# Liverpool to benefit from £10 million investment in robotic laboratories



Liverpool is set to receive a significant boost in its health innovation sector with the announcement of a new £10 million investment for state-of-the-art robotic laboratories designed to combat deadly diseases. This funding comes from the government's Innovation Zone initiative, aimed at enhancing research capabilities, particularly in the field of infectious diseases.

The new High Containment Level 3 laboratories will be established at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM) with the support of the Infection Innovation Consortium (iiCON). These advanced facilities will facilitate the development and validation of novel treatments, including vaccines and diagnostics, for high-risk infectious pathogens that pose global health threats.

Equipped with cutting-edge robotics, AI, and sophisticated liquid handling systems, the new laboratories will enable researchers to advance their work while ensuring safety in handling dangerous pathogens. LSTM, which has one of the largest concentrations of Containment Level 3 labs in the North West, previously played a crucial role during the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating the need for robust research facilities in addressing public health emergencies.

The launch of these labs is set to enhance human organoid research, employing advanced technologies to grow tissues that replicate human organs, potentially expediting the regulatory approval process for new treatments. In addition to saving lives, the robotic laboratories are projected to generate £40 million in investment within the first three years, as well as creating well-paid jobs in the region and fostering a robust research environment.

Liverpool City Region Mayor Steve Rotheram commented on the investment, stating, “Robotic labs might sound like something out of science fiction, but this is very much science fact – and a massive vote of confidence in our region’s position as a global leader in health innovation.” He further noted that the pandemic highlighted the essential role of the local life sciences sector, underlining the significance of this investment in attracting business and talent to the area.

Professor Giancarlo Biagini, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation at LSTM, expressed pride in receiving the investment, which complements funding from UKRI’s Expanding Excellence in England (E3) fund and the Wolfson Foundation. He stated, “This combined £20m initiative will accelerate the preclinical development of new therapeutics, vaccines, and diagnostics - strengthening the UK’s position as a global leader in health innovation.”

Adding to this sentiment, Professor Janet Hemingway, founding director of iiCON, stated that the consortium is pleased to support this transformative initiative and looks forward to utilising its extensive network of industry, academic, and clinical partners to maximise the facility’s potential. She emphasized the importance of fostering impactful collaborations that support SMEs and generate high-value jobs while enhancing health outcomes.

Since its founding in 2020 with an initial £18.6 million government grant, iiCON has rapidly expanded into a £260 million programme, collaborating with over 1,000 organisations and bolstering the city region’s research and development spend by £1 billion. It has successfully supported the launch of 36 new products, with over 5 billion units of essential treatments reaching communities globally.

The new laboratory project aligns with the longer-term Liverpool City Region Life Sciences Innovation Zone programme, which aspires to attract up to £800 million in public and private investment and create 8,000 skilled jobs over the next decade. This initiative is part of the government's broader national Investment Zone Programme, aimed at fostering innovation and economic growth in key sectors.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.lstmed.ac.uk/news-events/news/new-%C2%A310m-robotic-labs-investment-for-iicon-in-plans-to-%E2%80%98supercharge%E2%80%99-liverpool-life> - This article supports the claim of a £10 million investment for robotic laboratories at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, aimed at enhancing research capabilities for infectious diseases. It also highlights the facilities' role in fostering innovation and life-saving research.
* <https://www.labmate-online.com/news/laboratory-research-news/126/liverpool-school-of-tropical-medicine/robotic-labs-to-supercharge-uk-infection-research-activities/62603> - This news piece corroborates the development of Category 3 robotic laboratories in Liverpool to handle deadly pathogens, emphasizing their role in advancing UK infection research and commercializing therapeutic products.
* <https://growthplatform.org/news/2024/07/iicon-has-bolstered-its-team-by-making-a-senior-appointment-to-establish-the-category-3-ai-robotics-laboratory/> - This report supports the appointment of Dr Michael Egan to iiCON and the development of AI-driven robotic laboratories, highlighting Dr Egan's role in specifying and designing these cutting-edge facilities.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - Although the exact page was not searched, Noah Wire Services was mentioned as a potential source for the information about Liverpool’s health innovation and the new laboratory project.
* <https://www.lstmed.ac.uk/about> - This link to the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine's website provides background information on LSTM's role and capabilities, particularly in the context of health innovation and infectious disease research.