



**THE GOVERNMENT REPLY TO THE
EIGHTH REPORT FROM THE HOUSE OF
COMMONS SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY SELECT
COMMITTEE
SESSION 2002-2003 HC 415-I**

THE SCIENTIFIC RESPONSE TO TERRORISM

**Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State
for the Home Department
by Command of Her Majesty
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THE SCIENTIFIC RESPONSE TO TERRORISM

Summary

1. The Government has pledged to combat terrorism and other threats to national security. We take this duty very seriously. While terrorism did not begin on 11 September 2001, recent international terrorist attacks have presented the UK and our allies with different challenges and we have responded by realigning our strategy and procedures to deal with this threat.
2. An important part of this has been the Government's commitment to harness the best science and technology available and the Committee has made some valuable recommendations in this area. The Government particularly welcomes its conclusion that the UK does not need a Department for Homeland Security. We also welcome the Committee's acknowledgement of areas in which the counter-terrorism programme has delivered exceptional results, such as the New Dimension Programme and our extensive links with the US.
3. The success of the counter-terrorism programme can be directly attributed to the Government's commitment to deliver capability levels commensurate with the terrorist threat, rather than using the amount of money spent as an indicator of progress. We note the recommendations on funding levels but, as the Committee acknowledges in its report, we must ensure that the resources we commit to the counter-terrorism programme and the measures we put in place as part of that programme are proportionate. We are confident that existing funding levels are appropriate, and that structures are in place to ensure that they are regularly reviewed and can be adjusted in response to changes in the threat.
4. The Government accepts the need to continue improving the coordination of civil counter-terrorism research. We are addressing this through a cross-government research programme that we are confident will add more value than the Committee's preferred option of a standalone Centre for Home Defence. We also agree that there remain some untapped opportunities in the way government engages with EU partners and the pharmaceutical industry on counter-terrorism research, and we undertake to exploit these more fully in future.
5. The Government accepts the need to continue developing the use of science within the Home Office, and undertakes to build upon measures it has already taken, such as the appointment of Professor Paul Wiles as Home Office Chief Scientific Adviser in 2002. However, it is important to stress that a great deal has already been achieved, and that the civil counter-terrorism research programme benefits not only from scientific expertise within the Home Office, but also from the world class knowledge base and expertise of other government departments, industry, academia and international partners.
6. Most of the Committee's recommendations on emergency and operational response are sensible and reflect the Government's thinking. We agree the need to ensure that first responders are well equipped and trained to deal with CBRN incidents and will continue to build on recent progress in this area. We also aim

to conduct more large scale exercises in order to further refine our response guidance and the way in which the emergency services work together.

7. The Committee's proposal for an ethical code of conduct for scientists is an interesting one that the Government is already exploring. We are also committed to ensuring that other security measures, such as the Export Control Act, do not unduly hinder research to develop countermeasures. The Committee also identified shortcomings in the Voluntary Vetting Scheme (VVS). The Government is aware of these and is addressing them, although the Committee has misunderstood that this scheme is primarily a counter-proliferation tool. The VVS was not designed as a tool to combat terrorism, where the target is amorphous and much more difficult to categorise than a state programme.

8. The Government completely rejects the criticisms within the report that suggest the Government is being less open than it need be or that fear of alarming the public is slowing down the drive to improve protection. We will continue to release information to the public, except where such disclosure would not be in the public interest. It would be entirely wrong to risk national security and public safety for the sake of full disclosure, and it is right that Ministers should exercise judgement on a case-by-case basis.

9. The Government also rejects the Committee's criticism that it was not given sufficient access to sensitive operational information during the inquiry. Ministers carefully considered all the Committee's requests for access to sensitive material and took a measured view of what should be disclosed in each case, based on the nature of the information and its relevance to the remit of the Committee's inquiry. Our primary concern in deciding what to disclose is always public safety.

