

Press release: UK Public Health Rapid Support Team (UK-PHRST) deploys to Sierra Leone

Following natural disasters, outbreaks of water borne diseases such as cholera can occur, particularly where there is a lack of access to clean water and sanitation. Given the scale of the disaster in Freetown, the local capacity to detect and control a disease outbreak is limited and the Government of Sierra Leone has requested international support.

The UK-PHRST team deploying includes experts in tracking the progress of an outbreak (epidemiologists) and diagnosing its cause (microbiologists), as well as a logistician.

The team will be working alongside Sierra Leone health system professionals and other experts in disaster relief to support the Sierra Leone government's response.

UK-PHRST is jointly run by Public Health England and the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and is funded by the UK government. It continually monitors infectious diseases and other hazards globally, identifying situations where the deployment of specialist expertise could prevent these threats from turning into a global outbreak.

Professor Daniel Bausch, Director of the UK-PHRST said:

Sierra Leone is working to stop a tragedy becoming a major public health issue. Our team of specialists will support its health professionals with enhanced surveillance for water-borne diseases, such as cholera, which often appear in the wake of extreme rainfall and flooding. The people of Sierra Leone have shown extraordinary resilience since the Ebola outbreak and we are working alongside them as we tackle this latest disaster together.

Health Minister Philip Dunne said:

This disaster is a tragedy for Sierra Leone and I am pleased our new rapid support team is helping to protect lives.

In this first bilateral deployment our specialists will save lives on the ground working with local professionals to prevent disease outbreaks. By assisting to halt the spread of disease at the source, not only do we protect those in Sierra Leone but also citizens across the world, including the UK.

International Development Secretary, Priti Patel said:

The UK stands by Sierra Leone in its time of need, stepping up with new emergency support to get food, water and medicine to people who have lost everything.

British expertise is also leading the fight against global health threats ensuring that disease doesn't take hold in the aftermath of disasters.

The Rapid Support Team is just one way we are helping ensure that countries and the international system are better prepared to effectively tackle the preventable and treatable diseases that still plague countless people today. This will build a safer and healthier world which benefits us all.

As the UK-PHRST's deployment progresses, it will continue to provide support and share expertise with our partners in Sierra Leone to strengthen the health system beyond the immediate response.

The UK government has remained in Sierra Leone throughout the post-Ebola period, with Public Health England helping to strengthen health systems and further developing the ability to respond to such disasters and prevent outbreaks.

The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine is a world authority in public and global health research, and has been conducting Ebola vaccine trials in Sierra Leone since the outbreak of the virus in West Africa.

UK-PHRST

UK-PHRST consists of public health experts, scientists, academics and clinicians ready to respond to urgent requests from countries around the world within 48 hours to support them in preventing local disease outbreaks from becoming global epidemics.

Informed by surveillance data, the UK-PHRST deploys on behalf of UK Government in response to requests from low- and middle-income countries, as well as with the WHO (World Health Organization) and the Global Outbreak and Response Network (GOARN).

The UK-PHRST has previously deployed members to Ethiopia (outbreak of Acute Watery Diarrhoea) and Nigeria (Meningitis outbreak). These deployments were under the World Health Organization's Global Outbreak and Response Network (WHO GOARN).

The core team consists of:

- epidemiologists (experts in tracking the progress of an outbreak)
- clinical researcher (developing the best clinical response measures)
- social scientist (community responses to outbreaks)

- microbiologist (diagnosing the cause of an outbreak)
- data manager, analyst, systems expert
- infection prevention and control expert (advising on outbreak control measures)
- logistician

The consortium of research institutions includes the University of Oxford and King's College London as academic partners.

Public Health England

[Public Health England](#) exists to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. It does this through world-class science, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships and the delivery of specialist public health services. PHE is an operationally autonomous executive agency of the Department of Health.

London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

[The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine](#) is a world-leading centre for research and postgraduate education in public and global health, with more than 4,000 students and 1,000 staff working in over 100 countries. The School is one of the highest-rated research institutions in the UK, is among the world's leading schools in public and global health, and was named University of the Year in the Times Higher Education Awards 2016. Our mission is to improve health and health equity in the UK and worldwide; working in partnership to achieve excellence in public and global health research, education and translation of knowledge into policy and practice.

[Press release: Two in three bosses at Britain's biggest businesses not trained to deal with a cyber attack](#)

- New reports highlight scale of the cyber security and data protection challenge
- One in ten FTSE 350 companies operate without a response plan for a cyber incident
- Only six per cent of businesses completely prepared for new data protection rules
- Separate new research finds charities are as susceptible to attacks as businesses Undertaken in the wake of recent high profile cyber attacks, the survey of the UK's biggest 350 companies found more than two thirds of boards had not received training to deal with a cyber incident (68 per cent) despite more than half saying cyber threats were a top risk to their business (54 per cent).

