

UKHSA Chief Executive and colleagues recognised in the Queen's New Year honours list

UKHSA Chief Executive, Dr Jenny Harries, has received the title of Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire for her outstanding service to public health.

Jonathan Turner, Head of Scientific and Technical Services has been awarded an MBE with Professor Kevin Fenton, London Regional Director of Public Health, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, awarded a CBE.

Dr Harries has worked tirelessly to keep the nation safe during the COVID-19 pandemic with a focus on providing advice and support to the most vulnerable people in the country. Throughout the pandemic, she has provided health advice to the public at critical times in her role as Deputy Chief Medical Officer.

Dr Harries is now the Chief Executive of the newly formed UK Health Security Agency which brings together Public Health England and NHS Test and Trace, including the Joint Biosecurity Centre, with a remit to plan and prepare for current and future threats to our health. Dr Harries is uniquely placed to understand the national challenges the nation faces and the importance of working closely with local and regional colleagues to address them, particularly supporting the most vulnerable in our communities.

Prior to becoming Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Dr Harries was the Deputy Medical Director at Public Health England, where she played a leading role in the UK's response to Ebola in West Africa. She also provided crucial expertise to the Zika epidemic response, helping provide scientific advice and input to early studies to provide reassurance to expectant mothers across the UK at a time of considerable concern.

She also led the successful responses to the detection of MERS in the UK and the first UK cases of Monkeypox, ensuring dangerous infectious diseases were swiftly contained. Using knowledge from her previous role as PHE Director for the South of England, Dr Harries was instrumental in shaping both the national and local public health response to the Novichok attack in Salisbury. Her public health advice helped contain the risk to the public.

Dame Dr Jenny Harries said:

I am hugely honoured to receive this award. It is accepted on behalf of the countless brilliant and committed colleagues in clinical and scientific communities as well as those who provide such dedicated operational response through every health protection incident and emergency. It is they, who have inspired and supported

me throughout my career and who continue to work tirelessly to make the UK a safer place, often largely out of sight of the public.

In the response to COVID-19, and in so much else, the unprecedented speed and diligence of scientific endeavour has saved many thousands of lives and I hope that today's award will encourage more people, especially women, to pursue careers in science and public service.

Ian Peters, UKHSA Chair, said:

Jenny has made an enormous contribution to protecting the country's health during an outstanding career. She has repeatedly provided leadership in helping to resolve the most challenging health issues in the UK and overseas, providing expert advice and a reassuring voice during incredibly critical times. From the outset in the pandemic firstly as Deputy CMO, and since April as CEO of UKHSA she has combined her public health knowledge and her wide experience, with an integrity and calmness of approach which has led to the saving of many lives. Her honour is thoroughly deserved

Jonathan Turner, Head of Scientific and Technical Services, has worked as a Biomedical Scientist for over 30 years to develop patient-centred and health protection focused public health microbiology services in the South West and across the national network.

Jonathan Turner said:

I am thrilled and honoured to accept this award but do so on behalf of the team in Bristol and the wider diagnostic community. I recognise the efforts of all the team, the support staff, our administrators, warehouse staff, logisticians, and managers as well as our clinicians and scientists. I also need to recognise the volunteers that came to our aid, without whom we would not have been able to achieve this response.

Professor Kevin Fenton, London Regional Director of Public Health, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, has received a CBE for his 30 years of service and leadership across all domains of public health.

This includes a recognition of his work in improving health outcomes in complex public health programmes including HIV prevention, sexual and reproductive health, child obesity, mental health, health equity and social regeneration, and leading London's public health response during COVID-19.

Professor Kevin Fenton said:

I am honoured and humbled to receive such a prestigious award alongside other outstanding individuals. As we enter the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic response I am continually inspired by the professionalism, resilience and contributions of so many amazing colleagues who work relentlessly to keep us all safe and well.

I am accepting this award on behalf of all the incredible public health and NHS teams I am privileged to lead and work with in London and around the nation, who are committed to improving health, tackling health inequalities, building resilient communities and providing high quality health and care services to all. They exemplify the best of public health and should be proud of all they have achieved.