

New partnership with The Alan Turing Institute and Royal Statistical Society to support Joint Biosecurity Centre COVID-19 response

- new partnership with The Alan Turing Institute and Royal Statistical Society (RSS) will bolster the Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC) data analysis capabilities
- world-class statistical, machine learning and mathematical modelling expertise will provide even more granular detail to the JBC's statistical modelling of how the virus is spreading across the country
- partnership will support the government's COVID-19 response, improving the evidence base towards faster, more targeted interventions

The Alan Turing Institute and Royal Statistical Society will partner with the Department of Health and Social Care's (DHSC) Joint Biosecurity Centre to provide further independent statistical modelling and machine learning expertise to support the government's response to COVID-19.

The partnership will bolster existing capabilities within the JBC, which has been a key arm in the UK's fight against COVID-19, working with Public Health England (PHE) colleagues to support the NHS Test and Trace programme in breaking chains of COVID-19 transmission.

The Alan Turing Institute and RSS will provide independent insight and analysis of NHS Test and Trace data by setting up a new statistical modelling and machine learning laboratory to grant the JBC deeper understanding of how the virus is spreading across the country and the epidemiological consequences. Statistical modelling helps data scientists to predict what the virus might do next, based on what is understood about it already.

This extra support for statistical modelling will be brought together with the data science and public health expertise of the JBC to support COVID-19 decision-making at local and national levels.

Head of the JBC, Director General Dr Clare Gardiner, said:

We've been working tirelessly, alongside PHE colleagues, to provide the government and local authorities with independent, real-time analysis about infection outbreaks to national and local decision-makers.

From the beginning, we've been keen to build close partnerships with the academic and scientific community to ensure our work is underpinned by the best thinking and innovation. Throughout, we've sought regular guidance from experts across the UK, including the Alan Turing Institute and Royal Statistical Society, for our continual work on mathematical and statistical modelling to inform the insights we give.

By formalising this partnership, we will better support NHS Test and Trace in breaking the chains of transmission of the virus, bolstering our readiness for this winter and beyond.

The JBC will work with the Alan Turing Institute and RSS to establish a virtual statistical modelling and machine learning laboratory. The work done in the lab will formalise the Turing's existing work with the JBC, adding capacity and further enhancing the depth and breadth of analysis done by the JBC, including:

- helping to shape the JBC's estimates of the current rate of spread in different areas and forecasting the future rate of spread. This means identifying more quickly where the virus is spreading and, in turn, lead to faster responses to control the spread
- increasing the depth of the JBC's analysis of which factors appear to have the largest effect on the number of cases. This will support better forecasting of how the virus will likely spread around hotspots and greater insights into how we can control it
- further examination of the effects of the different interventions. This will build on our understanding of the effect and impact of our responses so far and in the future

Health Minister Lord Bethell said:

The expertise of the Joint Biosecurity Centre is a vital part of our strategy to break the chains of transmission and suppress this virus.

This new partnership with the Alan Turing Institute and Royal Statistical Society is fantastic news. It will give local and national decision makers access to the very best scientific analysis. This information will also be at the fingertips of the wider public.

This virtual lab will openly publish research focused on areas of national priority, including statistical methodologies, both as research papers and blog posts, and in the form of open source computer code, in line with a commitment to open science and transparency.

The Alan Turing Institute is the UK's national institute for data science, providing evidence-based and independent analysis. The Royal Statistical Society is a professional body for statisticians and a charity which promotes

statistics, data and evidence for the public good. Statistical and mathematical models are a crucial component in understanding how the virus is spreading and providing insight into how we can break the chain of transmission.

Chris Holmes, The Alan Turing Institute's Programme Director of Health and Medical Science, and Professor of Biostatistics at Oxford University, said:

The Turing is delighted to be playing a pivotal role in supporting the JBC by working to build an alliance with the RSS and academic experts to provide new insights in the evolving fight against COVID-19. In doing so, we will strengthen knowledge across the wider public health ecosystem.

Through independent, open science, rigorous modelling and analysis we will provide further understanding of this issue to the public and wider scientific community.

Professor Sylvia Richardson, RSS President-Elect and co-chair of the RSS COVID-19 Task Force, said:

We are pleased to partner with the Alan Turing Institute to offer our statistical expertise to the Joint Biosecurity Centre in its efforts to provide the most up-to-date analysis of the pandemic. Statistical modelling has a key role to play in giving us an insight into the spread of the virus, so we as statisticians can assist decision-makers with the policy decisions that affect us all.

The Royal Statistical Society, along with the Alan Turing Institute, will be able to work transparently and independently in providing the research that is needed at both local and national level.

