

# UKOTs Public Health Programme Newsletter

April 2023

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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](mailto:UKOTs.Programme@ukhsa.gov.uk)

## **BioFire TORCH machines to 8 UKOTs**

During early April 8 BioFire TORCH machines and reagents were supplied to UKOT laboratories as part of the Laboratory Strengthening project supported by FCDO, as a result 10 UKOT laboratories now have this state of the art capacity.

The BioFire FilmArray is a powerful tool for syndromic infectious disease diagnostics. Simple, fast, and comprehensive, the BioFire System delivers accurate results in about one hour. Each test panel targets a comprehensive grouping of pathogens that could be causing a specific syndrome—such as an upper respiratory, gastrointestinal or blood infection. The BioFire FilmArray offers broad coverage of infectious disease diagnostics that would not be possible by developing single traditional tests in small laboratory settings. The introduction of syndromic testing in the UKOTs will increase sustainable capacity in infectious disease diagnostics including detection of antibiotic resistant organisms.

In April, John Lee (Laboratory Technical and Quality Manager) and Geoffrey Benjamin (Pathology Manager, St Helena) visited Montserrat to start a partnership between the laboratories. Working with colleagues in Montserrat the BioFire TORCH was implemented with training. Antimicrobial susceptibility testing was also strengthened. This builds on the roll out of the Microguide prescribing App, continuing the focus on patient treatment and antimicrobial stewardship to address the global threat of antimicrobial resistance. Improved testing will result in patient health care benefits and protection of UKOT populations from post pandemic infectious disease threats in the future.

Finally, many congratulations to Geoff on his award of the British Empire Medal for services to St Helena for his laboratory work during the COVID pandemic, Geoff received the medal presented by the Governor in St Helena, and has been invited by the King to the UK as one of the recent medal recipients.



## **Behavioural Science Gap Analysis**

During early 2023 the Behavioural Science and Insights Unit (BSIU) undertook a needs assessment to understand how the UKOTs currently use behavioural science, and how the programme can best help to provide behavioural science support and training in future. This needs assessment took the form of a questionnaire which was circulated to CMOs from the UKOTs. Responses were received from 11 territories and explored self-identified public health priorities, self-reported understanding and awareness of behavioural science and any areas that respondents felt could best benefit from behavioural science support in future.

Lots of really detailed data emerged from this process which we will use to tailor our work with UKOTs moving forwards. There were some key and common findings across UKOTs. Firstly, generally speaking respondents reported relatively low knowledge of behavioural science methods and low embedding of methods into territories, but also recognised that behavioural science is useful and important. Secondly, in terms of areas of interest for support, most respondents mentioned sharing of existing tools and support adapting these for their contexts, alongside ongoing advice. This is what we've been working into our training modules and more information will be forthcoming on these shortly! Finally, there was a wide range of public health priorities identified by respondents; while there was some focus on infectious diseases, most responses focused on obesity (and related concerns) and non-communicable diseases. Tobacco and alcohol use were also frequently cited.

Overall this process revealed some very interesting results that will be used to make sure that the training and support that we provide in the Behavioural Science and Insights Unit is as useful and tailored as possible.

The screenshot shows a questionnaire titled "Behavioural Science Support and Learning Needs Assessment". The section is titled "Current understanding of behavioural science" and asks: "How would you rate the following on a scale of 1-10 (1 = poor, 10 = excellent)?" The scale is represented by radio buttons numbered 1 to 10. Below the scale are three rows of questions:

	1 (poor)	2	3	4	5	6
Your territory's awareness of behavioural science	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your territory's knowledge of behavioural science approaches	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your territory's level of understanding of applying behavioural science to public health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

At the bottom of the form are three buttons: "← Back", "↺ Reset", and "Next →".

## **Network Spotlight: Pharmacy Network**

Interest has been raised to develop a UKOT Pharmacy Network in order to bring people together to share ideas, provide mutual support and collaborate on new initiatives. Opportunities for the forum include:

- Collaborating with the procurement and freighting of medical supplies across the UKOTs.
- A support network for clinical advice.
- Exchanging pharmacists between territories- creating a 'pool' of Pharmacists
- Exchange of knowledge between pharmacists and specialists in the UK to keep up to date/gain training and assist with Continuing Professional Development (CPD).
- Work together to create UKOT wide pharmacy clinical services, sharing the burden on creating frameworks, policies, promotion etc
- Utilise training providers to create 'standard' training for pharmacy teams e.g. in St Helena, staff can be trained up to Technician level using training providers in the UK.

Please contact [ukots.programme@ukhsa.gov.uk](mailto:ukots.programme@ukhsa.gov.uk) to register your interest in joining this network.