

## [News story: New return on investment tool on musculoskeletal conditions](#)

Public Health England (PHE) today (11 October 2017) launched its latest [return on investment \(RoI\) tool](#), this time helping local commissioners decide the best approach to preventing musculoskeletal conditions (MSK) within their populations.

RoI assessments can be made at local authority, clinical commissioning group, or sustainability and transformation partnerships level, helping commissioners make the economic case for prevention.

PHE commissioned the York Health Economics consortium to develop the tool. The different approaches to addressing MSK were chosen following a literature review and in consultation with an expert steering group.

Among the approaches are:

- ESCAPE-pain, an exercise-based rehabilitation program for knee pain, which would return £5.20 in healthcare savings for every £1 spent
- cognitive behavioural therapy including exercise for back pain, which would see £7.52 in both healthcare savings and quality of life year gains returned for every £1 spent
- vocational advice from physiotherapists in primary care for all MSK conditions, which would return £11.14 in healthcare savings, quality of life year and productivity gains for every £1 spent

Duncan Selbie, PHE's chief executive, said:

The main way in which the NHS operates – you get ill, it fixes you – is unsustainable. People will have to take more responsibility for their own health and the NHS should intervene much earlier to help people avoid the need for expensive care. Bad backs and joints cause the most sick leave at work and using this resource will both help to get people back into work, reduce pressure on the NHS and boost the local economy.

Low back and neck pain is the leading cause of morbidity, as laid out in our Health Profile for England. Its impact is 3 times bigger than the second place condition, skin diseases. In 2014 to 2015, 9.5 million sick days were claimed because of MSK conditions. This represents 40% of all days lost due to work-related ill health and 33% of long-term sickness absence in England is due to MSK conditions.

Reducing the burden of MSK on local populations is an important step to getting people back to work, boosting the local economy and also lowering the future demand on health and social care budgets.

It is the latest tool from PHE's health economists underlining why investment in prevention is important to long term health of the population and long term sustainability of the NHS. At the end of August, PHE published an ROI tool for mental health interventions, including a school anti-bullying programme and social and emotional learning for children.

A suite of tools have already been published, with ones on falls prevention and Best Start in Life in the pipeline.

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## [Press release: Nuclear Safeguards Bill introduced today](#)

- Equivalent high standards of Euratom to be maintained

The UK will establish a domestic nuclear safeguards regime under measures contained in the [Nuclear Safeguards Bill](#), introduced to Parliament today (Wednesday 11 October).

As set out by Business Secretary Greg Clark on [14 September 2017](#), the government is committed to a domestic nuclear safeguards regime which will deliver to existing European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) standards, exceeding those required by the wider international community.

The Bill, first announced in the [Queen's Speech](#), will bolster the roles and responsibilities of the UK's existing nuclear regulator, the [Office for Nuclear Regulation \(ONR\)](#), once the UK leaves Euratom.

The UK will continue to be a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and work is ongoing on new agreements with international parties to ensure it continues to meet relevant international standards.

Energy Minister Richard Harrington said:

The Nuclear Safeguards Bill will help secure the future of the UK's nuclear industry and high standards of nuclear safety and safeguards once we leave Euratom.

We are bringing forward the UK's first new nuclear power plants in a generation and it is in our mutual benefit to maintain the successful working relationship we have now with Europe, and the rest of the world, on nuclear matters. This is what we will be looking to secure in negotiations with our partners.

Nuclear safeguards are processes which allow countries to show to the international community that civil nuclear material is used for peaceful

purposes.

The UK will withdraw from [Euratom in 2019](#) as a result of the decision to leave the EU and the Nuclear Safeguards Bill will ensure that the UK has the right regime in place for the ONR to regulate nuclear safeguards.

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## [News story: Home Office announces changes to Grenfell immigration policy](#)

Under the original policy, eligible foreign nationals directly affected by the fire with uncertain immigration status could be granted 12 months' limited leave to remain in the UK with full access to relevant support and assistance.

The changes announced today will enable those who qualify under this policy and who come forward before 30 November to have their limited leave extended and to qualify for permanent residence after a total period of 5 years' leave granted under the policy, subject to meeting security, criminality and fraud checks.

Immigration Minister Brandon Lewis said:

Our initial response to this terrible tragedy was rightly focused on survivors' immediate needs in the aftermath of the fire and ensuring they could access the services they need to start to rebuild their lives.

However, since the Grenfell Tower immigration policy was announced, we have been planning for the future of those residents affected by these unprecedented events and listening to their feedback, as well as the views of Sir Martin Moore-Bick.

The government believes it is right to provide this specific group of survivors greater certainty over their long-term future in the UK, subject to their continued eligibility and the necessary security and criminality checks being met.