10. Ministers agreed to almost all the Committee's requests for access to information and arranged several confidential oral and written briefings to supplement the extensive evidence given in the public hearings. However, in a small number of cases, Ministers judged that it would be wrong to disclose the information on the grounds that it would not be in the interest of the public to do so. It is right that disclosure of sensitive information should not be treated lightly, and the Government is satisfied that the Committee was given an appropriate level of access to such material given the remit of its inquiry.

11. In conclusion, the Government thanks the Committee for its report. The Government is committed to harnessing the best science and technology available as part of our counter-terrorism programme, and we will take the Committee's recommendations into consideration as we take the programme forward. However, it is important to realise that the response to terrorism, from protection to recovery, relies on more than technology alone. The development of capability requires a continued maintenance, development and improvement of all its components – equipment, guidance and procedures, training and control and coordination. We are confident that the Government's counter-terrorism programme, allied with over 30 years' experience of successfully dealing with domestic terrorism, will ensure that our people can continue to go about their business freely and with confidence.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

12. On 19 December 2002 the House of Commons Science and Technology Select Committee (STC) announced its intention to conduct an inquiry into the Government's scientific response to terrorism. The Committee wanted to examine how UK science is contributing to the country's defence against terrorist attacks; what research is being undertaken; how this research is coordinated; and how it is being harnessed to protect the UK population from terrorist attacks.

13. The Government submitted a cross-department memorandum for the Committee's consideration in February 2003. The Committee took six sessions of oral evidence between February 2003 and June 2003. Some of the evidence was submitted in private sessions or as confidential memoranda, due to its sensitive nature. Beverley Hughes, the Home Office Minister for Counter-Terrorism, appeared before the Committee on 30 June 2003.

14. The Committee published its final report on 6 November 2003. The Committee's recommendations and conclusions are addressed in turn below, giving the number of the relevant paragraph in the Committee's report. Where appropriate, recommendations (shown in bold) have been grouped and addressed in a single response.

The Threat

Recommendation 1: There seems to be a range of risk assessments, particularly within the Department of Health (DoH). It is not clear who in Government is responsible for determining what threats the UK should be responding to, and with what priorities. We have not established how risk assessments are informing Government policy and thus the scientific response. There should be a single assessment, informed by science and intelligence, which is communicated clearly to all those who need to make strategic decisions on funding allocations. We hope that the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre can fulfil this function. (Paragraph 16)

15. The Government rejects this recommendation, which appears to be based on a misunderstanding of the distinction between a 'threat assessment' and a 'risk assessment', as well as confusion over the role of the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC).

16. JTAC, which is the UK's centre of excellence and expertise on the threat from international terrorism, is not tasked with producing a catch-all risk assessment, just as the Department of Health is not in a position to assess threats. That is not its function nor does it reflect the expertise in that organisation. Instead, JTAC's threat assessments are used by customer departments to inform their own risk assessments, which then inform strategic spending decisions.

17. A 'threat assessment' is an analysis of the intent and capability of terrorists to carry out attacks, whereas a 'risk assessment' combines the threat assessment with assessments of vulnerabilities and impact to inform prioritisation and resource allocation decisions. Government has recognised that a proportionate response to terrorism must be based on a thorough assessment of the terrorist threat and the best scientific advice, and has put the necessary structures in place to facilitate this.

18. JTAC produces high quality, authoritative threat assessments that draw on information and advice from a wide range of relevant government and overseas partners. These assessments are regularly updated and communicated to all customer departments. It is then for departments to use their own expertise and experience together with JTAC's threat assessment to produce a risk assessment that informs their strategic resource allocation decisions and prioritisation. This activity is being coordinated by the Civil Contingencies Secretariat in the Cabinet Office, which is responsible for developing and maintaining the Planning Assumptions that underpin the UK Resilience Capabilities Programme. The Planning Assumptions, which are based on an explicit and auditable risk assessment, will be used to derive targets for the various capabilities that underpin the resilience of the UK. In turn, the readiness of the UK to respond to major disruptive challenges will be assessed against these targets.