Joint Biosecurity Centre

The Joint Biosecurity Centre is part of DHSC, and was established in May 2020 to bring additional and complementary analytical capacity to build on that already in place at a local and regional level across the UK. It provides evidence-based, independent analysis to inform local and national decision-making in response to COVID-19 outbreaks. This includes:

- helping to direct action on testing, contact tracing and local outbreak management in England
- informing an assessment of the risks to UK public health from inbound international travel
- advising on the COVID-19 alert level

The JBC is an integral part of the NHS Test and Trace service within DHSC.

Working in partnership with PHE, it is an important element of an evolving and strengthening health protection ecosystem in the UK. In the immediate term, the JBC's objectives are to break the chains of COVID transmission to protect the public's health.

The Alan Turing Institute

The Alan Turing Institute, headquartered in the British Library, London, is the national institute for data science and artificial intelligence. They undertake research which tackles some of the biggest challenges in science, society and the economy, and collaborate with universities, businesses and public and third sector organisations to apply this research. In recent months, researchers from the Alan Turing Institute have been working to provide independent advice to the NHS Test and Trace Team in support of the NHS COVID-19 app.

The Royal Statistical Society

The [Royal Statistical Society](#), founded in 1834, is one of the world's most distinguished and renowned statistical societies. It is a learned society for statistics, a professional body for statisticians and a charity which promotes statistics, data and evidence for the public good. Today the RSS has around 10,000 members around the world.

Sobriety tags launched to tackle alcohol-fuelled crime

- Tags in force from today in Wales, extended to England next year
- Tags will monitor compliance with alcohol bans handed down by courts as part of community sentences
- New technology will help tackle root cause of criminal behaviour to reduce reoffending

The tags monitor offenders' sweat every 30 minutes and alert the probation service if alcohol is consumed. Not complying with their alcohol abstinence order – new powers allowing courts to issue drinking bans for up to 120 days – could see them back in court for further sentencing or facing fines.

It is the latest boost to the Government's plans to make community sentences more robust, a tougher punishment while also making criminals less likely to reoffend. Last month, [the Lord Chancellor set out reforms](#) to make community orders stricter and expand the use of electronic monitoring.

Alcohol is a factor in around 39% of violent crime, with the social and economic cost of alcohol-related harm stretching to over £21 billion per

year. It is seen as one of the driving influencers of domestic violence and unprovoked attacks on strangers. That is why the sobriety tags will be backed up by targeted professional support, signposting offenders to the help they need to improve their lifestyle and rein in their drinking. Referrals to treatment will continue to be made for those with more serious alcohol addictions who commit crimes.

Minister for Crime and Policing, Kit Malthouse MP said:

All too often we see the devastating effects of alcohol-fuelled behaviour, reckless crimes and casual violence which blight our neighbourhoods and the lives of too many victims.

This proven new tool can break the self-destructive cycle that offenders end up in, helping them sober up if they choose to and the courts to punish those who don't.

The scheme follows two successful pilots in London and across Humberside, Lincolnshire and North Yorkshire which showed that offenders were alcohol free on over 97% of the days monitored. Wearers also reported a positive impact on their lives, wellbeing and behaviour.

At present, abstinence orders can last for four months but we are looking at whether they should be able to last longer as part of our sentencing reforms.

The tags alert staff when they have been tampered with and can distinguish between drinks and other types of alcohol – such as hand sanitiser or perfume. They work 24/7 and can also tell if someone tries to block contact between the tag and their skin.

Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart said:

Alcohol can have a devastating impact on lives and figures show it is a key factor behind far too many crimes.

I am encouraged to see Wales at the forefront of implementing this new technology, which we believe will contribute towards lowering reoffending rates, making our streets safer and supporting those who need help.

The Government's plans to overhaul sentencing will see dangerous offenders spend longer in prison, while greater efforts are made to tackle the root causes of offending. More support will be on offer for those willing to turn their back on crime through treatment for mental health issues and addictions. Supervision of offenders in the community will be improved with greater powers for probation officers and increased curfews. The Government

also plans to use GPS tags to track burglars, robbers and thieves when they are released from prison.

Local Covid Alert Level update for Greater Manchester

Following discussions between local leaders and the government which today concluded without an agreement, Greater Manchester will move from Local COVID Alert Level High to Very High from 00.01 on Friday 23 October.

This means that new measures will come into place including:

- People must not socialise with anybody they do not live with, or have formed a support bubble with, in any indoor setting or in any private garden or at most outdoor hospitality venues and ticketed events;
- People must not socialise in a group of more than 6 in an outdoor public space such as a park or beach, the countryside, a public garden or a sports venue;
- All pubs and bars must close, unless they are serving substantial meals;
- Betting shops, casinos, bingo halls, adult gaming centres, and soft play areas will close
- People should try to avoid travelling outside the very-high alert level or entering a very-high alert level area, other than for work, education or for caring responsibilities or to travel through as part of a longer journey; and
- Residents should avoid staying overnight in another part of the UK, and others should avoid staying overnight in the Very High Alert area

The rate of COVID-19 infections is rising rapidly across the UK. The ONS estimate that one in every 240 people in England had the virus in the week from 25 September to 1 October and that the numbers infected are doubling every seven to 12 days. Cases are not evenly spread, with infection rates rising more rapidly in some areas than others.

