

OFFICIAL – SENSITIVE

SECRETARY OF STATE FIRST DAY PACK – TWO PAGE NOTES FROM DIRECTOR GENERALS

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E. Global and Public Health

Director General: Clara Swinson

1. The Global and Public Health group is concerned with keeping people healthy, and thereby contributing to economic prosperity and a sustainable health and welfare system. It aims to keep the UK safe from existing or potential threats, which individuals cannot mitigate themselves, and to keep people living healthier for longer and therefore not to need, or to minimise, NHS care.

2. Factors influencing our health include early years, education, housing, employment, our families and communities. The NHS, central and local government and individual behaviours are strong influencers of our health. We are also concerned with international systems, since threats such as infectious disease do not stop at borders.

3. DHSC leads the **national public health system** to achieve these aims, together with:

- Our public health executive agency, **Public Health England** (Chief Executive – Duncan Selbie), which provides services and support to the NHS and local government and expert advice to government;
- Local government, which has legal duties to provide services such as sexual health and substance misuse, funded by a grant of £3.3bn pa, and runs other services that affect health, such as housing;
- The health service, which delivers services to prevent disease (e.g. immunisation and screening) and treat disease (e.g. cardiovascular health) in primary and community care as well as hospitals;
- Sponsoring three Arms-Length Bodies which provide and regulate services in England and some other parts of the UK: NHS Blood and Transplant, the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority and the Human Tissue Authority;
- The Food Standards Agency, a non-ministerial Department accountable to Parliament through DHSC Ministers;
- The Devolved Administrations, when DHSC acts internationally on behalf of the UK.

4. The UK is well respected internationally and plays an important role in **global health**:

- DHSC is the lead government department for the World Health Organisation (WHO), working closely with Department for International Development, Public Health England and the Foreign Office. The WHO is the UN agency responsible for health, for example on response to health emergencies such as Ebola or Zika;
- The European Union currently regulates some public health issues and provides a system of surveillance and response to health threats and disease outbreaks. We are planning to incorporate these areas into UK law. A separate brief is provided on EU exit;
- We also work with other countries bilaterally or in groups, e.g. the G7 and G20 on common issues.

5. The main work areas in the group are:

- **Emergency Preparedness and Health Protection** (Director – Emma Reed): This directorate prepares for and responds to emergencies, including COBRA, and works on the government's Prevent strategy. It practices for terrorist or other threats such as pandemic flu or Ebola. It ensures the delivery of a national immunisation and screening programmes. It also runs a global health security programme, supporting middle and low income countries, as part of the 0.7% of GDP spent on development.
- **Population Health** (Director – Mark Davies): This directorate covers policy on behaviours which affect health such as tobacco, alcohol, and obesity. It analyses and advises on work to reduce the injustice that health outcomes are poorer for those in lower socio-economic groups and works with other departments on issues such as drugs policy and child sexual abuse. It delivers the Healthy Start vitamin and food programme, and provision of abortions for women from Northern Ireland.. It also covers health ethics, such as advances in embryology and surrogacy law.
- **EU, International and Public Health System** (Director – Paul Macnaught): This directorate coordinates the DHSC position on EU exit. It covers our current relationship with the EU; working with the World Health Organization to make it more effective; and regular health ministerials in the G7, G20 and Commonwealth. It leads on reciprocal healthcare arrangements with the EU (and others). It is also responsible for the legislative, policy and financial frameworks for the public health system in England and sponsors our Executive Agency, Public Health England.
- **Work and Health** (Director – Tabitha Jay): This joint unit with the Department of Work and Pensions aims to improve the employment and health outcomes for disabled people and those with long term conditions, particularly mental health and musculo-skeletal conditions which account for the largest amount of sickness absence. It works with the NHS, Job Centres, and employers to trial better ways to help people stay in work when their health deteriorates, and to get unemployed people with disabilities / long-term conditions back into work.