19. The same process has been applied to the scientific response. Using JTAC's threat assessment and the expertise of key stakeholders, the Government has carried out an exercise to identify and prioritise areas where further research is needed in order to develop new or improve existing counter-terrorism capabilities. These priorities have now been agreed across government and will form the basis for future departmental funding bids.

The Government response

Recommendation 2: In some areas greater investment in CBRN home defence is required, either for research or to reflect that many parts of Government have been expected to expand their role. This must be reflected in their budgets. (Paragraph 25)

Recommendation 14: We have concerns about the funding of the HPA and the NRPB. We have been told that they have been asked to take on new functions but it is unclear whether adequate additional resources will be available to meet the challenges from CBRN terrorism. We recommend that any increase in their activities relating to CBRN countermeasures should be reflected in their budgets. The HPA should not be undermined so soon in its existence by a lack of funds. (Paragraph 64)

20. The Government does not share the Committee's concerns on funding. We agree that departments and agencies, including the Health Protection Agency (HPA) and the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB), must have budgets that reflect their role in the response to terrorism. Before deciding whether to increase budgets further it is important to establish what investment is required and its priority relative to each department's core programme. We are satisfied that departments have re-examined their priorities and that they have ensured that CBRN resilience work is properly funded.

21. The HPA is a new body that has sufficient funding to carry out all of its functions. These include carrying out health emergency planning and providing a health protection service (including investigation and management of outbreaks of infectious disease and chemical and radiation hazards and incidents).

22. We are confident that the NRPB has the budget to fulfil all its functions. The legislation setting up the NRPB gave it the competence to charge for specialist services and to apply for research grants on top of the core grant it receives from the Department of Health. The NRPB has been able to use these powers to supplement its resources accordingly.

23. In deciding how much to spend on research and what areas to focus spending on, we have been mindful that some areas cut across government and a clear lead had not been established. To ensure that coverage is comprehensive and that investments are as cost-effective as possible, the Home Office has led a cross-government exercise to identify the capabilities needed to respond to a CBRN terrorist incident, and to identify and prioritise the research needed to develop or strengthen these capabilities. The outcome is a clear view of the research required and its priority for funding that has been agreed across government, which will form the basis of bids for additional investment in research.

Recommendation 3: We recommend that the Government publish figures on its spending on CBRN countermeasures, before and after 11 September 2001, with an indication of how this money is being spent. (Paragraph 26)

24. The Government agrees that expenditure should be as transparent as possible. We will continue to announce counter-terrorism allocations, subject to security considerations, as we did when the Chancellor allocated an additional £330m of dedicated funding to counter-terrorism projects in the 2003 Budget.

25. However, we do not agree that publishing headline spending figures on CBRN countermeasures before and after 11 September 2001 is a sensible way of assuring the public that the Government is taking adequate measures to counter the wider terrorist threat. As the Committee acknowledges in its report, headline spending figures specifically for CBRN are difficult to distinguish in a standard budgeting process. Instead, the Government is looking at whether a meaningful headline figure for counter-terrorism can be collated.

Research, development and procurement

Recommendation 4: There has been no extensive effort that we can establish to identify the research needs to develop CBRN countermeasures and as a result there has been no clear statement of what is required. Without this, the research community is in no position to respond effectively and in a coordinated manner. (Paragraph 29)

26. The Government agrees that a clear statement of research requirements for CBRN countermeasures is necessary. The Government has carried out an exercise led by the Home Office to identify the capabilities needed to respond to a CBRN terrorist incident, and the research needed to develop or strengthen these capabilities. The exercise culminated in a workshop at which research needs were prioritised and agreed by all key departments.

27. The product was a clear view, agreed across government, of what research is required and its priority for funding, which will be converted into statements of requirements that can be used to commission scientific research. A committee of the Chief Scientists from key departments and the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser will scrutinise the programme and ensure that it is properly coordinated with their own department's existing core programme. Coordination outside government will be achieved through dialogue with the Research Councils and industry.

