

## Welcome

This publication provides updates for colleagues and partners across UKHSA and the Overseas Territories

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## Reflections: UKHSA UKOTs Public Health Conference 2024

“The UKOTs Public Health Conference 2024 was held from the 25th to the 27th of June in Manchester, UK. The theme of this year’s conference was **Navigating the Future: Leadership and Workforce Development in Health Security**. The conference highlighted some of the unique challenges that CMO’s face in leading health security in the Overseas Territories, as well as the passion and commitment from them in improving health security for their populations. I was impressed by the active participation, thought-provoking questions, and valuable discussions. This really contributed to the vibrant and intellectually stimulating atmosphere of the event. The level of engagement in the room was inspiring, particularly around the challenges and achievements shared. We look forward to continuing the collaboration, knowledge sharing and commitment to drive progress and improve health security in the UK Overseas Territories.”

*Susan Ismaeel - Programme Manager, UKOTs Programme, UKHSA*

“A huge thank you to everyone who participated in the UKOTs Public Health Conference for 2024! It was a fantastic opportunity to build relationships old and new, and to share expertise and experiences from across the UK Overseas Territories. It was a pleasure to host you in Manchester and we look forward to hosting you again next year.”

*Natalie Wright - Head of Programme, UKOTs Programme, UKHSA*



## Network Spotlight: Epidemiology

Established in July 2022, the UKOTs Epidemiology Network brings together colleagues working in epidemiology or related areas from across the UKOTs, aiming to provide a safe forum for discussing challenges, sharing best practices, peer support, and professional development opportunities. The Network meets virtually every 4-6 weeks and recent sessions have covered a diverse range of topics. In May 2024, data scientists from UKHSA presented on the opportunities and considerations around using generative AI (such as ChatGPT and Copilot) in epidemiology. April saw a well-attended workshop on scientific and abstract writing, drawing participants from various disciplines. The theme of the February session was outbreak investigation, featuring presentations on spatial epidemiology and an MRSA outbreak in Bermuda.

Looking ahead, the Network plans to spotlight the non-communicable disease registers project in St Helena and Anguilla being carried out by the University of the West Indies, sharing learnings and best practices from this initiative. Additionally, an upcoming session on gender equality in epidemiology with an expert in the field from the London School of Economics will address the importance of incorporating gender into surveillance and reporting in order to reduce health outcome inequities. For further information or to join the Epidemiology Network, please contact [ukots.programme@ukhsa.gov.uk](mailto:ukots.programme@ukhsa.gov.uk).

## Behavioural science intervention development training

In June, Riinu Pae and Richard Amlôt from the Behavioural Science and Insights Unit (BSIU) led a two-day training on behavioural science intervention development in Hamilton, Bermuda. Organised by the Bermudan Ministry of Health, the event brought together 18 public health practitioners and clinicians.

Participants were guided through all intervention design steps, from choosing target behaviours and conducting a 'behavioural diagnosis' to designing, optimising, and evaluating interventions. The training, based on established frameworks, covered both gold-standard approaches and pragmatic adaptations. It also included a refresher on research methods and data collection for evidence-informed decision-making.

A standout feature was the collaborative group work, where attendees developed interventions for real-life issues. An exercise involving think-aloud interviews to gather feedback on a poster sparked lively discussions on engaging the community and stakeholders.

The training was highly praised for its engaging delivery and content. BSIU plans to refine and deliver it to other UK Overseas Territories' teams. For more information, please contact [Riinu.Pae@ukhsa.gov.uk](mailto:Riinu.Pae@ukhsa.gov.uk).



## TCI Cholera Exercise and After Action Review

As part of the UKOTs Programme, Paige Rufus, Ian Rufus and James Cowan deployed to the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) in June 2024 for a week to undertake a Cholera Exercise and After Action Review (AAR). The two-day event was well attended with representation and inter-agency collaboration from 12 organisational stakeholders, with 33 participants taking part.

One of the highlights of our trip was a tour of the hospital, which was an enlightening experience. We were able to see first-hand the impressive facilities and meet with the dedicated staff who shared valuable insights into their operations and patient care. On the final day, we got to enjoy a trip to the beach, which was a wonderful way to relax and unwind after a productive week. It provided a great opportunity for the team to bond and reflect on our achievements in a beautiful setting.

The AAR results will be formalised in a report to be shared with the Chief Medical Officer (CMO), which will help to inform updating the plan.

