

Tackling chemical weapons in Syria through both OPCW and UNSC

I would like to congratulate Tunisia on assuming the Presidency and also as other colleagues have done, to welcome new members of the Security Council from India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico and Norway.

I would like also to thank Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu for her briefing today. We would also like to reiterate our gratitude to the Director-General of the OPCW for attending and briefing the Security Council last month. As recognised by the Security Council in resolution 2118 and subsequent resolutions, ongoing coordination between the UN and the OPCW is vital if we are to collectively resolve this issue.

At this point, I'd also like to reiterate our confidence in the OPCW and its Technical Secretariat. I recall that only a year ago, this Council adopted a Presidential Statement which unanimously reaffirmed our strong support for the work of the OPCW. Just five weeks ago, the overwhelming majority of states, parties from across all regional groups voted in favour of the OPCW budget, which included renewed funding for the IIT and other Technical Secretariat teams working on Syria.

I thank the OPCW Director-General for his 87th monthly report. In December 2013, the Security Council unanimously decided that Syria should not use, develop, produce, otherwise acquire, stockpile or retain chemical weapons, and should comply with all aspects of the decision of the OPCW Executive Council of 27 September 2013, which required it to submit a declaration of its chemical weapons programme within 30 days. It is deeply regrettable that 7 years later, Syria's 30-day declaration can still not be considered accurate and complete.

As we have discussed previously, the unresolved issues in Syria's chemical weapons declaration are of a serious and substantive nature. They include the unaccounted-for whereabouts of thousands of munitions and hundreds of tonnes of chemical agents. As the Director-General reported last month and again this month, they include a facility which Syria previously declared as not having been used for chemical weapons production but which OPCW evidence collected since 2014 indicates was used for the production and/or weaponization of chemical warfare nerve agents.

The ongoing threat posed to international peace and security by these unresolved issues is not hypothetical. Since Syria allegedly destroyed all of its chemical weapons stockpile in 2014, it has been found by both the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism and the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team to have used chemical weapons on at least 6 occasions. These are not hypothetical issues for the thousands of Syrian civilians who have suffered the horrifying effects on the body of nerve agents and chlorine.

As we said last month, the fact that three of the unresolved issues have

recently been closed, shows that, contrary to the assertions of some that they are artificial, they are eminently capable of resolution if Syria chooses to engage genuinely and constructively.

Mr President, there is increasing international concern about Syria's ongoing failure to comply with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the consequent threat to international peace and security and the chemical weapons non-proliferation regime. This is reflected in the recent decision taken by the OPCW Executive Council, which set a further deadline for compliance by Syria and recommended that the Conference of States Parties take action if Syria did not comply. Following failure to meet that deadline, the Conference of States Parties will consider that action this Spring.

As I said earlier, it has always been recognised that elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme has to be tackled through concerted efforts of both the OPCW and Security Council.

As we enter the 8th year of our consideration of this matter and as new colleagues join us on the Council, we look forward to renewing a serious and constructive discussion about the action the Security Council should take to uphold its resolutions and tackle this serious threat to international peace and security.

[Prime Minister's statement on coronavirus \(COVID-19\): 5 January 2021](#)

Good afternoon,

I want to update everybody about vaccines

because across this entire country today there are people – everybody – making another huge sacrifice.

Teachers and pupils coping with online learning

Businesses who have borne the brunt of successive lockdowns and, of course, the amazing staff of our NHS and our care workers who are grappling with a new variant – this new variant – of coronavirus.

And I believe that when everybody looks at the position people understand overwhelmingly that we have no choice

when the Office of National Statistics is telling us that more than 2 per cent of the population is now infected

- that's over 1 million people in England –

and when today we have reported another 60,000 new cases

and when the number of patients in hospitals in England is now 40 per cent higher than at the first peak in April.

I think obviously – everybody, you all – want to be sure that we in government are now using every second of this lockdown to put that invisible shield around the elderly and the vulnerable in the form of vaccination

and so to begin to bring this crisis to an end.

And I can tell you that this afternoon

- with Pfizer and Oxford/AstraZeneca combined – as of this afternoon

we have now vaccinated over 1.1 million people in England and over 1.3 million across the UK.

And that includes more than 650,000 people over 80

- which is 23 per cent of all the over 80s in England –

And that means that nearly 1 in 4 of one of the most vulnerable groups will have in 2 to 3 weeks – all of them – a significant degree of immunity.

And when you consider that the average age of Covid fatalities is in the 80s

You can see the importance of what we have already achieved.

And that is why I believe that the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation was right to draw up a programme aimed at saving the most lives the fastest.

So by February 15th, as I said last night, the NHS is committed to offering a vaccination to everyone in the top four priority groups including older care home residents and staff, everyone over 70, all frontline NHS and care staff and all those who are clinically extremely vulnerable.

And to help us with meeting this target we already have 595 GP-led sites providing vaccines, with a further 180 coming on stream later this week.

We have 107 hospital sites – with a further 100 later this week

So that is almost a thousand sites – vaccination sites – across the country by the end of this week

And next week we will also have 7 vaccination centres opening in places such as sports stadia and exhibition centres.

We know that there will still be long weeks ahead in which we must persevere with these restrictions

but I want to give you – the British people – the maximum possible transparency about this vaccine roll out with more detail on Thursday and

daily updates from Monday so that you can see day by day

and job by job

how much progress we are making.