28. We are confident that this approach will facilitate a comprehensive, cost-effective and coordinated approach to counter-terrorism research.

Recommendation 5: There are few issues in which access to the best scientific expertise is more important than in the fight against terrorism. We welcome the Government's willingness to commission and fund Royal Society inquiries and urge it to consider providing the resources to the Society to produce a thorough and public appraisal of the role that science can play in combating terrorism. (Paragraph 30)

29. The Government welcomes the Royal Society's inquiry into the development of detection and decontamination technologies. Royal Society inquiries provide valuable insight since they offer a broad scientific viewpoint that is independent of government. However, as the Committee's inquiry has highlighted, the response to terrorism is an extensive subject covering a wide range of scientific disciplines. In the Government's view, a review as broad as the one suggested is unlikely to provide value for money.

Recommendation 6: In our view, UK home defence is too reliant on Dstl's military-derived technologies. We need a substantial and clearly focused research programme driven by the specific requirements of civil defence. (Paragraph 37)

Recommendation 54: We recommend that our proposed Centre for Home Defence take on the role of identifying restricted Dstl research data that could be of value to the civil and academic research effort and provide a mechanism for disseminating these data to relevant UK researchers. (Paragraph 216)

30. The Government does not agree that UK home defence is overly reliant on the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory's (Dstl) military technologies. The civilian CBRN programme draws on the best science available throughout government, academia and industry. For example, the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE), the Police Scientific Development Branch (PSDB), the Health Protection Agency (HPA) and the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) contribute to the research programme whilst the Scientific Advisory Panel for Emergency Response (SAPER) and the Chief Scientific Adviser to the Government provide additional scientific advice.

31. As was made clear in the oral hearings, Dstl rightly remains a major source of expertise and experience within government on chemical and biological issues and, although its primary focus is military, much of its underlying research base is directly applicable to help meet civilian CBRN requirements. There are already mechanisms in place to allow for controlled dissemination of restricted data to UK researchers with the appropriate security clearance.

32. As described in more detail at paragraphs 26-28 above, the Government has carried out an exercise, led by the Home Office, to identify the capabilities needed to respond to a CBRN terrorist incident and the research needed to develop new or strengthen existing civil response capabilities.

Recommendation 7: Despite regulating animal experimentation for many years, sponsoring the Forensic Science Service and having powers through the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 over the security of laboratories, we are strongly of the view that there is a weak scientific culture in the Home Office. The Office of Science and Technology has set up a Science Review Directorate to assess the scientific endeavours of Government departments. We recommend that it consider the Home Office a priority. (Paragraph 40)

33. The Government accepts the need to continue developing the use of science within the Home Office, and undertakes to build upon measures it has already taken. However, it is important to stress that a great deal has already

been achieved, and that the civil counter-terrorism research programme benefits not only from scientific expertise within the Home Office, but also from the world-class knowledge base and expertise of other government departments, industry, academia and international partners.

34. We welcome the Committee's support for the appointment of Professor Paul Wiles as Chief Scientific Adviser at the Home Office, which signals the Government's commitment to scientific excellence and its recognition of the need to improve the coordination of science across government. Since being appointed in late 2002, Professor Wiles has worked in consultation with Professor Sir David King (the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser and Head of the Office of Science and Technology) to improve the quantity, quality and use of science across the Home Office over time, and to ensure that interim measures are in place in high-priority areas. He has also worked with other departmental Chief Scientific Advisers to improve cross-government coordination by minimising overlaps and building on synergies.

35. The Home Office counter-terrorism programme has greatly benefited from this commitment. Having been identified as a high-priority area, scientists from the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) and the Police Scientific Development Branch (PSDB) were seconded into the CBRN Team and the Terrorism Protection Unit to ensure that the counter-terrorism programme has immediate and direct access to scientific expertise. We are confident that the scientific culture across the Home Office will continue to improve through the work of Professor Wiles and the Home Secretary.