Eligible survivors granted the initial 12 months' leave outside the Immigration Rules will be able to apply for further periods of limited leave with access to public funds and permission to work, and indefinite leave to remain after 5 years' lawful residence.

Meanwhile, relatives of survivors or victims of the tragedy will be able to stay in the UK for up to six months from their date of entry, it was confirmed today.

The new dedicated immigration policy allows relatives who have come to the UK to provide a short period of support to a survivor or to arrange the funeral of a family member to have their stay extended.

Anyone who believes they are eligible for either scheme can speak face-to-face to a specialist Home Office team at:

The Community Assistance Centre  
10 Bard Road  
Nottingdale  
West London  
W10 6TP

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## **Press release: Small firms benefitted from over £12 billion of government spending**

Figures out today show that SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises) benefitted from £12.2 billion worth of central government spending in 2015 to 16.

They also show that the amount government spends directly with SMEs has continued to climb. This now stands at £5.6 billion, representing a significant increase since 2011 to 12 when £4.4 billion was spent.

The proportion of total government spend going to SMEs currently stands at around one pound in every four.

But the government recognises that the latest figures show there is more to be done to reach its aspiration of spending one pound in every three with these businesses by 2022. While direct spend has increased, the overall target continues to be challenging, with issues of counting down supply chains causing difficulties for businesses themselves.

That is why it is proposing new measures to encourage more spend to flow to SMEs.

Caroline Nokes, Minister for government Resilience and Efficiency says:

SMEs are the backbone of the UK economy, fuelling economic growth and providing more than 15 million jobs. These businesses also play a vital role in helping government to deliver efficient, effective public services that meet the needs of our citizens and provide value for money for taxpayers.

We have set ourselves a challenging target, but we know this is the right ambition. This Government is doing more than any previous Government to break down barriers for SMEs who want to supply to the public sector. We are confident these new measures will be welcomed by small businesses throughout the UK.

FSB National Chairman Mike Cherry said:

I welcome the commitment to make more use of the UK's ambitious and innovative small businesses when awarding public procurement contracts. Today's figures show there is still some way to go to reach the 33 per cent target, but I look forward to working with ministers to see it delivered and for this to be hardwired into the Government's upcoming Industrial Strategy.

It is also important for government departments and agencies not to hand public money to bigger companies which have a track record of treating smaller suppliers appallingly, with late payments and unfair contracts, and today's commitment on that is a positive step.

The proposed new measures include:

- using transparency to encourage large businesses to employ more SMEs in the supply chain
- improving visibility of opportunities available to SMEs in the supply chain
- making prompt payment part of the selection process for larger suppliers

The government will launch a consultation on these proposals in the coming weeks.

Earlier this year, it was announced that for the first time all of government's strategic suppliers have signed up to the fair payment terms in the Prompt Payment Code – helping to boost cash flow for small businesses and allowing them to invest in growth.

The Crown Commercial Service – the government's central procurement body – is leading the way in simplifying the application processes for small businesses who wish to become government suppliers.

All central government contracts above £10,000 are openly advertised on the government's procurement website, [Contracts Finder](#).

At the same time, government is also publishing a list of the 100 small and

medium-sized enterprises who received the most spend from government departments during 2015 to 16.

For more information about government spend with SMEs, go to [www.gov.uk/CCS](http://www.gov.uk/CCS).

### **Further information**

You can [view the statistics on government spending with SMEs on GOV.UK](#).

- government departments now spend around £5 billion more with SMEs than in 2011 to 12, when comparable figures were first collected. That year, around one pound in six was spent with SMEs.
- Network Rail are included as part of central government in the published figures for the first time, taking the total government procurement spend to £50.9 billion in 2015 to 16.
- with Network Rail spend excluded – to allow measuring on a like-for-like basis against 2014 to 15's figures – the government's overall percentage spend with SMEs is 25.5%. When Network Rail spend is included the overall percentage spend with SMEs is 24%.
- one of the biggest areas of spend is on defence. Ministry of Defence contracts are typically large and complex. Without MoD spend included, SME spend would be 27.7%.

Further details of the measures to boost spend include:

- using greater transparency to increase SMEs in the supply chain, by requiring them to publish annual data on their spend from government contracts flowing to smaller businesses in their supply chains
  - improving visibility of opportunities available to SMEs by requiring suppliers to advertise their subcontracting opportunities on Contracts Finder so SMEs can bid
  - making prompt payment part of the selection process for larger suppliers, and excluded them from the procurement process if a bidder fails to satisfy this selection condition
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# Speech: 86th Session of the OPCW Executive Council

Thank you Mr Chair,

The United Kingdom supports the statement made by the Ambassador of Estonia on behalf of the European Union.

