

About the HPA

The Health Protection Agency, is an independent organisation that was set up by the government in 2003 to protect the public from the health effects of infectious diseases and other hazards to health.

It does this by providing support, advice and information to the general public, to health professionals, to national and local government and to other organisations that play a part in protecting health.

The HPA identifies and responds to health hazards and emergencies caused by infectious disease, hazardous chemicals, poisons or radiation.

It also makes sure the nation is ready for future threats to health that could happen naturally, accidentally or deliberately.

The HPA combines public health and scientific knowledge, research and emergency planning within one organisation - and works at international, national, regional and local levels.

The HPA work is underpinned by research and gathering the best possible evidence. It has a history of translating this intelligence into actions that directly help patients, such as new vaccines and treatments.

Please visit www.hpa.org.uk to learn more about the HPA and its work.

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June 2009
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Exercises

Emergency Response



Exercises and events team

The Exercises and Events team run a series of exercises across the country on behalf of the Department of Health to enable the health service to improve preparedness to new or re-emerging threats, to naturally occurring events, and to chemical, biological or radiological incidents. This is done in conjunction with the regional HPA, through the Regional Health Emergency Planning Adviser and the Strategic Health Authority.



Preparing for major incidents

Health-led exercises are the best way to explore whether training has been effective and whether healthcare organisations are sufficiently prepared to respond to incidents and outbreaks when they occur.

HPA run exercises, evaluate the emergency health plans already in place, helping to ensure that the health services can respond in a rapid and co-ordinated way to any deliberate release of chemical, biological or radiological agents.

Each exercise involves coordinating across a wide cross-section of organisations on a national, regional and local level. This includes the Department of Health, other government agencies, NHS organisations, local authorities and other blue light services.

Additionally exercises have been designed and delivered for other national organisations, tailored to their specific needs.



The Exercises team delivers:

- Field exercises involving multi-agency response to casualties involved in a 'real' (enacted) incident
- Command post exercises across government departments, national and international boundaries, including 27 EU member states
- Desktop exercises with scenarios which encourage discussion on the multi-agency response, with an emphasis on health
- Development of 'off the shelf' desktop exercises, which can be tailored to be run at any level

For further information on this year's exercise programme please contact the exercises team.

