

UKOTs Public Health Programme Newsletter

June 2023

In this edition:

- UKOTs Public Health Conference
- Cayman STEP-wise Survey
- RIVM Conference
- Network Spotlight
- Media Round Up

Welcome! This publication provides updates for colleagues and partners across UKHSA, OHID and the Overseas Territories. If you have any queries, feedback or contributions please contact: UKOTs.Programme@ukhsa.gov.uk

UK Overseas Territories Public Health Conference 2023

The UKOTs Public Health Conference 2023 was held in Miami on June 19–23rd 2023. It was a privilege for the programme to bring together UKOTs colleagues alongside UKHSA, Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) and Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) representatives. The conference provided an opportunity for delegates to collaborate, network and learn from each other.

The theme of this year's conference was Sustaining Public Health Systems. Topics discussed included health workforce, hazards, regional health security and surveillance, and vulnerable populations.

Sessions included presentations by colleagues, interactive practicals, a day dedicated to networking and discussing workplans, and specially tailored sessions, such as the COVID-19 After Action Review. We would like to take the opportunity to thank all speakers and attendees for engaging with the week, both in person and online.



Cayman STEP-wise survey

In May 2023, an epidemiologist (Allegra Chatterjee) travelled to the Cayman Islands to support the National Epidemiologist with the STEPS non-communicable diseases (NCDs) survey. This nationally representative survey developed by the WHO aims to understand the prevalence of common NCDs as well as behaviour-related risk factors for these diseases. STEP 1 & 2 of the survey are a questionnaire, and STEP 3 involves taking biochemical measurements from participants.

The deployment primarily consisted of supporting the training of enumerators and nurses carrying out the data collection. This involved activities such as developing training materials and instruction manuals, helping facilitate training sessions, setting up equipment and troubleshooting problems.



RIVM Conference

In June, Sunita Sturup-Toft (Consultant in Global Public Health) and Annabel Grieve (Programme Management Lead) attended the RIVM Conference in Bonaire. RIVM (the Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment) work with the constituent countries of Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten and the special municipalities of Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba on a range of public health aspects.

The International Health Regulations (IHR) focused conference covered technical areas around IHR capacities, emergency management, food safety, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), infection prevention and control (IPC), labs, surveillance, sexual health, vector-borne illness and NCD surveillance.

The conference highlighted significant areas of overlap in the public health challenges faced in the UKOTs, providing a good opportunity to work in collaboration. Connections have already been made between technical leads and we hope to continue to connect colleagues in the UKOTs with these islands to share learning and challenges.



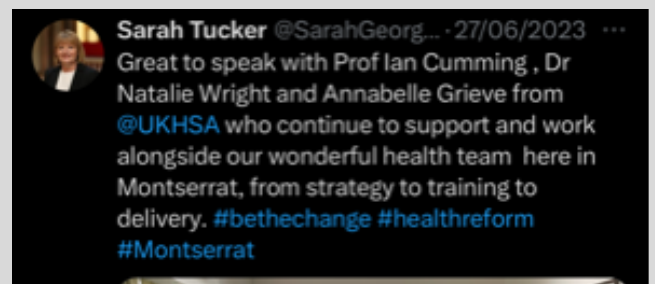
Network Spotlight – Health Promotion Network

Over the past year, the health promotion network has held NCD risk factor themed calls. The theme for May was Air Quality. Mr Juan Castillo, Air Quality Advisor at the Climate Change and Environmental Determinants of Health Unit at PAHO and Lydia Izon-Cooper, Principal Public Health Scientist in the Radiation, Chemicals and Environmental Hazards Directorate at UKHSA presented.

Given the multi-sector nature of air quality issues, we extended the invite to this network call to environmental colleagues as the session was well suited to linking the health and environmental impact of air pollution. Representatives from almost all UKOTs joined the session from many different Departments, Ministries and Agencies for a thought provoking and inspiring session. Sources and exposure to air pollution was covered, as well as the basic aspects and health effects of air pollution. The challenges to improving air quality on small islands was discussed as well as encouraging opportunities.

The next health promotion network call will be themed around alcohol as a NCD risk factor. Please contact ukots.programme@ukhsa.gov.uk if you wish to be invited.

Q1 Media Round Up



UK Health Security Agency Team Visits TCI To Provide Technical Support



FCDO & UHSA Support Expanded Testing Capabilities for Montserrat's Ministry of Health

📅 June 29, 2023 📍 DiscoverMNTTeam

The PCR testing capability of the Ministry of Health has been expanded.

According to the May 2023 Cabinet Notes, the government acknowledged the support of the Foreign & Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) to purchase a BioFire System.

Through the UKOT Lab Strengthening Project from the United Kingdom Health Security Agency (UKHSA), the FCDO has provided the machines to Ascension and seven other Overseas Territories, including Montserrat.