

[News story: Home Secretary visits the site of major incident in Amesbury](#)

The visit came after tests showed the couple were exposed to the same Novichok nerve agent used in the attack on Yulia and Sergei Skripal in Salisbury in March.

The Home Secretary was met by Chief Constable of Wiltshire Police Kier Pritchard at the Guildhall in Salisbury, where he was given an operational update on the ongoing investigation. Afterwards, he met with first responders from Wiltshire Police and the Fire and Rescue and ambulance services to thank them for their dedication and professionalism.

John Glen, MP for Salisbury, then took the Home Secretary to visit local businesses in Guildhall Square, and to watch a performance by the Salisbury Area Young Musicians.

Then the Home Secretary went to Amesbury where he visited Muggleton Road, the site where the two individuals were taken ill.

Speaking at the scene, he said:

It was a privilege to meet some of the first responders and I want to thank them for their professionalism and dedication. We now need to allow the police to continue their investigation.

I am mindful of the individuals still in hospital in critical care and thinking of them, and their family and friends. It is important to reiterate though that the risk to the general public remains low.

What I have experienced in Amesbury and Salisbury is an overwhelming feeling of the community coming together. They have impressed the whole country with their response and have shown that Salisbury is open for business.

[Speech: Reviewing the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy](#)

Mr President, I'd like to begin by aligning the United Kingdom with the statement to be delivered by the European Union. And I'd like to thank the Ambassadors of Finland and Jordan and their experts for their tireless

efforts over the past month. The United Kingdom is pleased that we, the Member States of the UN General Assembly, have achieved international consensus while reviewing the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. It is important that as the global terrorism threat evolves the strategy reflects the progress that we Member States have made and continues to build on it. The journey to reaching consensus has been fraught with contentious debate. It has not been easy but it is important that in this forum, we all have an opportunity to share our views and perspectives but we come together in the end to face a common and global threat.

The UK is particularly pleased to see the reaffirmation of the importance of preventing violent extremism and of addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. Prevention is a core component of our counter-terrorism approach and we see an important role for the United Nations in furthering national and international efforts in this regard. For the United Kingdom, preventing violent extremism is fundamentally about safeguarding people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism by reducing their intent to act. The UK champions a whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach to prevention which is reflected in the UK's newly refreshed CT strategy CONTEST.

We recognise that national and local buy-in for programming and measures are critical ingredients for effectiveness and sustainability. Preventing violent extremism must be owned by a state national or local authorities. It cannot be imposed from the outside. That would be wrong. It would be ineffective. So let us end our disagreement over labels and get on with action.

Mr President, as the global threat from terrorism evolves and spans across political borders, the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters and those returning or relocating from conflict zones is of serious concern to many of us and we were pleased to see that international commitments to address this, including through tools such as API and PNR are reflected in the Resolution. We recognise that many states have called for technical assistance in meeting these obligations and we support the efforts of the United Nations system and partners to provide the requested technical assistance. But we would also stress that Member States have the responsibility to meet all obligations under Security Council Resolutions including 2396 and 2309.

We welcome the strengthened cooperation between the Office for Counter-Terrorism and the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate as embodied by Under Secretary-General Voronkov and Assistant Secretary-General Coninx and we welcome their joint report which we shared with all Member States. The unique assessments and analyses provided by CTED provide an important basis for the capacity building support provided by the Global Compact entities.

These recommendations reflect the prioritisation and approval of the Member State and the support of the Council through the Counter-Terrorism Committee. The UK is therefore keen that the General Assembly bodies work closely with those of the Security Council to ensure that the UN counter-terrorism architecture remains fit for purpose and positioned to respond in a rapidly evolving threat landscape.

Mr President, conversations between Member States will, and rightfully should, continue in the month to come to build on what we have achieved during the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review and to discuss frankly and openly those topics on which we may disagree. The UK wants to move forwards. As we look ahead to the high level conference this week, we hope it will provide an opportunity for constructive exchange and insight. The UK hopes that through the full contribution and involvement of both government and civil society organisations, we, the international community, can build on the consensus achieved on the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review in order to make progress as a unified voice in our fight against global terrorism. Because that fight is too important for us to be divided. That is the goal of the terrorists. So let us stand together.

Thank you, Mr President.

[News story: Game changing progress in Sellafield pond](#)

For the first time ever, empty nuclear fuel skips have been removed from the floor of the First Generation Magnox Storage Pond – one of the most hazardous facilities in Europe.

The breakthrough came after Sellafield Ltd worked with Appleby-based engineering firm Barrnon to make containers to safely store the skips elsewhere on the site.

A Sellafield Ltd team worked with Barrnon to add extra shielding and wooden braces to 50 shipping containers, enabling an initial 100 skips to be removed from the pond.

The approach applies learning from skip operations at other nuclear sites in the UK.

More than 1,200 Magnox skips rest on the floor of the pond, which was originally used to store nuclear fuel for atomic weapons.

Clearing them out makes it much easier to remove other hazards like sludge, a by-product formed from decaying nuclear fuel, algae, and other debris.

Dorothy Gradden, head of legacy ponds at Sellafield, said:

This is a game changer for us and the most significant step yet in getting clutter out of the pond.

It gives us the elbow room we need to crack on with the waste retrievals and is the latest example of how simple solutions are

delivering hazard and risk reduction on the site.