One in ten FTSE 350 companies said they operate without a response plan for a cyber incident (ten per cent) and less than a third of boards receive comprehensive cyber risk information (31 per cent).

Minister for Digital Matt Hancock said:

We have world leading businesses and a thriving charity sector but recent cyber attacks have shown the devastating effects of not getting our approach to cyber security right.

These new reports show we have a long way to go until all our organisations are adopting best practice and I urge all senior executives to work with the National Cyber Security Centre and take up the Government's advice and training.

Charities must do better to protect the sensitive data they hold and I encourage them to access a tailored programme of support we are developing alongside the Charity Commission and the National Cyber Security Centre.

There has been progress in some areas when compared with last year's health check, with more than half of company boards now setting out their approach to cyber risks (53 per cent up from 33 per cent) and more than half of businesses having a clear understanding of the impact of a cyber attack (57 per cent up from 49 per cent).

The Government is fully committed to defending against cyber threats and a five-year National Cyber Security Strategy (NCSS) was announced in November 2016, supported by £1.9 billion of transformational investment. This includes opening the National Cyber Security Centre and offering free online advice as well as training schemes to help businesses protect themselves.

The 10 Steps to Cyber Security guide sets out a comprehensive framework to help company boards manage cyber risks, from getting the basics right through to protecting their most critical assets, and the Cyber Essentials scheme sets out the technical basics all companies should have in place.

Earlier this week, Government also announced proposals on how to help the nation's essential industries be more resilient to cyber threats through the NIS Directive.

Alex Dewdney, NCSC Director for Engagement, said:

The NCSC is committed to making the UK the safest place in the world to live and do business online.

We know that we can't do this alone – everyone has a part to play. That's why we're committed to providing organisations with expert advice through our website and direct engagement.

We also urge organisations to follow the guidance in the Government's Cyber Essentials Scheme.

Separate new research looking at the cyber security of charities has also been published today.

It found charities are just as susceptible to cyber attacks as businesses, with many staff not well informed about the topic and awareness and knowledge varying considerably across different charities. Other findings show those in charge of cyber security, especially in smaller charities, are often not proactively seeking information and relying on outsourced IT providers to deal with threats.

Where charities recognised the importance of cyber security, this was often due to holding personal data on donors or service users, or having trustees and staff with private sector experience of the issue. Charities also recognised those responsible for cyber security need new skills and general awareness among staff needs to raise.

Helen Stephenson CBE, Chief Executive at the Charity Commission for England and Wales, said:

Charities have lots of competing priorities but the potential damage of a cyber-attack is too serious to ignore. It can result in the loss of funds or sensitive data, affect a charity's ability to help those in need, and damage its precious reputation. Charities need to do more to educate their staff about this threat and ensure they dedicate enough time and resources to improving cyber security.

We want to make sure charities are equipped to do this, and we encourage them to use the advice on our Charities Against Fraud website. We also continue to work closely with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to help charities protect themselves online.

The FTSE 350 Cyber Governance Health Check is the Government's annual report providing insight into how the UK's biggest 350 companies deal with cyber security.

The Government will soon be introducing its new Data Protection Bill to Parliament. With this coming into effect next May, implementing the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the report for the first time included questions about data protection.

The new data protection law will strengthen the rights of individuals and provide them with more control over how their personal data is being used.

The report found:

- Awareness of GDPR was good, with almost all firms (97 per cent) aware of the new regulation
- Almost three quarters (71 per cent) of firms said they were somewhat prepared to meet the GDPR requirements, with only 6 per cent being fully prepared
- Just 13 per cent said GDPR was regularly considered by their board
- 45 per cent of Boards say they are most concerned with meeting GDPR requirements relating to an individual's right to personal data deletion

The Information Commissioner's Office has produced guidance for organisations on implementing the regulation, including a checklist for businesses on the actions they need to take; and a series of interactive workshops and webinars.

The ICO will also produce guidance for organisations about the responsibilities under the GDPR and individuals on their rights under the GDPR. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport will continue to work closely with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) during this transitional period.

Note to editors:

Media enquiries – please contact the DCMS News and Communications team on 020 7211 2210 or out of hours on 07699 751153.