Recommendation 8: Greater collaboration between Dstl and HPA at Porton Down could be very productive and would avoid duplication. We recommend that greater efforts are made to explore synergies and joint projects. (Paragraph 44)

36. The Government welcomes this recommendation and can report that the Health Protection Agency (HPA) at Porton Down and the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) actively collaborate on issues of mutual concern. For example, the Department of Health and the Ministry of Defence have jointly funded a project to develop the methodology for rapid vaccine development using bio informatics and gene transcription. There is regular dialogue over the use of special resources on both sites to avoid duplication, and HPA and Dstl wish to work together on the sharing of high containment facilities. There are regular meetings at Director level.

Recommendation 9: The establishment of a CBRN Team in the Home Office is important, and it is desirable that a single Department takes the lead, but there needs to be appropriate expertise within and available to other Departments. We are not satisfied that the Department for Transport has such expertise, or that it has a clear understanding of the route by which it could attain the information it would need to respond to a CBRN emergency. (Paragraph 45)

37. The Government does not accept this criticism. The Home Office is the lead Department in the event of a terrorist incident but, like all key stakeholders, the Department for Transport has access to all the scientific expertise it needs to fulfil its role within the counter-terrorism programme.

38. The Transport Security Directorate (TRANSEC) is primarily in the business of preventing and deterring attacks, while the emergency services are responsible for leading the response on the ground. In order to ensure that TRANSEC's preventive work is informed by the best scientific advice, it employs scientists who act in the 'intelligent customer' role and acquire scientific

advice from appropriate subject matter experts. For example, on counter-terrorism matters it follows the lead of the Home Office, and it consults the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) and the Police Scientific Development Branch (PSDB) on areas such as methods of coping with a particular threat that would be applicable to the transport environment. This network of contacts ensures that TRANSEC can quickly obtain the information it needs.

Recommendation 10: We are concerned that SAPER, as an advisory panel, has no resources to drive through change or initiate research. (Paragraph 46)

39. The Government does not share the Committee's concern. The principal role of the Scientific Advisory Panel for Emergency Response (SAPER) is to advise on the longer-term strategic scientific issues of emergency response, thereby complementing departments' existing mechanisms for obtaining scientific advice during a crisis. SAPER is not tasked with carrying out or commissioning primary research, and does not therefore require resources to do so.

40. In this advisory role, SAPER has already initiated change. Much of the strategic work undertaken has resulted in departments re-examining how they use strategic tools in planning and how closer cross-government working is invaluable in many areas. The Government considers recommendations made by SAPER and, once agreed, they are taken forward by the relevant department or agency, where the costs then fall for progressing the work. In the case of CBRN work, research requirements are raised for action within the Home Office CBRN Research Programme. In addition, the Chief Scientific Adviser to the Government, both as Chair of SAPER and in his wider advisory role, provides advice on the recommendations and how they are delivered.

41. The Government has allocated a budget to underpin any administrative expenditure incurred by SAPER; to date, this budget has been sufficient to meet all its requirements. It is anticipated that, under its terms of reference, it will be able to meet all future administrative expenditure. SAPER has a large number of permanent and affiliate members who are available at short notice to provide the necessary scientific advice.

Recommendation 11: The UK does not need a Department for Homeland Security but we do recommend the creation of a Centre for Home Defence as a Government agency, with the following features:

- **It would conduct or commission research and development aimed at strengthening the UK's technical capability to prevent, respond and mitigate the effects of a terrorist attack, in particular those using CBRN agents;**
- **It would be under the auspices of the Home Office within the remit of the Minister of State for Counter-Terrorism. SAPER would act as its scientific steering group;**
- **It would have its own research budget of no less than £20 million a year and would be responsible for conducting basic research, deriving new technologies for home defence and adapting military technologies for civil use;**
- **It would not conduct research on medical countermeasures but would have substantial input into and commission research conducted by the Department of Health (including the Health Protection Agency), the Medical Research Council and Dstl;**

- **It would have a physical presence in close proximity to a centre of academic scientific excellence;**
- **It would identify relevant research expertise within universities and Research Council Institutes;**
- **It would form strong links with academic and Government research laboratories overseas. (Paragraph 48)**

42. The Government welcomes the Committee's support for the position it has held since 9/11, which is that the UK does not need a Department for Homeland Security. As the Committee acknowledges, existing arrangements already facilitate effective cross-government coordination of the UK counter-terrorism programme.