In Greater Manchester, infection rates are among the highest in the country. As of 12 October, the weekly average for new cases was 1591, an increase of 302% in one month since 12 September.

There are now more COVID-19 patients in Greater Manchester Hospitals than in the whole of the South West and South East combined, and on the current trajectory the number of COVID patients in Greater Manchester will exceed the numbers from the first peak in April in 2 to 3 weeks.

To support the local authority during this period, the government will be providing a £22 million funding package to protect public health and local economies, including compliance, enforcement and contact tracing activity

across Greater Manchester. The government will also continue to discuss further business support funding with local leaders in line with what was agreed for Lancashire and Merseyside.

The funding is in addition to Jobs Support Scheme set out by the Chancellor earlier this month, which will pay up to two thirds of employees' wages for businesses required to close and provide grants worth up to £3,000 per month. Employees will have access to Universal Credit on top of this.

The Government has already provided £1 billion of additional funding for all local authorities to support their COVID responses, on top of the £3.7 billion provided since March.

Local COVID Alert Level: Very High will take effect across all parts of Greater Manchester: Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Wigan.

Measures will only be in place as long as necessary, with case rates and epidemiology reviewed regularly. The restrictions in Greater Manchester will be reviewed by at least 11 November.

All available data for the areas that will move to Local COVID Alert Level: Very High on Saturday have been assessed by the Government, including the Health and Social Care Secretary, NHS Test and Trace, the Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC), Public Health England (PHE), the Chief Medical Officer and the Cabinet Office. Data assessed includes incidence, test positivity and the growth rate of the virus.

The government's strategy is to suppress the virus while supporting the economy, education and the NHS, until an effective vaccine is widely available. Local action is at the centre of our response, and engagement with Local Authorities will continue to be a key part of this process.

[The world cannot afford another conflict in the Persian gulf region](#)

Thank you, Mr. President, and I want to start by thanking the Russian Presidency for holding this debate. The issue under consideration today is one of great importance. And as I start, let me just also say in response to Rob Malley, that I want to echo my German colleague on the case of Michael Kovrig, which causes us deep concern.

Mr. President, the United Kingdom remains concerned by the trajectory of violence, instability and hostile state-activity in the Middle East and Gulf region. Heightened tensions and insecurity serve no one's long term interest and instead put all at risk. We continue to call for de-escalation, dialogue

and peace. The world cannot afford another conflict in the region.

As we have said repeatedly in this chamber, our commitment to the JCPOA remains resolute and it is at the forefront of our policy to support regional stability. Iranian nuclear armament would have catastrophic implications for the security of the region and beyond, and the JCPOA is the only vehicle currently available to prevent this. Nevertheless, while we remain committed to the nuclear deal, systematic Iranian non-compliance with its JCPOA commitments is putting it at risk. Iran must engage constructively with the Dispute Resolution Mechanism and Iran must implement its commitments under the deal. This is critical for security across the Middle East.

We have also frequently expressed our concern about Iran's wider activity in the region. Iran has consistently carried out arms transfers to regional non-state actors in violation of Security Council resolutions. There can be no doubt that such proliferation destabilises the region and escalates already high tensions. That is why we regret the expiry of resolution 2231's conventional arms restrictions. We will therefore continue to build our security cooperation with allies and partners and work to find a sustainable solution to Iranian proliferation. And we will redouble our efforts to ensure implementation of other Security Council resolutions, which prohibit arms transfers to regional non-state actors, including resolution 1546 in Iraq, resolution 1701 in Lebanon and resolution 2216 in Yemen. We will also ensure that the remaining provisions of resolution 2231, in particular the restrictions on Iran's ballistic missile program, are rigorously enforced.

Mr. President, for too long the region has been scarred by terrorism, war and other conflict. But though instability has increased, we must not lose hope. So we welcome the announcements of normalisation between Israel and the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, and we welcome the suspension of Israeli annexation plans. They must stay that way. The Abraham Accords demonstrate the potential for and the power of Jewish and Arab peoples in the region, breaking with the resentment and enmity of the past. Nelson Mandela once said, "resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies." The antidote to resentment and enmity is reconciliation and as Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said, we hope that other states will follow the UAE and Bahrain's example and thereby secure a more peaceful Middle East. So we must build on the momentum of the Abraham Accords in order to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which remains a wellspring for tension across the region. There is ultimately no substitute for direct talks between the Israelis and Palestinians towards the ultimate objective of a two state solution. Here, as with many of the region's conflicts, mistrust can only be countered by measures to rebuild confidence and facilitate dialogue.