The FTSE 350 Cyber Governance Health Check is carried out in collaboration with the audit community, including Deloitte, EY, KPMG and PWC:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cyber-governance-health-check-2017>

The Cyber Security Among Charities report covers the findings from qualitative research undertaken with UK registered charities:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cyber-security-in-charities>

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) has commissioned the [UK Cyber Security Sectoral Analysis Survey](#) to provide statistics about the size, scale and future opportunities for the UK's Cyber Security industry.

The reports are part of the Government's £1.9 billion investment to significantly transform the UK's cyber security. The National Cyber Security Strategy sets out how the UK Government will deliver a UK that is secure and resilient to cyber threats; prosperous and confident in the digital world. The National Cyber Security Programme managed by the Cabinet Office coordinates the work undertaken to implement the UK's National Cyber Security Strategy. Further information is available at www.gov.uk/cybersecurity

Annex

Paul Taylor, UK head of Cyber Security at KPMG, said:

“Cyber-attacks continue to pose a growing threat to business. While cyber security has cemented itself onto the board's agenda, they often lack the

training to deal with incidents. This is hugely important as knowing how to deal confidently with an incident in the heat of the moment can save time and money. The aftermath of a cyber-attack, without the appropriate training in managing the issue, can result in reputational damage, litigation and blunt competitive edge.”

Zubin Randeria, cyber security leader at PwC, said:

“The report’s findings echo those of the PwC CEO Survey, which found that three-quarters of UK CEOs consider cyber risks to be a significant threat to their business and 97% are addressing cyber incidents. It’s positive that cyber security is now front of mind for boards and business leaders, but concerning that many still are not equipping themselves with the right knowledge to respond when the worst does happen. Cyber security attacks are now an everyday reality and it’s the responsibility of business leaders to make sure they’re prepared.

“The most successful leaders will be those who take an active involvement in cyber security governance and set the tone from the top – this is not an issue just to delegate to more technical teams. Investors, customers, the media and the general public all routinely scrutinise companies’ responses to cyber security incidents, as we’ve seen from the recent ransomware attacks. Companies that fail to prepare to respond to a breach also leave themselves exposed to a damaging commercial and reputational backlash.”

Phill Everson, head of cyber risk services at Deloitte, said:

“This year’s report marks a clear improvement in board level awareness of cyber risks and their impacts, driven in large part by high profile, cross-sector incidents. There is still some way to go, though, as the findings show that many boards still do not have a defined role to lead a company-wide response. This corroborates with recent Deloitte analysis of FTSE 100 annual reports, which found that just 5% disclose having a board member with specialist technology or cyber experience.

“As well as greater awareness of the financial and reputational impact of a cyber breach, preparedness is also key to a successful response. From May next year, cyber breaches will have to be reported within 72 hours under General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). This is significantly sooner than the period that many companies have historically alerted customers, which often runs into many months. As hackers become increasingly more sophisticated, companies will have to ensure that staff training and technology stays ahead of the evolving cyber threat to respond in a timely and effective manner.”

Stuart Whitehead, UKI Head of Cybersecurity, Privacy & Resilience at EY said:

“Cyber is an ever increasing threat to the UK economy and although we are glad to see that this latest survey of the UK’s largest organisations illustrates that cyber is increasingly a board level priority, there is still some way to go to best prepare organisations for a potential breach. With the current backdrop, the cyber agenda is evolving into a conversation about

organisations' resilience to cyber-attacks. This is not only how organisations protect themselves but how they respond to an incident, recover business processes and limit the impacts to revenue and reputation. The increase in Board level attention is encouraging, but greater emphasis will be required over the coming years to truly improve the security posture of organisations across the UK."

[News story: Royal Navy leads international efforts to seize drugs worth £400M](#)

The UK and France commanded a multinational naval task force which has scored eight drugs busts over the period, seizing 1.75 tonnes of narcotics worth nearly £400m, including 265kg of heroin and 455kg of hashish worth £65m by the Royal Navy Type 23 frigate, HMS Monmouth.

Since April, British, French, US and Australian warships in Combined Task Force 150 (CTF150) took part in Operation Southern Surge to counter narcotics trafficking, which funds terrorism in the region, scoring eight drugs busts.

The naval task force polices more than three million square miles of sea in order to track down vessels smuggling drugs and weapons, as well as providing reassurance to ships using the international waters. The multinational coalition is also focused on deterring and denying maritime terrorist activity in the region, which includes some of the world's most vital trade routes such as the Suez Canal and Bab Al Mandeb Strait. The headquarters of CTF150 has been made up of 24 British and French sailors and commanded by French Rear Admiral Olivier Lebas.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

The success of this join task force with our French allies is a demonstration of Britain's firm commitment to global maritime security and our ability to work with European allies to tackle the threat from drug smuggling.