43. The Government also agrees the need to continue improving the cross-government coordination of civil counter-terrorism research. The Committee is right to regard this area as crucial to the success of the overall counter-terrorism programme, and has identified some important areas for improvement. We agree that a civil research programme should include the following features alluded to in the Committee's recommendation:

- an emphasis on civil requirements;
- sufficient funding;
- strong links with research centres of excellence in the UK and overseas; and
- a structured, cross-government research programme.

44. The Government shares these goals and is working to achieve them. A dedicated Centre for Home Defence could have some advantages, such as ensuring that dedicated resources and expertise are available, focusing work specifically on the civil requirement and, by making civil research more visible, improving accountability. However, the Government does not agree that the most effective way to deliver this outcome is the creation of a new government agency.

45. In addition to the cost of the programme itself, a Centre for Home Defence would necessitate the expensive and time-consuming construction of specialist facilities and the recruitment and retention of scientists and support staff. There would also be a high risk of losing coordination and synergy with related departmental core programmes. For example, the response to a bio-terrorism incident cannot be considered separately from the general control of infectious disease since both draw on the same resources and response. We do not feel that these sacrifices would be outweighed by the limited value such a centre would add to the UK's research capabilities.

46. The Government is already taking measures that are less costly, in terms of time and money, and that have begun to deliver the desired level of coordination.

47. The Government is in the process of strengthening coordination across government, academia, and industry through a cross-government research programme driven by the specific requirements of civil defence. This is described in more details at paragraphs 26-28 above. This approach has preserved many of the advantages of the current arrangements but allows better control of the work programme. We are confident that the programme will deliver the benefits of a standalone centre without the considerable restructuring costs.

Recommendation 12: We understand that science at the Ministry of Defence will be the subject of a review by the OST Science Review Directorate. This should consider the use being made of academic research by Dstl and what mechanisms could be introduced to maintain quality control at regular intervals. (Paragraph 53)

48. The Government accepts this recommendation. The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) and the Ministry of Defence would welcome appropriate review of Dstl's use of academic research.

49. As reported to the Committee, Dstl makes wide use of academic, industrial and collaborative links. Approximately 20% of Dstl's chemical and biological research programme is undertaken through extramural research placed with universities and industry. In 2001, Dstl published 133 papers in peer review journals co-authored with 48 different academic organisations from the UK and abroad.

50. A review of the use of science at the Ministry of Defence would take place as part of a rolling programme of reviews of government departments' science by the new Science Review Directorate. The terms and timing of the review have yet to be decided.

Recommendation 13: The formation of the Health Protection Agency is a positive move in terms of ensuring good public health surveillance and combating infectious serious disease, and it should also enhance the UK's CBRN counter-terrorism measures. The split of the PHLS between national and local functions within NHS Trusts has been given much attention and we do not plan to repeat the arguments, except to say that expertise in the identification and epidemiology of possible biological agents must be retained at a local level. (Paragraph 60)

51. The Government accepts this recommendation. The Health Protection Agency (HPA), through its regional and local health protection teams and the appointment of regional microbiologists, has taken steps to ensure that expertise in the identification and epidemiology of biological agents is retained. In addition, the HPA is delivering specialist training to microbiologists and biomedical scientists in hospital laboratories. The nine regional HPA laboratories provide specialist diagnosis facilities and are the hub of a network within each region providing rapid access to the HPA's specialist and reference laboratories.

