

[Guidance: HAIRS Report 2017](#)

The Human Animal Infections and Risk Surveillance (HAIRS) group continued to meet monthly during 2017 in order to discuss emerging issues affecting human and animal health in the UK and internationally.

During 2017, vector-borne diseases continue to be discussed and assessed by the group. There was another identification of *Aedes albopictus* mosquito by PHE's active mosquito surveillance. This again demonstrates the risk of invasive mosquitoes becoming established in England, and the importance of an active mosquito surveillance programme for the early detection and management to prevent this from happening.

In addition, the further spread of *Culex modestus* in the Thames Estuary and along the Essex coast resulted in enhanced human and animal surveillance for West Nile Virus infections in those areas.

The public health threat from *Mycobacterium bovis* in animals continues to be discussed by the group, as new gaps in guidance and policy emerge.

[News story: DECA WINS £4.8 M SUPPORT WORK CONTRACT](#)



Special Projects Communications and Force Protection Delivery Team meet with DECA Chief Executive Geraint Spearing, Business Development Director, Ian Cole and members of the Managed Services Team

DECA will provide managed services and undertake the maintenance, repairs and operation of SPCFP's Electronic Countermeasure (ECM) equipment until 2023, securing a range of specialist technical skills in the region, and saving the taxpayer £3.2M in the overall cost of support.

This is the first task placed under the new DECA Tasking Agreement (DTA) of this magnitude, enabling DECA to manage the extensive supply chain on behalf of DE&S which in turn will provide greater confidence to their military

customers in the provision of this vital equipment.

Geraint Spearing, CE of DECA stated,

We are delighted that we are able to deliver critical support to our military colleagues on this life saving equipment, whilst demonstrating our value to Defence. The solution we have agreed is testament to the excellent joint working between SPCFP DT and DECA teams.

Published 28 September 2018

[Press release: FCO announce new Chair of Wilton Park](#)



The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is pleased to announce the appointment of Ms Gisela Stuart as the new Chair of Wilton Park. The appointment will be effective from 1 October 2018. Ms Stuart replaces the outgoing Chair Iain Ferguson. Ms Stuart served as Member of Parliament for Birmingham Edgbaston from 1997 until 2017. Amongst the public positions she holds are Chair of Change Britain, Director Henry Jackson Society and Member of the Global Strategy Forum Advisory Board.

Wilton Park is a not-for-profit executive agency of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Based in Wiston House, West Sussex, Wilton Park organises over 65 events a year on issues of international security, prosperity and justice. Wilton Park encourages and facilitates high level collaboration that shapes the agenda and pushes forward international policy, with the secluded residential setting enabling frank and open dialogue.

The Chair of Wilton Park serves for a term of five years, with the possibility of re-appointment for a second term.

[News story: People with severe mental illness experience worse physical health](#)

A new Public Health England (PHE) [report](#) shows people with severe mental illness (SMI) suffer significantly worse physical health compared to the general population, with the greatest inequalities seen among younger people.

The report looks at GP data for adults aged under 75. It was prompted by the inequalities that are known to exist in people with severe mental illness who die on average 15 to 20 years earlier than the general population. It is part of wider work to improve the physical health of people with mental illness, by underpinning action plans with better data, increasing early detection and expanding access to physical and follow-up care.

Severe mental illness refers to people who have received a diagnosis of bipolar affective disorder or schizophrenia, or who have experienced an episode of psychosis.

The report found patients with SMI have a higher prevalence of:

- obesity (1.8 times more prevalent than the general population)
- diabetes (1.9 times)
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (2.1 times)
- stroke (1.6 times)
- heart failure (1.5 times)
- Coronary Heart Disease (1.2 times)
- asthma (1.2 times)

Patients with SMI are also around twice as likely to have multiple physical health conditions as the general population.

Younger people (aged 15 to 34 years) with SMI experience the greatest level of health inequalities. They are 5 times more likely to have 3 or more physical health conditions than the general population.

Younger people with SMI suffer further from a higher prevalence of:

- obesity (3 times more prevalent than the general population)
- diabetes (3.7 times)
- hypertension (3.2 times)

Professor Julia Verne, Head of Clinical Epidemiology at Public Health

England, said:

It's unacceptable that people with severe mental illness live with more ill health and die up to 20 years younger than the rest of the population.

We need to look beyond mental illness to a 'whole person' approach to health care, helping to improve peoples' lives. It is vital that people experiencing severe mental illness are supported to improve their physical health, including better access to support and services such as screening programmes, health checks and stop smoking services.

Professor Tim Kendall, national clinical director for mental health at NHS England said:

Improving the life expectancy of people with serious mental health issues needs coordinated action, and this report adds to our knowledge, reinforcing the need for a continued focus on closing the physical health outcomes gap.

The NHS is already increasing early detection and expanding access to evidence-based physical care assessment and follow-up care, with more than 280,000 people set to get help by 2020 to 2021, while the NHS long-term plan will set out further priorities for the years ahead.

Mark Winstanley, CEO of mental health charity Rethink, said:

It is hugely concerning that the average life expectancy of someone living with serious mental illness is the same as the life expectancy of the average adult in the 1950's.

The physical health needs of people experiencing serious mental illness must be taken into consideration alongside their mental health needs. We hope that this timely report from Public Health England alongside the work of the Equally Well collaboration will bring around much-needed change.

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guideline on psychosis and schizophrenia in adults recommends GPs monitor the physical health of patients with Severe Mental Illness. It recommends that patients with Severe Mental Illness have at least one annual physical health review that includes among others, checks on weight or BMI, metabolic status, pulse and blood pressure monitoring, as well as appropriate interventions and support with recovery.

[News story: New competition: stopping it in its tracks](#)



This new Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) competition is seeking novel approaches to stopping or impeding tanks and other heavy armoured vehicles on the battlefield while minimising collateral damage.

DASA welcomes proposals relating to physical barriers or effects (such as traps and rapid ways to build them) as well as invisible barriers or effects (including electromagnetic and other non-explosive technologies).

Systems for defence utility and with potential security applications, including those for urban deployment, are also welcome.

Up to £1 million of funding is available in Phase 1 of this competition to fund proof-of-concept solutions. Additional funding is anticipated to be available for future phases to move towards a deployable solution.

Full details are available in the [competition document](#).

The competition will close at midday on 8 November 2018.

If you have any queries on this competition, please do contact us at accelerator@dstl.gov.uk.

Published 28 September 2018