We commend your work, Mr Chair, to steer the Executive Council through the selection process for the next Director General, and thank you for your warm welcome yesterday. This organisation is being superbly served by Ahmet Uzumcu. We believe that we have a strong successor in Ambassador Fernando Arias of Spain, and hope that the Executive Council will agree his nomination by consensus.

In other positive developments, the successful completion of the verified destruction of the Russian Federation's declared chemical weapons stockpile underscores the global commitment to rid the world of chemical weapons. The UK was pleased to contribute funding and expertise to support Russia's work. We also welcome the progress made by the Iraqi authorities to destroy the final remnants of Saddam Hussein's era chemical weapon stockpile at the Al Muthana complex.

Unfortunately, despite this progress, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the norms that underpin it face significant challenge. In the last year alone this Council has witnessed:

1. regular credible reports of the use of chemical weapons by state actors in Syria, and an attack in Malaysia against a DPRK national;
2. multiple reports of chemical weapons attacks by Daesh linked terrorists in Iraq; and
3. insidious attempts to undermine the credibility of the OPCW, including by attacking the OPCW's technical competence and integrity, and attempts to limit the Conference of States Parties' engagement with civil society;

For more than four years, we have seen the devastating impact of continued chemical weapons use in Syria. Sarin has been used with horrific effect in Ghouta in 2013 and in Khan Sheikhoun in April this year. Sarin has now been found in samples from Al-Lataminah, close to Khan Sheikhoun, following credible reports of an attack there on 30 March. The OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism confirmed that the Syrian regime used chlorine as a weapon three times in 2014-15, and that Daesh used sulphur mustard on one occasion in 2015. No one has yet been brought to justice for these crimes. All perpetrators must be held to account – however long that takes. We have full confidence in the professionalism and dedication of the JIM and FFM and look forward to their upcoming reports.

Mr Chair,

Use of chemical weapons is a grave violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Yet this is just one of the issues where Syria has failed to comply. The Convention, UN Security Council resolutions and this Executive Council all require Syria to produce a comprehensive declaration of its chemical weapons programme. The Technical Secretariat has worked tirelessly to uncover the truth, in the face of Syrian obstruction contrary to what we have just heard from the Syrian Ambassador. Despite four years of engagement, there has been minimal progress. The Director General reported last week evidence of "potential undeclared chemical weapons activities involving production or weaponisation of chemical agent" in Syria, and that he could not verify that the Syrian Declaration was accurate or complete.

Syria's response to the findings of such respected international bodies is to deny reality and forensic evidence. The Syrian Regime has failed to engage appropriately with the Technical Secretariat to answer the long list of serious questions about gaps, inconsistencies and anomalies in its chemical weapons programme declaration. We've heard this morning further denial of scientific reality from the Syrians, they still refuse to engage meaningfully with the OPCW's findings that show agents present at facilities which have not been declared, and types of chemical warfare agent that Syria has not declared at all. After more than four years, the only conclusion can be that Syria has not declared or destroyed all of its chemical weapons. The Syrian Regime has continued to use chemical weapons against its own people, and continues to pose a significant chemical threat.

Chemical weapons use is not confined to Syria. In Malaysia, an assassination in February using the nerve agent VX shocked the world. We note that court proceedings have started in Malaysia to examine the circumstances that led to the death of a North Korean national at Kuala Lumpur International Airport 2. We thank Malaysia for the helpful update that they provided to this Council yesterday, and encourage Malaysia to continue to inform the Executive Council about their investigation.

It is not just state programmes that demand this Council's attention. All of us must work to ensure that terrorists cannot develop chemical weapons capabilities. We hope that this Council will adopt the draft decision proposed by the US and Germany to combat chemical terrorism.

We remain deeply concerned that Daesh retains the capability and intent to use chemical weapons. We welcome the Technical Secretariat's work with Iraq to deal with the chemical threat that they face, including by supporting Iraqi investigations into chemical weapons use. We encourage both Iraq and the Technical Secretariat to keep the Executive Council informed of their work.

Finally, we have all acknowledged that to enhance the global fight against chemical weapons we need to engage a wide range of stakeholders, from industry to civil society. The UK welcomed the 2013 Review Conference decision to open the annual Conference of States Parties to civil society groups. We share the concerns voiced yesterday by Canada, Switzerland and the Netherlands that a number of NGOs have been refused accreditation to attend this year's CSP, based purely on the objections of one or two states. No



reasons have been given for the decision to refuse accreditation. In our view, the exclusion of ECOSOC accredited NGOs from the Conference of States Parties harms the reputation of states and the OPCW. We should be at the forefront of transparency as an International Organisation, not a backmarker. Our work is too important to hide.

Thank you Mr Chair