

UK industrial strategy**Big pharma to unveil £1bn boost for Theresa May's Brexit future**

Nearly 1,000 new high-skilled jobs planned for research hubs in London and Manchester



Qiagen and MSD are ready to announce more than £1bn research investment in Britain © AFP

NOVEMBER 27, 2017 Sarah Neville, Global Pharmaceuticals Editor

Theresa May's vision of a vibrant post-Brexit economy will receive a much-needed boost today when two large pharmaceutical companies unveil more than £1bn of investment in research hubs creating nearly 1,000 high-skilled jobs.

The commitments by German-based [Qiagen](#) and MSD, the company known as Merck in North America, come as ministers publish an industrial strategy intended to reassure business about the UK's prospects as it prepares to leave the EU.

MSD will develop a research facility in London by 2020 aimed at finding new drugs. The investment, worth about £1bn, should support 950 jobs, including 150 new research roles that the company said should attract "the brightest and best" scientists to the capital.

Qiagen is expected to invest **hundreds** of millions of pounds to establish a campus in Manchester to lead its work on genomics, potentially creating up to 800 new jobs and attracting companies from [across the world to the North West](#). It is developing the campus in partnership with Health Innovation Manchester.

The government has been anxious to demonstrate that its life sciences industrial strategy can [benefit the whole country](#), not simply the "[golden triangle](#)" of London, Oxford and Cambridge, where much world-leading research is carried out.

The white paper on industrial strategy is expected to set out plans to tackle the UK's [productivity woes](#) by outlining proposals to improve skills and infrastructure. The government has identified areas the UK must aim to lead, including artificial intelligence, driverless cars and low carbon technologies.

John Bell, Regius professor of medicine at Oxford, who was commissioned by government to develop the life sciences strategy, said a number of large companies, including Roche, Novartis and Pfizer had cut back their research efforts in the UK over the past 15 years.

However, the two investments being announced today, on top of moves by [AstraZeneca](#) to make its headquarters in Cambridge and Novo Nordisk to fund a diabetes research centre in Oxford suggested "we are seeing the beginnings of the reversal of that", he added.

Pharmaceutical industry leaders have expressed concern about whether Britain would continue to punch above its weight in the share of global life sciences investment it receives post-Brexit.

The UK currently secures 3.5 per cent of global investment, the highest share in Europe if exchange rate effects are excluded. However, a number of industry executives have spoken of delaying future investment decisions, partly due to Brexit uncertainty.

The government suggested more pharmaceutical company investments would be announced in coming weeks. Greg Clark, business secretary, said life sciences was one of the UK's fastest developing industries, employing 233,000 people and generating turnover of more than £64bn.

This article has been amended after MSD clarified that its investment will create 150 new jobs, not 950 as originally indicated

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