

# Erik Nordkamp Managing Director, Pfizer UK

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*Erik Nordkamp, managing director of Pfizer UK shares his thoughts on the future of healthcare and the role that Pfizer and the UK can play in shaping it. He explains why the momentum is right for the UK to lead the way in sustainable healthcare and how it can remain a reference market post-Brexit.*

## **Can you please introduce the scope of operations of Pfizer UK?**

Pfizer operates across five sites in the UK and employs around 2,500 people<sup>[1]</sup> so a significant footprint for us. While we have scaled back our operations, we continue to conduct R&D activities in Cambridge and Sandwich.

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Over 700 colleagues are based at our Sandwich site,<sup>1</sup> which is among the largest bio-pharmaceutical science operations in the UK. In addition, it is home to Pfizer's only automated pilot plant that manufactures medicines for use in our clinical trials worldwide and is able to perform every step in the complex process of producing a new medicine.

At our Tadworth site, where we are today, two thirds of colleagues work for the UK company whereas the rest have regional and global roles.

While the UK may represent a relatively small percentage of overall global sales, our virtual impact is much bigger. The UK has an international reputation as a leading reference market for many countries, so it is important that we play an active role in the UK life sciences environment.

### **Since the beginning of your tenure in 2015, what have been some of the priorities you have been pursuing?**

With Brexit occurring during my tenure, it has been a priority of mine to ensure we support the UK in the best way possible and make the most of the situation while planning for all eventualities. We have done this by engaging in a constant dialogue with key stakeholders, including the media, to help our relationships with them evolve.

As an industry, we haven't always been seen in a positive light in the UK. Therefore, I feel it is important for us to actively communicate so that people understand who we are and what we do.

I'm also keen to move away from traditional transactional type relationships and towards more collaborative approaches. We are at a point in time in the UK where the NHS needs to transform due to financial challenges and it recognises the need for innovative partnerships.

As Brexit is looming, the UK also wants to show that it is at the forefront of development within the life sciences, to be a poster child for success, which creates a fertile environment for partnerships. We're, therefore, very positive about the fact that the Life Sciences Industrial Strategy has been published; we feel it is very comprehensive and we would like it to be implemented in full. However, the right governance and an effective implementation plan will need to be put in place to make this happen, and it's reliant on the involvement and commitment of the NHS. Essentially, incentives within the NHS need to be aligned with what the Life Sciences Industrial Strategy is trying to achieve.

### **What have been some of the innovative partnerships you have been pursuing?**

There are two types of innovative partnership that we have been pursuing.

The first is for us to partner with the healthcare system at a regional level and examine certain treatment pathways where we can contribute expertise. We consider how we could redesign a pathway to create a better experience for patients and healthcare professionals, while taking waste out of the system and creating better outcomes in the process. We also consider what other partners we could involve, which sometimes results in a consortium.

The second is very exciting but more difficult to achieve as it involves rethinking healthcare entirely - like sitting in front of a blank sheet of paper and, without any regard for current constraints, designing what we would like to see. This is the equivalent of somebody saying I don't need to

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put landlines in place; I can jump straight to mobile phones.

Both approaches require a number of factors that are all present in the UK, such as communities where data systems can be connected and where there are scientific capabilities present to properly partner with. Moreover, there has to be vision and leadership within the healthcare system so that we can align our view of what we want to achieve to ensure that changes are durable. There also needs to be enough headroom within the NHS system for this innovation transformation to take place.

Healthcare is not an area where you can drop the ball as ultimately it impacts patients. Leadership is about having the vision to do what is needed to implement changes three years down the line while addressing current challenges. At Pfizer, we think that an honest discussion with the NHS will allow us to achieve this and enable us to put patients first in everything that we do.

### **The UK is a reference market, but what is needed to ensure it is sustainable?**

In Dutch we say "this is the year of the truth" as many important decisions will be taken. Will sector deals be decided upon, what will the new PPRS (Pharmaceutical Price Regulation Scheme) deal look like, what decision will be taken on Brexit, how far will the outlined Life Sciences Industrial Strategy be implemented? All of these questions are very important indicators of whether the UK is serious about being a leader in life sciences.