Thanks very much I am now going to hand over to Chris to do the slides.

[Maggie Carver CBE Appointed as Interim Chair of Ofcom](#)

News story

The Secretary of State has appointed Maggie Carver CBE as the Interim Chair of Ofcom from 1 January 2021 to 30 June 2020, whilst the appointment process for a permanent Chair is completed.



Maggie Carver is currently Deputy Chair of Ofcom, a post she has held since she joined the Ofcom Board in September 2018. She is also Chair of the Racecourse Association and a Director of the British Horseracing Authority. She has extensive experience as a non-executive director, having served on the boards of 18 companies, public, private and not-for-profit. These include chairing news and programme provider ITN, multiplex operator SDN, and the British Board of Film Classification, as well as being a director on the boards of Channel 5 Television, RDF Media plc, Satellite Information Services, armed forces broadcaster BFBS, and British Waterways. Maggie's executive career was in investment banking, television production, broadcasting and retail.

This appointment has been made in accordance with the [Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments](#). The process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. This role is remunerated at £120,000 per annum. The Government's Governance Code requires that any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years is

declared. This is defined as holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation or candidature for election. Maggie Carver has not declared any activity.

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[New leadership for construction of 40 new hospitals](#)

- Natalie Forrest brings a wealth of health, construction and project management experience, most recently as Chief Executive of Chase Farm Hospital
- Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear set to upgrade mental health and learning disability services and Salford Royal will start work on a new hospital that will include a major trauma centre

The government's commitment to build 40 new hospitals by 2030 has been boosted today by the appointment of Natalie Forrest to oversee the building programme.

Forrest has worked in the NHS for over 30 years and is a registered nurse. She most recently led the construction and operationalisation of NHS Nightingale London in response to the pandemic. Alongside this role, she was also Chase Farm Hospital's Chief Executive in North London, where she successfully led operational and clinical teams to design an innovative and groundbreaking new hospital, delivered to time, on budget and without interrupting services.

In total, 48 hospitals will be built by 2030, with £3.7 billion committed so far. In the North East, one of these schemes has just received final approval to upgrade mental health facilities in the region. Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust's new £72.6 million facilities – which will be finalised by 2023 – will improve the quality of mental health and learning disability services in the regions by combining innovative design with a holistic approach to patient care and safety.

Final approval has also been secured on Salford Royal's £67.4 million new hospital building, and construction work will begin soon. This will be home to a major trauma centre treating patients who have experienced life-changing or life-threatening injuries – for example, after a serious road traffic accident or fall.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

I'm delighted to appoint Natalie into this role. She not only

brings unrivalled experience in health management and nursing, but also the construction and project management knowledge that helped turn the Excel conference centre into a Nightingale Hospital in just 9 days, as well as overseeing the rebuild of Chase Farm Hospital at pace.

The New Hospital Programme – as part of our Health Infrastructure Plan – will transform the delivery of NHS healthcare infrastructure to build back better and will ensure our country has world-class healthcare facilities right across the country for decades to come.

Senior Responsible Officer of the New Hospital Programme Natalie Forrest said:

I am determined to build trust in our national capability in planning and delivering hospitals, not just with health and construction stakeholders but with the staff and patients who will benefit from them on a daily basis.

My goal will be to deliver these new hospitals cost-effectively and at speed, and to foster an ecosystem that owns, learns from and improves healthcare design.

With over 12 years spent in NHS senior leadership roles, Forrest has extensive experience working with key clinical, board-level and other NHS stakeholders.

Starting this month, she will oversee a delivery board across the Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England and Improvement, which will work closely with a network of NHS trusts.

Overall, the New Hospital Programme within the government's long-term [health infrastructure plan](#) will help develop new sustainability standards, planning capabilities and care and workforce models. It will also implement cutting-edge digital technologies across the NHS, and will support an integrated approach to building new healthcare infrastructure using modern methods of construction.

The full list of 48 hospitals is available in the press release, '[PM confirms £3.7 billion for 40 hospitals in biggest hospital building programme in a generation](#)'.

[Listr and the Career Framework](#)

News story

The Operational Delivery Profession's Loans, Secondment and Interchange Tool will provide products and services to support your ODP career.



The Loans, Secondment and Interchange tool and the Career Framework are two fully interactive products, made bespoke for the Operational Delivery Profession.

These tools are designed to support your progression and development, whatever that might look like to you and regardless of your background, grade or location. Listr will enable you to connect with other professionals to form informal mentoring, qualification buddying or coaching relationships. The Career Framework will support you in planning your career and flourishing as an ODP professional.

Peter Schofield, Permanent Secretary for the Department of Work and Profession and Cross-Government Head of Operational Delivery Profession, tells us how useful he thinks these products will be; "Listr is an online tool that facilitates personal development, it allows users to connect and engage with other people, whether they're in your own department or somewhere else across government. It's an online space where you can find buddying and mentoring opportunities that can help you to develop your skills and capability within your current role and to progress onto the next. Listr will really help ODP members on their personal development journeys and career paths, whilst also helping to connect and build the wider ODP community."

The bespoke website was officially launched during our ODP Engage event in October 2020, to find out more, please visit our ODP Engage website to watch the Listr and Career Framework session from day two of the event.

We would love to hear what you think about the tool and how you have used it in your progression journey. If you would like to share your story, please email the team odpcentralteam.talent@hmrc.gov.uk

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