COVID-19 is the infectious disease caused by the new coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) identified in late 2019. COVID-19 is affecting many countries globally and has been declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO). To date, there have been approximately 2 million COVID-19 related deaths reported worldwide.

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported. The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, dry cough and tiredness. Other symptoms that are less common and may affect some patients include aches, pains, nasal congestion, headache, conjunctivitis, sore throat, diarrhea, loss of taste or smell or a rash on skin or discoloration of fingers or toes.

1 out of every 5 people who contract COVID-19 become seriously ill and have difficulty breathing. There are clear age-related links to disease severity and older people and those with underlying medical problems are at higher risk of developing serious complications from the illness.

The disease spreads primarily from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth, which are expelled when coughing, sneezing or speaking. Additional research is underway aimed at understanding the role of other types of viral spread.

There are currently only very limited vaccines or effective treatment options available to address COVID-19. Deployment of the first round of approved prophylactic vaccines could take months, possibly years, to effectively protect enough people to achieve ‘herd immunity.’ For now, the most effective ways to protect yourself and others against COVID-19 are to cover coughs and sneezes, wear protective face masks, clean your hands frequently and thoroughly, avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose and practice social or physical distancing.

The facility in Livingston, Scotland has been producing FDA/EMA/MHRA approved commercial-grade travel vaccines for more than a decade. It will be the production hub for Valneva’s COVID-19 vaccine candidate. The UK government funding will allow Valneva to expand the site’s capacity for drug substance production, accelerate clinical development and increase the number of jobs at the Livingston facility.