As an industry, we feel that commitment to the implementation of the Industrial Strategy is one thing we have to be able to see, not just from Government, but also at the NHS level. Furthermore, we would like to see innovation being valued more. This is truly the area where we see the UK lagging behind other countries, both in terms of valuing innovation and of how innovation is taken up by the system.<sup>[2]</sup> Some parts of Government have acknowledged the link between boardroom sentiment on inward investment and the extent to which Government values new products. We are seeing movement in that understanding and now hope that meaningful decisions will be taken to ensure the future sustainability of the system.

### **What role can the UK play in redefining and advancing global healthcare?**

The UK is a reference market. NICE was a pioneer 20 years ago with its approach to health economics and the UK has witnessed a series of medical technology inventions and is an important home to scientific thinking. However, what is making the UK particularly relevant right now is the pressure it is under to really think about its future. This truth combined with the need for the NHS to transform generates a momentum that forces creativity and prepares the ground for innovation to thrive.

We're keen to operate in this space, where the future of healthcare will be determined. An ageing population and the increasing cost of technology are just two of the key issues we face. Brexit represents a potential opportunity, including changing the way that Government and the NHS engage with industry.

### **Pfizer has been active in promoting its Pfizer Healthcare Hub in London. What linked success story would you like to share?**

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It is still early days for the three companies we are supporting but they are going from strength to strength. Pfizer is a medicines company but the more we can learn about advancing healthcare, the more we will be able to do for patients and the Healthcare Hub is one of the ways of achieving this.

When you work with entrepreneurs and you truly make a commitment to work with them and help them scale, they challenge you back. They push you to make faster decisions and infuse more entrepreneurial thinking into your own organisation. We are learning to do things differently and challenge what is a fairly traditional industry, which is a healthy procedure.

I think healthcare is going to transform thoroughly in the few next years and that means we will have to focus even more on this type of external activity and engagement.

**Ian Read, global CEO of Pfizer, recently explained that Pfizer is not looking for the next multimillion dollar deal but will concentrate its efforts on its great pipeline. What will be the upcoming launches in the UK?**

We are on the verge of exciting times as we will potentially be launching 15 new products over the course of the next five years, including within the field of rare diseases.<sup>[3]</sup> As many of these products don't fit the traditional way of assessing the value of medicines, it will be interesting to see how the approvals process will unfold in the UK. Some are really transformative and in line with our strategy to focus on products that give us the best promise of scientific and commercial success, thereby helping us to improve the lives of patients.

I think this is really Ian's legacy. He steered Pfizer through a period marked by significant patent losses and transformed the company into one that is expecting some major launches in the near future.

**What skills do you take away from managing a country like the UK?**

I feel it is like being a managing director on stilts. Everything is on a bigger scale: influencing, operations and complexity. And while it is an honour to lead the organisation in this changing time and play an active role in the industry, resilience is much needed. In the UK, you have to deal with challenges and learn to prioritise under pressure.

Another aspect to being the UK managing director is that you have to learn how to engage in public debates, face media and represent the industry with a human voice. I am thrilled I can share my pride to work for this industry, to show the human face of it and to demonstrate our dedication to patients. But it remains challenging nonetheless.

**What would you like the world to know about Pfizer in the UK?**

We were, we are, and we will continue to be one of the companies shaping healthcare in the UK, and globally. We work towards that goal by playing an active role externally and by proceeding in a very collaborative way, through partnerships, trying our best to be a company that is cognizant of the issues that matter most to society.

*This article was developed in conjunction with Pfizer Ltd.*

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[1] Pfizer data on file

[2] PwC Strategy and Pfizer. Driving Global Competitiveness of the UK's Life Sciences Ecosystem. For the benefit of UK patients, the economy and the NHS. Feb 2017. P3 & 9

[3] Q1 2018 Pfizer Inc earnings call. May 2018. P5 & 6

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