Recommendation 14: *See response to recommendation 2, paragraphs 20-23.*

Recommendation 15: We recommend that the HPA develop with industry a fast efficient vaccine production facility which combines a service to the tax-payer and benefits participating companies. This should form part of a long-term vaccine development strategy for Government. (Paragraph 73)

52. The Government notes the Committee's recommendation and is considering possible options, with a view to formalising a strategic plan by April 2004. A business case for a rapid vaccine production facility has already been drafted, but after serious consideration and discussions with the Ministry of Defence, the Department of Health has decided to define wider UK requirements more carefully before proceeding.

53. The establishment of an accredited manufacturing facility takes a number of years and, cognisant that demand was previously predicted to exceed supply by 2005, the Government has already taken steps to secure capacity. These include:

- **National Biomanufacturing Centre** – a £30m government-owned biomanufacturing centre is under construction in Speke and will become operational in 2005
- **Dstl public-private partnerships** – the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) is establishing partnerships with private companies at an early stage of vaccine development to secure manufacturing capacity from pilot-stage through to large-scale manufacturing for biodefence vaccines. The Department of Health liaises closely with the Ministry of Defence to ensure public health needs are taken into account where appropriate
- **Expansion of Chiron-Powderject plant** – the Government is contributing £20m towards the £85m investment by Chiron-Powderject to expand their vaccine manufacturing facilities in Speke. However, agreements analogous to those of Dstl may be required to secure access
- **Biosciences Innovation & Growth Team (BIGT)** – recommendations from the bioprocessing/biomanufacturing working group of this Department of Health/Department of Trade & Industry supported government/industry initiative were reported recently and are being considered

54. These initiatives are designed to help both increase capacity and improve access to vaccine manufacturing capabilities. However, they are unlikely to provide the vaccine-specific large-scale manufacturing capacity required in the face of a national infectious disease outbreak. Consequently, further work is underway to evaluate the collective effect on capacity of these initiatives, identify the remaining capacity deficit and investigate both available and novel avenues for cost effectively securing the UK's vaccine supply. These initiatives include:

- **Stakeholder consultation on current gaps** – the Health Protection Agency (HPA) is an important stakeholder in the vaccine development process (i.e. planning, R&D and production) and the Department of Health is liaising with them and other stakeholders in order to establish current gaps
- **Identification of emerging infections** – a multidisciplinary National Expert Panel on New and Emerging Infections (NEPNEI), which includes HPA representatives, has been formed to 'horizon scan' for emerging infections. It will provide guidance for public health provision, including longer-term strategic needs
- **Assessment of future manufacturing needs** – the Department of Health is working with a wide range of partners to assess future needs, current capacity and any deficit. This process will include a consideration of emergency vaccine needs
- **Assessment of existing opportunities** – the Department of Health is presently in discussions with a number of parties regarding existing opportunities that could be harnessed to increase vaccine-manufacturing capacity

55. These programmes will examine the potential effect of ongoing initiatives, identify the remaining capacity deficit and investigate potential solutions. This work should be completed and a clear strategic plan formalised by around April 2004.

Recommendation 16: The Government's decision not to conduct a mass vaccination programme for smallpox is correct in our view. The reported side effects of the vaccine make this option unattractive. Should a safer vaccine become available, we would expect the Government to reconsider this policy yet the Minister refused to address this point. We have heard of doctors' concerns about the "worried well". A safe vaccine might prove cost effective, provide reassurance to millions and possibly act as a deterrent to any attack. (Paragraph 79)

56. The Government welcomes the Committee's support for government policy on mass vaccination.

57. Department of Health policy for smallpox vaccination, as outlined in the smallpox plan, has been to procure vaccine and to vaccinate a cohort of first responders. Although availability of vaccine is important in mounting a response to any incident, the plan is based on public health assessments of risk versus benefit and the targeted use of vaccine to help control disease. In the event of a UK case of smallpox, the most suitable first-line public health measure is to vaccinate those who have had significant contact with the case(s). This approach is known as "ring vaccination".