Next year the team plans to use robotic lasers to cut up and flat pack the skips in order to remove and store them even more efficiently.

Now 66 years old, the open-air fuel pond is one of the 4 high hazard buildings at Sellafield prioritised for clean-up by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA).

Duncan Thompson, Sellafield programme director for the NDA said:

It's great to see lessons learned elsewhere in the NDA estate being applied to the mission at Sellafield.

This is another example of the considerable progress being made in removing the hazard from the pond.

[News story: The Veterans' Gateway records over 10,000 enquiries as it celebrates its first year in service](#)

Designed to offer a one stop shop through which veterans can access advice on a vast range of areas, from housing to health concerns, the Veterans' Gateway has seen over 37,000 click throughs to external sites, with the majority of users requesting advice on finance.

With requests coming from as far afield as Thailand, South Africa and St Maarten in the Caribbean, the service caters to veterans of all ages and backgrounds. 81% of users are under 65 years old, and 56% of web visitors access the site via mobile phones.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

We are committed to delivering for our veterans, and the Veterans' Gateway is making sure those who served our country are getting the support they and their families need.

This £2m project has helped 10,000 ex-service men and women in its first year, making the transition between service and civilian life as smooth as possible.

Every day our troops and veterans inspire our nation and it is

right we deliver for them in return for the sacrifices they have made.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Tobias Ellwood today visited the Veterans' Gateway service centre near Cardiff in South Wales. He met with veterans who now work as call handlers, using their experiences in the Armed Forces to benefit others, and giving back to the service community.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Tobias Ellwood said:

The vast majority of veterans go on to live healthy and fulfilling lives, and most find employment within six months of leaving the military. But we need to offer support to those who find the transition more challenging.

I'm proud to see the great work that goes on behind the scenes of the Veterans' Gateway, and I've been inspired by the community spirit of all who dedicate their time and knowledge to supporting those in need.

The 24-hour service is delivered by a Royal British Legion-led consortium with Poppyscotland, Combat Stress, Connect Assist, the Ministry of Defence and SSAFA, the Armed Forces Charity.

Charles Byrne, Director General of The Royal British Legion, on behalf of the Veterans' Gateway consortium, said:

The number of people contacting the Veterans' Gateway continues to grow and we are reaching new groups of people including young veterans who need our support in finding the right information, advice and help.

We have also seen increasing numbers of users being able to self-refer and gain better access to the services available to them. The Veterans' Gateway can become a key resource for veterans and their families seeking support. With over 30 referral partners, it is truly a team of teams.

[Press release: M4 smart motorway plans to go on show this weekend](#)

32 miles of the M4 will have an extra lane created in both directions, with

upgraded signs, signals and technology to inform drivers about conditions ahead.

Plans about the upgrade are going on show this weekend, Saturday 7 July, with the first of six public events ahead of main construction starting later this year.

Drivers, business owners and local residents are invited to find out more about the plans, which will add an extra lane in each direction to the M4 between junction 3, near Hayes, and junction 12 at Theale, to upgrade it to an all-lane-running smart motorway. New technology will help to manage traffic to reduce delays and give drivers up to date information about conditions on the road ahead.

Work is due to start this autumn on the stretch between junctions 8/9 and 10, between Maidenhead and Wokingham. Six public information events are being held in the area, starting in Maidenhead this weekend, and visiting Wokingham, Theale and Reading over the next two weeks.

The M4 smart motorway scheme has already been through a comprehensive consultation as part of the complex planning process, and people interested in finding out more about the plans are encouraged to attend an event and put any questions directly to the project team. Further events will take place early next year between junctions 8/9 and junction 3 (Hayes).

Highways England delivery director Mike Grant said:

Upgrading the M4 to a smart motorway between junctions 3 and 12 is a massive job and will provide huge benefits not only to the 130,000 drivers using it each day by tackling congestion and improving journey times, but also for business travellers and holiday makers using the corridor to get to and from the airports in the south, as well as residents and businesses based in the area.

Smart motorways add vital capacity to our motorway network and are central to our ambitious plans for modernising the motorway network, adding 120 miles of new lanes to motorways in the South East by 2020. Drivers will also see better information about conditions through new smart motorway technology which helps us to manage incidents, smooth traffic flow, make journeys more reliable and improve journey times, while maintaining high levels of safety.

The public exhibitions starting this weekend are an ideal place for anyone interested in the upgrade of the M4 to a smart motorway to meet the project team and find out more.

The M4 is the main strategic route between London, the west of England and Wales.

Under the plans, the hard shoulder will be permanently converted into a live

running lane between junctions 3 and 12 in both directions. New signs and signals will be used to vary the speed limit to reduce congestion at busy times, and to control traffic if there is an obstruction on the road ahead.

Work is scheduled to start in September this year, and will be carried out in phases, with the smart motorway being fully operational in spring 2022.

[Public information events](#) are starting this weekend (Saturday 7 July, Holyport War Memorial Hall, near Maidenhead) with a further five events running until Thursday 19 July in Reading. People are encouraged to attend to find out more about the plans and put any questions directly to the project team. Further events will be held over the next few months along the route of the scheme.

Anyone interested in the scheme can visit the [project page](#) on the Highways England website.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.