

GlaxoSmithKline

case study



pharmaceutical sector

INVEST Essex case studies highlighting Essex companies who are leaders in their fields

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GlaxoSmithKline

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GlaxoSmithKline

looking to the future with neurosciences research



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“There’s a geographical research triangle that covers Essex, Hertfordshire and London and stretches on to Oxford and Cambridge,” continues GSK’s spokesman.

“There tends to be a lot of mobility between sites, so the road and rail network around Harlow helps our teams reach those places easily and that makes face-to-face collaboration a practical proposition.”

Essex is conveniently situated for such a mobile team and provides a good mix of location, quality of life and business infrastructure. This is essential for a global knowledge-based company that needs to attract and retain high-calibre research staff from around the world, while supporting a high level of national and international mobility.

The proximity to London, Cambridge and Oxford, home to many biomedical academics centres with which GSK collaborates, also make Essex a popular destination for companies who are relocating.

GlaxoSmithKline is one of the world’s leading research-based pharmaceutical and healthcare companies. It aims to discover, develop and market medicines and vaccines that meet patients’ needs and provide value to governments and other healthcare providers. Research into these solutions is driven by GlaxoSmithKline’s strong foundation in science.

At any time, GSK has some 150 projects in development from new medicines, product-line extensions to vaccines. This research takes place in any of the 18 research sites around the world, and the company spends about £300,000 every hour on research projects.

Research and development in the pharmaceutical sector is long, risky and expensive; it typically takes about 12-15 years and costs over £500 million to bring a new medicine or vaccine from concept to market. Research excellence is therefore a critical element in the company’s long-term strategy.

GlaxoSmithKline’s Harlow centre has been carrying out research since the 1950s and is the home for

2,500 scientists and support staff whose focus is on early-stage neuroscience research.

As a Research & Development spokesman commented, “The role of early stage scientists at centres like Harlow is to carry out research to identify and develop a potential new medicine up to the point where it can be tested in humans. At that stage other teams at the site work to produce the medicine in limited quantities for those trials – in itself a very complicated task. If those trials are successful and the medicine is approved by regulators, it moves to one of our global production sites.”

The team in Essex works closely with other GlaxoSmithKline scientists, particularly those in both Verona, Italy and Shanghai, China, both sites for research into neurosciences.

GlaxoSmithKline has a concentration of research centres in the counties bordering on the north of London, with three other GlaxoSmithKline research centres located nearby in Stevenage, Ware and Welwyn.



INVEST Essex provides confidential advice and practical support to companies wanting to establish a presence or expand in the UK. We promote Essex as an outstanding business destination and help existing and potential investors make the most of our strategic location, thriving business environment, and quality of life.

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