The money made from these nefarious criminal activities fund the terrorists who threaten us at home and abroad. As we leave the EU we will continue to work alongside our allies to tackle smuggling in the region and maintain the free flow of shipping.

Deputy Commander Combined Task Force 150, Royal Navy Captain Paul Pitcher,

said:

The deployment of a combined French-UK staff has successfully demonstrated French-UK naval integration in an operational maritime environment. The ships under our command have enjoyed considerable success in seizing illegal drugs at sea, as well as providing naval presence to reassure the shipping community in and around the strategic chokepoint of the Bab Al Mandeb Strait.

The Franco-British team has been directing operations since April after taking over from the Canadian Navy, and has just passed on command to the Pakistan Navy. Navies from the Combined Maritime Forces, a coalition of 31 nations, take it in turns to lead the task force either from a command ship or the headquarters in Bahrain.

The Combined Task Force joint command is the latest in a series of shared commitments undertaken by the UK and France, demonstrating the enduring closeness of the two nations' defence relationship.

Earlier this year, around 60 Royal Navy and Royal Marine personnel joined a French naval deployment to the Indian Ocean and Far East, while British and French forces routinely operate together as allies in the Global Coalition and NATO. This year, France is also contributing to the ongoing UK-led NATO enhanced Forward Presence deployment to Estonia.

News story: Tough new measures to protect savers from pension scams

The government has today (20 August 2017) confirmed new measures to protect private pension savers from the threat of unscrupulous pension scammers.

The measures will include:

- a ban on cold calling in relation to pensions, including emails and text messages
- a tightening of HMRC rules to stop scammers opening fraudulent pension schemes
- tougher actions to help prevent the transfer of money from occupational pension schemes into fraudulent ones

The cold calling ban will be enforced by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

The government is also tackling scammers by ensuring that only active companies, which produce regular, up-to-date accounts, can register pension

schemes. Limiting transfers of pension pots from one occupational scheme to another will mean trustees must check their receiving scheme is regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority, or has an active employment link with the individual, or is an authorised master trust.

The announcement comes as new figures released today show almost £5 million was obtained by pension scammers in the first five months of 2017. It is estimated that £43 million has also been unlawfully obtained by scammers since April 2014, with those targeted having lost an average of nearly £15,000, as scammers try to encourage savers to part with their money with false promises of low-risk, high-return investment opportunities.

Minister for Pensions and Financial Inclusion Guy Opperman said:

Today's figures highlight the extent to which people's savings are being targeted and stolen through elaborate hoaxes – leaving them with little opportunity to build up their savings again. That is why we are introducing tough new measures for those who scam.

If people have saved for a private pension, we want to protect them. This is the biggest lifesaving that individuals normally make over many years of hard work. By tackling these scammers, people should know that cold calling, apart from exceptional circumstances, is banned.

Economic Secretary to the Treasury Stephen Barclay said:

It's utterly unacceptable that people who have worked all their lives to build up a pension pot should be subject to scams which may leave them out of pocket.

Pensions are often the most valuable asset a person has upon reaching retirement – and that's why we are determined to crack down on scammers and protect our hardworking savers.

[Press release: ICC Arrest Warrant for Major Mahmoud al-Werfalli in Libya: Joint Statement on Libya by the Governments of France, the United](#)

Kingdom, and the United States of America

Joint Statement on the ICC Arrest Warrant for Major Mahmoud al-Werfalli in Libya

The governments of France, the United Kingdom, and the United States welcome the announcement on August 17 by the Libya National Army (LNA) that it will investigate reports of unlawful killings in Benghazi. We note that the LNA has recognized the arrest warrant by the International Criminal Court prosecutor for a member of the LNA, Major al-Werfalli and are encouraged by the LNA's decision to suspend Major al-Werfalli pending an investigation. We call on the LNA to ensure that the investigation is carried out fully and fairly; and those responsible for the unlawful killings are held to account.

We are monitoring ongoing acts of conflict in Libya closely. Those suspected of committing, ordering, or failing to prevent unlawful killings and torture on all sides must be fully investigated and held accountable, as appropriate. We will continue our efforts at the international level to pursue appropriate action against those who are complicit in violations of international human rights law or international humanitarian law, whatever their affiliation. We consider that it is in Libya's interest to be able to rely on unified security forces responsible for the country's security and acting within the framework of Libya's laws and respecting international law.

The governments of France, the United Kingdom, and the United States also reaffirm their support for the Government of National Accord. We underscore the importance of the United Nations' central role in facilitating Libyan-led political dialogue, welcome the appointment of the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ghassan Salamé, and look forward to supporting his efforts to facilitate a political solution in Libya.