

**International Forum**  
**Thursday 28 April 2022**  
**Brief Readout**

**Summary**

- This meeting featured presentations and discussion on CBRN activity in UKHSA, and the UK's Biosecurity Strategy Refresh.

**United Kingdom – UKHSA**

- UKHSA colleagues provided an overview of ongoing activity. (See relevant slide-pack for more information)
- What is CBRN is a term used to describe Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear materials
- CBRN is often associated with terrorism
- CBRN(e) terrorism defined as 'the actual or threatened dispersal of CBRN material (either on their own or in combination, or with explosives – referred to by 'e') with deliberate criminal malicious or murderous intent
- Low probability in incidence occurring - but catastrophic consequences when/if they do
- UKHSA strategic remit and priorities included in remit letter from Lord Bethell to Jenny Harries:
  - Prevent – threats to health and build nation's readiness/defence/health security
  - Detect – proactively and monitor threats to health
  - Analyse – assess and continuous monitor threats to health to understand how best to mitigate risks
  - Respond – rapidly to ensure able to effectively to action as required - globally/nationally/regionally/locally
  - Lead – key that we are able to lead both globally and nationally
- Ultimately, from a health perspective, the goal is to save lives and protect the nation from public health threats and to reduce inequalities.

**International work themes/areas**

- There is a wide range of international capacity building/knowledge sharing programmes and projects:
  - CBRN and Incident management (Inc. Waste)
  - International Health Regulations (IHR) strengthening/cross border issues
  - Bilateral/multilateral training and knowledge sharing
  - Protection of health
- WHO activities (WHO Collaborating Centre for the Public Health Management of Chemical Exposures):
  - Capacity building support and guidance for countries
  - Chemical Risk Assessment Network
  - Experts for JEE IHR



- Incident response
- Poison Centres and support

#### **European Cooperative Initiatives**

- Cooperative work programmes contributing to improvements and addressing priority issues at the European level.
- JA Terror – addresses gaps in health preparedness and to strengthen cross-sectorial working with security, civil protection and health sectors response to biological/chemical terror attacks.

#### **International CBRN projects**

- Delivery of international projects to strengthen CBRN management (Inc. Waste) safely and security - practical elements of field work:
  - Prevention of chemical incidents
  - Enhanced preparedness and response to chemical incidents
  - Enhanced recovery capacity after a chemical incident
  - SE Asia and SE and East European Countries
- Capacity building for medical preparedness and response to CBRN incidents
  - Middle east regions
- Including delivery with international partners.

#### **IHR Strengthening Project**

- A UK-Aid funded technical assistance project contributing to international efforts to improve global health security through increased compliance with the WHO International Health Regulations (2005)
- The programme shares knowledge on preventing/detecting and responding to public health emergencies through triple mandate:
  - Strengthening leadership
  - Building technical capabilities
  - Developing sustainable public health systems

#### **Global Health Security Initiative (GHSI)**

- Est. 2002 as a 'trusted network' between Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, UK, US – together with the EC and WHO
- Operates across 5 pillars of emergency management cycle – prevention, emergency planning, preparedness, response, and recovery
- Provides advice/support across CBRN spectrum
- Technical working groups report through Coordination and Liaison Committee (CLC) to Senior Officials and Ministers

#### **Chemical Events Working Group**

- Publishes material on risk prioritization tools, casualty decontamination and public health risks caused by opioids
- Guidance developed on chemical aspects of IHR requirements - public health aspects of chemical incidents



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- Host symposia on decontamination, risk and crisis communication, post incidence recovery - most recent symposium earlier this year.
- N.B. Event available via link if requested.
- Construction/execution of exercises - emphasise importance of what happens following an event

#### **Key international Organisations UKHSA has RN engagement with (not an exhaustive list)**

- UN – International Atomic Energy Agency
- WHO – Collaborating Centres on Public Health Management of Chemical Exposures/ Radiation Protection
- GHSI – GHS Action Group/Radio-nuclear Threats Working Group
- Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism - Response and Mitigation Working Group

#### **Current Work Activities**

- UKHSA WHO CC for Radiation Protection – including a wide range of activities in support of the radiation emergency preparedness and assistance network
- GICNT – [www.gicnt.org](http://www.gicnt.org)
- GHSAG RNTWG – [www.ghsi.ca](http://www.ghsi.ca)

#### **Behavioural Science International CBRNe collaborations**

- Horizon 202 funded project – PROACTIVE – Preparedness against CBRNe threats through common approaches between security practitioners and the vulnerable civil society
- x-European collaboration n focused on increasing practitioner effectiveness
- Contributing to development of action sheets on Mental Health and Psychosocial support in relation to radiation incidents with the Nuclear Energy Agency
- Support to UKHSA Ukraine incident – focus on evidence informed mental health support/communications
- x-Atlantic/UKOT collaboration
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#### **United Kingdom – National Security Secretariat**

##### **UK Biological Security Strategy Refresh 2022 – National Security Secretariat**

- 2018 Biological Security Strategy - set out refined approach and new actions to respond to threats.
- Aims:
  - Understand biological risks faced today/in the future
  - Prevent biological risks from emerging/from threatened UK and UK interests
  - Detect, characterise and report biological risks as early and reliably as possible
  - Respond effectively – by having right capabilities in place
- The 2018 framework remains robust. However, the risk landscape/vulnerabilities have changed.



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- Focus of the refresh will be to consider evolving priorities since COVID-19/strengthening leadership and coordination with international partners.
- Shifts in biological security risk picture since 2018 include climate and land use changes (increase in zoonotic outbreaks) trade and migration shifts, developments in science and biotechnology.

#### **Approach to 2022 Refresh**

- A three-phase approach – coordinated by the UK Cabinet Office reporting through the National Security Advisor to the Minister for the Cabinet Office/Paymaster General
  - Phase 1 – Planning: Nov 2021 – Jan 2022
  - Phase 2 – Analysis: Jan 2022 – May 2022
  - Phase 3 – Strategy Development: April 2022 – Sept 2022