



Cabinet Office

Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP
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Rt Hon David Cameron MP
Prime Minister, Chair of NSC (THRC)
10 Downing Street
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22 March 2016

Dear Prime Minister,

Horizon scanning for international health risks

Diseases like Ebola and Zika can constitute major risks to our national security.

I have therefore asked the Civil Contingencies Secretariat to develop a new scanning system for international health risks. The results of this work have now been agreed with all relevant departments and have been endorsed by the Chief Medical Officer.

I am confident that the new system will enable ministers to:

- spot major emerging diseases across the world;
- understand the direct risks to the UK, British Nationals and broader UK interests in affected countries; and
- receive expert advice on clear and flexible UK responses and mitigation arrangements.

A monthly report will be issued to the Health Secretary, the International Development Secretary and me. This will outline: key international health risks, departmental assessments of the impacts, and actions to mitigate the risks. I have asked the Chief Medical Officer to approve each monthly report before it is presented. Attached is an illustrative example of the report for your reference (correct as of early March 2016).

To avoid this becoming just 'business as usual', I suggest that, rather than sending these reports each month to NSC (THRC), I shall write whenever officials have flagged a health risk of particular concern.

The scanning system will be implemented in April and my officials will undertake a review in 6 months time. For any specific queries relating to the new system officials should contact Name Redacted

Name Redacted in the Civil Contingencies Secretariat. Name Redacted @cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk

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I am copying this letter to members of NSC (THRC), the Chief Medical Officer and the Cabinet Secretary.



Personal Data

OLIVER LETWIN