

Welcome

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

If you have any queries, feedback or contributions please contact: UKOTs.Programme@ukhsa.gov.uk

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Driving Quality: How the Montserrat Care Certificate is transforming care in Montserrat

The Care Certificate is a set of 15 standards, originally developed by Health Education England, aimed to support the development of health and care support workers (HCSW) to ensure they have the skills, knowledge and behaviour to provide compassionate, safe and high-quality care.

In Montserrat, this includes having a broad range of responsibilities and often stepping in to help where required due to its small workforce. Working closely with the Nurse Educator, Sister Foster, and Nurse Director, Nurse Daley, the Care Certificate was contextualised to be appropriate for the health system in Montserrat, while still meeting Care Quality Commission standards.

Twenty participants took part in a Care Certificate pilot in Montserrat, with 18 completing the training. The certification included presentations from specialists on topics such as nutrition, environmental health and safeguarding, with quizzes to test knowledge.



The evaluation revealed that 81% of participants strongly agreed that completing the Care Certificate improved their skills and knowledge to do their job effectively, with 75% agreeing that they felt confident in their ability.

The Care Certificate had further impact by:

- Driving interest in the healthcare field
- Developing leadership skills for assessors
- Building the confidence and skills of HCSW
- Improving the quality of care provided in Montserrat

"I have enjoyed gaining knowledge, new insights and skill sets while doing the Care Certificate program which helps me to be more competent and more confident in my day to day work activity"

- Care Certificate Participant

Montserrat are looking forward to launching its second cohort in the coming months. This is an important step forward in ensuring that entry level health staff have the skills they need, and are developing a more resilient health and social care workforce in Montserrat – potentially serving as an example to other small island contexts.

Colleagues in Montserrat have developed an amazing video highlighting the success from implementing the Care Certificate which you view here: <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/ozws3g6k48v9gz3974qzm/Care-Certificate-Corrected.mp4?rlkey=who55mzxz0ticna8fq14m8yk1&e=2&st=7v4j0a3c&dl=0>

Network Spotlight: Laboratory Networks

The UKOT Clinical Microbiology Laboratory Network and UKOT Environmental Testing Laboratory Network meet quarterly online, with network activity and communications happening throughout the year. Participants include Clinical and Environmental Scientists/Technicians and Physician Consultants in Clinical Microbiology. Guest speakers from CARPHA, PAHO and UKHSA also attend. Many UKOTs have small and remote Clinical and Environmental Microbiology Laboratories, who are subject to many challenges not seen in Europe, South America or the USA. These networks are therefore significant in the context of UKOT Laboratories, providing a forum for the laboratories to contribute to the agenda. The premise of the virtual network is to foster public health microbiology and strengthen technical collaboration and knowledge within UKOT Laboratories. Another aim of the networks are to leverage technical expertise and support from UKHSA, and our regional partners CARPHA and PAHO. The groups also discuss laboratory accreditation, safety, exchange opportunities, and develop leadership skills.

UKOT Clinical Microbiology Laboratory Network and a Fond Farewell to Ms Everette Duncan-Smith

In our last Clinical Microbiology meeting, a fond farewell was given to Ms Everette Duncan-Smith. Everette, who is the Laboratory Coordinator in Anguilla, is retiring after 42 years of service and was recently instrumental in the delivery of the UKOT Antibiotic Testing Workshop last year. We all thanked Everette for her valuable contributions to the group and wished her a happy and healthy retirement. Infectious diseases are emerging at an increased rate and include the first case in recent decades of Measles in the Caribbean, a new more infectious strain of Mpox, and the worldwide resurgence of Gonorrhoea, Syphilis, Avian Influenza, Dengue Fever, Vibrio Cholera - the list goes on. The network provides a space to discuss the latest developments in detection methods for pathogens. Another key area that the network has focused on is strengthening bacteriology and antibiotic susceptibility testing in response to the worldwide antibiotic resistance emergency which is acute in the Caribbean region.

UKOT Environmental Testing Laboratory Network

Environmental testing laboratories are essential for effective public health and have similar challenges to clinical laboratories. The group focuses on public health microbiology, water and food testing, and chemical analysis. Recent subjects discussed include laboratory testing portfolios, external quality assurance schemes and laboratory databases. Antoinette Johnson (Cayman Islands Laboratory Manager) gave a great presentation on Recruitment Challenges and Solutions at our last meeting, as all laboratories in the UKOTs find recruitment of technicians challenging. The group benefited from a presentation on a commercial system for water microbiology recently set up in St Helena. The network is also facilitating work on a survey of environmental testing in the UKOTs to make the most of any opportunities for collaboration.

In summary, the networks provide an essential exchange between peers to consider potential laboratory strengthening. This is vital if we want to put into practice the lessons of COVID-19 and the importance of strong laboratory capability in response to emerging infectious disease threats. Please get in touch with John.E.Lee@ukhsa.gov.uk if you would like to learn more about these networks, or to join.

UKOTs Vector Control E-Learning Modules

The Medical Entomology and Zoonoses Ecology (MEZE) Team has recently launched a set of four E-Learning modules for UKOTs Vector Control teams. These modules aim to strengthen the knowledge of the diversity of mosquito species in the UKOTs, the diseases they transmit and how they can be identified and controlled. Vector Control Officers get a certificate after completing the short assessment portions of these four modules, and the MEZE Team is investigating options for accreditation.

Currently, the modules are being piloted with local colleagues in Montserrat and BVI, to gather comments from vector control officers on their content and format, to make them as useful as possible. When this feedback has been collected and incorporated into the E-Learning modules, they will be introduced to other OTs. Currently, this is looking to be in October 2024. The modules will be available on the E-Health platform and released by the UKHSA's E-learning team.



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