



Department  
of Health &  
Social Care



UK Health  
Security  
Agency

Correspondence

# Letter from Ashley Dalton MP to Professor Susan Hopkins, UKHSA Chief Executive

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From:

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To:

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Dear Susan,

This letter sets out my key priorities for the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) for the financial year 2025 to 2026. These sit alongside UKHSA's enduring core capabilities that include expert scientific and public health expertise, data and analysis, surveillance capabilities and operational response to strengthen public health protection and security capability across the UK.

UKHSA will continue to be a trusted source of public health advice and scientific expertise and work closely with the Chief Medical Officer (CMO), the UK's most senior medical adviser and head of the public health profession. The CMO will be the ultimate arbiter for advice on scientific and clinical matters, will be formally consulted by UKHSA on wider public health protection strategy and will be the professional lead for UKHSA's most senior medical professionals. The CMO will co-ordinate closely with UKHSA in support of the agency's global public health remit. UKHSA will also work closely with the CMOs for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

In 2025 to 2026, the government expects UKHSA to undertake the following activities to meet its strategic priorities, underpinning these with smart deliverables, key performance indicators (KPIs) and success metrics in line with the Cabinet Office's [Arm's length body sponsorship code of good practice](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/arms-length-body-sponsorship-code-of-good-practice) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/arms-length-body-sponsorship-code-of-good-practice>).

# Be ready to respond to all hazards to health

Deliverables for strategic priority 1: 'Be ready to respond to all hazards to health' include:

## Exercise PEGASUS

As a key delivery partner for the tier 1 live exercise on pandemic preparedness (Exercise PEGASUS), UKHSA will use its expertise to design and deliver an impactful exercise, working across government and with the health and social care sector.

## Pandemic preparedness

UKHSA will contribute to the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) pandemic preparedness strategy, providing expert input and supporting engagement and implementation with key delivery partners. UKHSA will also provide clinical and expert advice to support the completion of the UK-wide respiratory pandemic response plan, working towards the development and completion of further pandemic response plans and begin developing reasonable worst case scenario (RWCS) variations across all routes of transmission.

UKHSA will lead development of adaptive and scalable capabilities to enhance UK pandemic preparedness, including:

- case, contact and outbreak management
- diagnostics
- surveillance
- ports and border health
- communications

It will support the DHSC policy leadership on pandemic vaccines and therapeutics through commercial, operational delivery and scientific expertise. In doing so, it will scope the options, specification and delivery of reforms to the national pandemic flu service that would, while working with

the NHS, provide enhanced capability for the distribution of medicines in response to specified health security threats.

UKHSA will provide scientific, clinical, data and policy expertise in support of DHSC to develop partnerships with academia, industry and international partners to achieve pandemic preparedness objectives and those of the [100 days mission](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/100-days-mission-to-respond-to-future-pandemic-threats) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/100-days-mission-to-respond-to-future-pandemic-threats>) for which UKHSA will provide the domestic secretariat.

UKHSA will lead strategic and operational efforts to assess and strengthen capabilities for assessing and responding to emerging infectious disease threats, as outlined in the [National Security Risk Register](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-risk-register-2025) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-risk-register-2025>). This includes updating operational response plans on vector-borne disease threats to ensure readiness and strengthening [One Health](https://www.who.int/health-topics/one-health#tab=tab_1) ([https://www.who.int/health-topics/one-health#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/one-health#tab=tab_1)) collaboration for responding to zoonotic threats.

## **Baseline and surge capability on incident response**

UKHSA will maintain and build capability as appropriate to prepare for and respond to health security threats, including chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) incidents. This includes identifying areas for improvement and potential future investment.

## **Improve health outcomes through vaccines**

Deliverables for strategic priority 2: 'Improve health outcomes through vaccines' include:

### **Vaccines**

UKHSA will provide clinical and scientific expertise to DHSC to support the overarching ministerial priority to increase vaccine uptake towards World Health Organization (WHO) recommended levels. It will:

- provide evidence-based clinical advice on safe, effective and equitable vaccine use
- lead on the development of professional guidance and public and/or patient facing communication to support existing and new programmes
- provide system clinical leadership through the national immunisation network

UKHSA will support the delivery and evaluation of the manifesto commitment to offer immunisations by health visiting teams and support the evaluation of the expanded use of community pharmacies. This should provide a robust evidence base to inform optimal, cost-effective implementation and future expansion of these and other supplementary vaccination service provision.

UKHSA will reaffirm and consolidate its clinical leadership role and accountabilities, including the provision of expert specialist public health advice and guidance, surveillance and monitoring of vaccine preventable diseases, programme safety and coverage, and vaccine communications and publications expertise. This will be done as part of the DHSC-led system redesign work required for the transition of NHS England and DHSC to one organisation.

UKHSA will manage the procurement, storage and distribution for national immunisation programmes and childhood influenza, pandemic preparedness pharmaceuticals, and emergency clinical countermeasures (including CBRN products, pandemic specific influenza vaccines and antivirals).

UKHSA will manage the Moderna UK strategic partnership contract, which will strengthen the UK's resilience to future health emergencies by securing:

- onshore, scalable mRNA vaccine production for the first time
- over £1 billion in research and development investment with an emphasis on clinical trials

UKHSA will work with DHSC to give advice to ministers where required, including for decisions with financial implications.