Conflicts in Yemen, Syria and Iraq continue to be sources of instability in the region. On Syria, the United Kingdom continues to support an inclusive Syrian-led political process, as provided for in resolution 2254. Following the latest Constitutional Committee talks, we again implore all parties to engage properly with the process. A political settlement is the only way to bring long term stability to Yemen and to address the worsening humanitarian crisis. We fully support the peace process led by the UN Special Envoy and we urge all parties, particularly the Yemeni parties, to engage constructively.

We remain committed to supporting a peaceful and prosperous Iraq, able to promote stability in the region. We are proud to work with Iraq within the global coalition to counter Daesh, a clear example of shared cooperation, effectively addressing one of the region's biggest security concerns.

Mr. President, we welcome the Secretary-General's participation in this debate and the United Nations' role working to resolve each of the aforementioned conflicts and sources of tension in the region. The Secretary-General can continue to rely on the United Kingdom's full support in each theatre.

However, as the concept note for today's debate suggests, there is a need to look beyond current crises and to engage on wider issues. In the longer term this will require a process within the region, which includes confidence building measures leading to a wider dialogue. The United Nations has a potential role to play as a trusted mediator and indeed, OP8 of resolution 598 makes provision for the Secretary-General to examine, with states of the region, measures to enhance regional security and stability. And while we hope that today's debate is a step in the right direction, we must be honest that an open debate in the Security Council, however well-intentioned, is not the forum for such conversations. Progress can only ultimately be made through candid conversations between all parties.

We are also not convinced that launching into security focused working groups will result in meaningful dialogue. We must remain realistic about the current level of regional mistrust. The issues involved are complex and sensitive, and an incremental approach is needed to build confidence and cooperation. More critically, as Russia points out, any dialogue needs to be shaped by regional participants. I want to welcome the commitment to regional security expressed by Iran in its letter of the 15th of October to the Council covering the Hormuz Peace Endeavour. But as a party to conflicts across the region, Iran is not an impartial actor, and it would not be appropriate for any initiative to be Iranian-led. More consultation is needed within the region to avoid another failed regional security initiative. We should learn from the many failed attempts in order to make a future initiative a success. The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe that led to the 1975 Helsinki Accords provide both positive and negative lessons, which we can draw on.

Mr. President, in conclusion, it is vital that we hear from all regional states and we would welcome discussions beyond the Council that could help identify political and practical steps to reduce mistrust within the region. Such discussions could include a potential mediation role for the United Nations. As I said at the outset, tensions and insecurity in the region ultimately serve none.

I thank the Russian Federation again for organising this debate on such an important issue. Thank you, Mr. President.

Readout of PM and CDL call with business leaders 20 October

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson and CDL Michael Gove spoke to 250 business leaders on preparing for the end of the transition period.



This afternoon, Prime Minister Boris Johnson and CDL Michael Gove spoke to 250 business leaders on preparing for the end of the transition period.

The Prime Minister thanked businesses for the huge efforts they have made so far this year, both to help with the coronavirus pandemic and to prepare for the end of the transition period. He reiterated that on 1st January 2021, change is going to happen and we will be leaving the single market and the customs union, and that the Government stands ready to help businesses get ready.

He added that this should be a moment of change and dynamism for the UK, providing businesses with fantastic opportunities. He also set out the Government's ambition to unite and level up the country, by providing better skills, education, technology and infrastructure.

The Prime Minister said:

Our job is to create the platform for dynamic businesses such as yours to compete and to grow. But it is vital that everybody on this call takes seriously the need to get ready, because whatever happens – whether it's Canada or Australia – change is going to happen. There is a big opportunity for this country and we want to help all of you to seize that opportunity.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Michael Gove said:

I am hugely appreciative of the efforts that so many companies have

made over the course of this year, both to help us deal with the Covid crisis and also to prepare for the end of the transition period. We know that this December 31st we will be leaving the customs union and single market come what may. It's in law, and it's a fact that the EU and UK accept as immovable, and that means we need to make sure we're ready.

Attendees represented a range of British business and industry, including transport, retail and manufacturing. They outlined ongoing preparations for the end of the transition period, including the challenges and opportunities ahead.

CDL committed to continue working closely with industry in the coming months to ensure that all businesses can prepare for the changes at the end of the transition period, and the actions which businesses need to complete regardless of the outcome of negotiations.

The Prime Minister also made clear that the Government will support businesses to get ready – and was optimistic that the country will thrive whatever the outcome of the negotiations.

ENDS

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