> International Crisis Group, [A fresh chance for the Security Council to tackle Covid-19](#), 6 April 2021

<sup>132</sup> International Crisis Group, [Seven points for the G7](#), 9 June 2021



## 5.2

## G7 Presidency

A G7 summit was held in Cornwall in June. It was the first face-to-face meeting between G7 leaders since the pandemic began.

### Expectations and aims for the June 2021 Summit

The Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, said he would use the summit to make “concrete commitments” to vaccinate the world by 2022.<sup>133</sup>

The WHO, World Bank, WTO and IMF [collectively warned against inequitable vaccine distribution](#) between low and high income countries and called for the G7 to contribute to a [\\$50 billion fund](#) to ensure 60 percent of the world’s populations are vaccinated by the end of 2022.<sup>134</sup>

Around 230 charities, academics and political leaders, including Gordon Brown and Tony Blair, called upon the G7 to [contribute around \\$44 billion over two years for global vaccination](#).<sup>135</sup>

### Summit conclusions and reaction

The [Summit Communiqué](#) set a goal of ending the pandemic by 2022. Leaders pledged to strengthen the role of the WHO, reaffirmed their support for Covax, said they would support the sharing of vaccine doses, increase manufacturing, and support the voluntary licencing of vaccine IP rights.

Looking beyond the Covid-19 pandemic, G7 leaders [acknowledged the recommendations](#) made by the WHO-commissioned review and said they would work to develop global protocols to trigger collective action in the event of a future pandemic and better address global health security.<sup>136</sup>

G7 Leaders also [pledged to donate 1 billion doses](#), 80 percent through Covax. Half will be delivered by the end of 2021.<sup>137</sup> Covax and UNICEF said the pledged doses are welcome, but were [insufficient in number and too late](#).<sup>138</sup>

Commenting on the communiqué of G7 health ministers, Action for Global Health said the commitment to strengthen health systems was welcome, but [lacked the concrete steps to achieve this](#).<sup>139</sup>

The [G20 Rome Summit](#) in October may see further global action.

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<sup>133</sup> G7 2021, [PM calls on G7 leaders to vaccinate the world by end of next year](#), 6 June 2021

<sup>134</sup> IMF, [A new commitment for vaccine equity and defeating the pandemic](#), 1 June 2021; IMF, [A proposal to end the Covid-19 pandemic](#), 19 May 2021

<sup>135</sup> The Guardian, [Covid: More than 200 leaders urge G7 to help vaccinate world’s poorest](#), 6 June 2021

<sup>136</sup> G7 2021, [Summit Communiqué](#), 13 June 2021, paras 6-16

<sup>137</sup> Commons Library, [Covax and global access to Covid-19 vaccines](#)

<sup>138</sup> WHO, [G7 announces pledges of 870 million Covid-19 vaccine doses \[...\]](#), 13 June 2021

<sup>139</sup> Action for Global Health, [G7 discuss Covid-19 challenges but fail to provide strategic leadership \[...\]](#), June 2021

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