

UKOTs Public Health Programme Newsletter

November 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

Smoking Cessation Progress in St Helena

Julia Robson (Tobacco Control Adviser) visited St Helena as part of ongoing support for the development of Smokefree St Helena that launched in January 2023. A previous visit in 2022 had focused on staff training along with awareness raising with the public, Ministers and health care staff. This visit built on the positive relationships with the service staff, and focused on wide ranging quality improvement activities to ensure the sustainability of the service.

Work included facilitating a workshop focused on refreshing skills, managing quit smoking medication supply and developing tailored support programmes for highly dependent smokers. Data quality and reporting was reviewed, along with managing referral pathways from the hospital and prison. Working with maternity and child health staff, the team reviewed relapse prevention support for pregnant women. In addition, discussions were held to address concerns raised about youth vaping.



Network Spotlight: UKOTs Clinical Psychologist Network

In early 2020, the UKOTs programme established a network of clinical psychologists. This was prompted by a sole psychologist on island who was seeking a peer network of colleagues in a similar setting. Since then, a membership of 5-8 psychologists have connected virtually every 2-3 months.

Initial discussions focused on COVID-19 and undertaking clinical work amidst the need for physical distancing. Since then, sessions have taken the form of a short introduction to a topic followed by discussion. Topics have included cultural issues and diversity, undertaking research, protecting anonymity in small communities, online and telepsychology, challenges of remote supervision, cognitive testing and working with young people.

Dr Neti Murphy (Falklands): "It is an outstanding source of professional support and development, and has opened opportunities for collaborative international research, but more importantly (especially for those of us in remote and rural OTs), it has created a supportive community of psychologists who work in settings that can otherwise feel somewhat isolated."

Dr Antonia Hawkins (Cayman): "The group has provided supportive connections; illuminated common challenges across our diverse, small communities; shared resources and ideas; and elicited many interesting discussions in a relaxed, friendly setting. Beyond that, despite living in a place so small it is often left off globes, I now feel connected to a wide-spread OT family working together to help us better support our local communities."

Reflections from Sarah Payne Riches: EPH Conference

The UKOTs Programme recently hosted delegates from 7 UKOTs at the European Public Health (EPH) Association Conference in Dublin. This was a professional development event for technical leads, a networking opportunity and a chance to hear from leading global experts.

The conference covered all aspects of Public Health but had a particular focus on sustainability and health, with significant coverage of food and commercial determinants of health, workforce, and mental health. There was also a specific health promotion track, and the programme organised a side event with several of the panel/workshop speakers. The programme also hosted workshops to focus on specific learning opportunities and knowledge sharing.

The conference was an excellent opportunity for networking with global experts and other health improvement specialists working on similar issues to those experienced in the Caribbean and in the South Atlantic.

UKOT delegates stated that they found the experience valuable and relevant to their job, and that workshops were useful for sharing knowledge and experiences with other UKOT colleagues.

From the programme's perspective, it was exceptionally helpful to hear from delegates about their current health improvement priorities and challenges. Equally, it was a real pleasure to get to know each of the delegates a bit better and spend some time chatting about all things related to public health!



UKHSA Conference 2023

Over two days in November, members from the UKOTs Programme attended the UKHSA Conference in Leeds, UK. There were a number of posters and presentations from the team:

1. Implementation of FilmArray Syndromic Testing in Small UK Overseas Territory Laboratories: Strengthening Clinical Outcomes, Biosecurity, and Response. Authors: John Lee, Matthew Dryden and Natalie Wright
2. Assessing the baseline: Establishing an Infection Prevention Control Programme in a small island territory. Authors: Dr Tiffannie Skerritt, Janice Toplass and Dr Avneet Shahi
3. Developing an Infection Prevention and Control Network in UK Overseas Territories
Authors: Janice Toplass, Lara Kontos and Kara Ellis.
4. Risk and Capacity Self Assessment Toolkit for the UK Overseas Territories chemical hazards.
Authors: Lydia Izon Cooper, Mari Langreiter, Nicholas Brooke, Eirian Thomas, Haydn Cole, Raquel Duarte Davidson and David Broughton