UKHSA will work with the Office for Life Sciences to support DHSC to develop a domestic manufacturing landscape framework. This will inform strategic decision-making by the government on manufacturing of diagnostics, vaccines, therapeutics and pandemic response capabilities in the UK.



# Reduce the impact of infectious diseases and antimicrobial resistance

Deliverables for strategic priority 3: 'Reduce the impact of infectious diseases and antimicrobial resistance' include:

## Infectious diseases

UKHSA will use its expertise to support the development and implementation of the government's [HIV action plan for England, 2025 to 2030](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hiv-action-plan-for-england-2025-to-2030) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hiv-action-plan-for-england-2025-to-2030>).

UKHSA will support prioritisation of action to reduce harms and inequalities in sexually transmitted infections (STIs) at national and local level, including implementation and monitoring of the STI prioritisation framework.

UKHSA will advise ministers on evidenced policy recommendations, including steps to be taken across the health system, to achieve the goal of eliminating viral hepatitis as a public health threat in England by 2030.

UKHSA will deliver evidence-based policy recommendations for cross government agreement to support the development of the [tuberculosis \(TB\) action plan for 2026 to 2031](https://www.gov.uk/government/calls-for-evidence/tuberculosis-national-action-plan-2026-to-2031) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/calls-for-evidence/tuberculosis-national-action-plan-2026-to-2031>) and address the rising incidence of TB.

UKHSA will continue delivering national health protection services to detect, contain and respond to infectious disease outbreaks, including for antimicrobial resistance (AMR) through:

- supporting the delivery of the [UK 5-year national action plan for AMR 2024 to 2029](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-5-year-action-plan-for-antimicrobial-resistance-2024-to-2029) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-5-year-action-plan-for-antimicrobial-resistance-2024-to-2029>)
- strengthening surveillance, infection prevention and control measures
- providing international collaborative system support against outbreaks, epidemic threats, and humanitarian crises

# Protect health from threats in the environment

Deliverables for strategic priority 4: 'Protect health from threats in the environment' include:

## Environment and climate

UKHSA will support the government to protect the public's health from environmental hazards within homes and outdoor environments, in line with the [10 Year Health Plan for England](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/10-year-health-plan-for-england-fit-for-the-future) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/10-year-health-plan-for-england-fit-for-the-future>). UKHSA will:

- support efforts to reduce exposure to air pollution and improve the standard of rented homes
- develop an air pollution exposure surveillance (APES) indicator for England
- assess health threats from water quality including recreational and open waters

UKHSA will support DHSC to protect public health from the risks associated with climate change, advising on appropriate actions to minimise the health and healthcare service impacts from overheating.

UKHSA will support the government to protect public health risks associated with vector-borne diseases. It will assess whether current capabilities for vector-borne disease surveillance, preparedness and response are sufficient given growing risks, and will identify gaps in preparedness and ensure robust data integration and scenario modelling capabilities.

## Improve action on public health through data and insight

Deliverables for strategic priority 5: 'Improve action on public health through data and insight' include:



## **Digital, data and cyber security transformation**

UKHSA will reduce and mitigate cyber risks by improving digital and data capabilities, and by modernising UKHSA's IT infrastructure over time. This transformation should support ambitions for safe, legal and ethical data sharing across platforms and organisational boundaries, where appropriate, to improve innovation and insights. This will in turn maximise benefits for the public and wider health and care systems, both now and in the future.

UKHSA will enhance its cyber and data protection controls through its digital transformation, maintaining and improving against the new cyber assessment framework (CAF) aligned Data Security and Protection Toolkit (DSPT), working closely with cyber teams in the wider health and care system and under the oversight of DHSC.

UKHSA will continue to explore opportunities presented by the transition of DHSC and NHS England to one organisation, seeking to further strengthen collaborations, drive efficiencies and reduce the burden on the NHS, across data, digital and technology.

## **Develop UKHSA as a high-performing agency**

Deliverables for strategic priority 6: 'Develop UKHSA as a high-performing agency' include:

### **Laboratory infrastructure**

UKHSA will submit the programme business case for the recently announced National Biosecurity Centre at Harlow. This business case will set out options for how to deliver the programme at the new site, replacing UKHSA's existing scientific facilities at Porton Down and Colindale and the corporate headquarters in Canary Wharf.

### **Finance capabilities**

UKHSA will continue to implement transformation through the finance, performance, risk and assurance (FPRA) evolve programme and progress the strategic objectives agreed by the advisory board. Actions should focus on improving financial forecasting, with the aim of financial outturn aligning with HM Treasury targets (within 1% of the 6-month forecast) in the 2025 to 2026 financial year and an improved audit opinion for future years.

UKHSA will plan and prepare for the potential impacts of the outcome of the spending review settlement and DHSC business planning on UKHSA outputs. It will work with DHSC to make the necessary decisions in 2025 to 2026 to manage within budget from 2026 to 2027 onwards.

## **Global health**

UKHSA will contribute to the government's strategic approach to global health, leveraging UKHSA's internationally recognised technical leadership and influence, working across government, in line with the evolving global health landscape.

## **Life sciences**

UKHSA will continue to support the life sciences sector, working with industry and academia including through the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) health protection research units.

## **Health equity**

UKHSA will continue to deliver on its [Health equity for health security strategy \(2023 to 2026\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ukhsa-health-equity-for-health-security-strategy-2023-to-2026) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ukhsa-health-equity-for-health-security-strategy-2023-to-2026>) to embed a health equity approach across all of UKHSA's activities, including incident response.



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