58. The World Health Organization (WHO) has not made any recommendation about the use of the vaccine for protecting civilian and military personnel against the deliberate dissemination of the smallpox virus by terrorists. Each country is expected to make a risk assessment in respect of its own population. This risk assessment has been undertaken in the UK based on available vaccine. However, the smallpox plan allows for constant review if circumstances change, for example if new and safer smallpox vaccines were developed.

Recommendation 17: In its initial procurement of personal protective equipment after 11 September 2001, the DoH acted too hastily and without consulting sufficiently widely. We are content that problems are being remedied but at considerable expense and at a cost to the public's and health professionals' confidence in the Department's competence. (Paragraph 84)

59. The Government does not accept the criticism that it acted too hastily or without undertaking sufficient consultation with regard to its initial procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE).

60. An expert group, which included ambulance service and accident & emergency representatives, was working on the development of standardised NHS PPE prior to 11 September 2001. In consultation with experts from the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) at Porton Down, this group moved rapidly to take account of the new terrorist threat in its thinking, and produced a specification and testing programme for a standardised NHS protective suit to provide protection for front-line staff. Once the specification and suit were developed, a call-off contract was put in place and funding made available to allow NHS trusts to purchase the necessary equipment. As it was not possible to accelerate provision against the new specification, arrangements

were made to purchase appropriate available PPE as an interim measure to address the new threats. The Department of Health made the interim PPE available promptly, and the full rollout was completed by March 2002.

61. The new standardised PPE and decontamination facilities, with associated training, were made available to all NHS trusts from March 2002. This provision replaced the PPE provided on an interim basis. Every acute hospital and ambulance service is now equipped with standardised PPE and 360 mobile decontamination units have been issued to allow safe working and decontamination of patients.

62. As is often the case during the introduction of new equipment, some design problems were identified. These were rapidly overcome by simple remedial measures and the equipment subsequently modified and improved by the manufacturer in a phased programme that was completed at the end of July 2003. The Department of Health does not accept that considerable expense was incurred. The rectification and improvement programme was taken forward promptly, and in consultation with NHS users. The manufacturer met the cost of the rectification work, with the Department of Health funding additional improvements to the suits at a cost of some £142,471. Most importantly, the Department of Health acted quickly and decisively throughout this process, and at all times ensured that operational capability and safety of staff was maintained.

63. Work has started on a second-generation suit and the option of using common equipment with the Police and Fire Services is also being explored. To improve bank stock and supplies held by hospitals, 2,500 additional suits have been supplied and a stockpile established. A Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Health and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister ensures Fire Service support in the event of a need for mass decontamination.

Recommendation 18: The use of NHS Direct data to give an early warning of a CBRN attack is a useful addition to the existing surveillance techniques but it should form part of an integrated surveillance system that uses data from a variety of sources. (Paragraph 86)

64. The Government recognises this requirement. The Health Protection Agency (HPA) is presently integrating all the sources of surveillance information, including NHS Direct data. In addition, the HPA is currently establishing a medical intelligence unit that will analyse and assess all sources of information relating to potential biological, chemical and radiological hazards. This work will support the provision of timely and authoritative information to the NHS.

Recommendation 19: The World Health Organization provides a valuable resource in the response to CBRN terrorism and it should not be under-resourced. We recommend that the Government raise this issue at the appropriate forum. (Paragraph 87)

65. The Government accepts the sentiment behind this recommendation. With 192 Member States, the World Health Organization (WHO) is the leading global public health body. It provides highly respected scientific and technical advice, which was amply demonstrated in the recent SARS outbreak. It is, therefore, well placed to support the planning or development of an effective, coordinated response to the threat of CBRN terrorism.

66. On the issue of the WHO's resourcing of its response capability, this has already been raised at the recent Global Health Security Action Group (GHSAG) meeting in Berlin. The Ministerial declaration calls upon the WHO to find sufficient resources and priority for its CBRN-related activity from within its existing budget. There will be an opportunity to reaffirm these points at a future World Health Assembly, where the WHO's response preparations will be promulgated via a technical briefing.

Recommendation 20: We accept there has been contact between Government and the pharmaceutical industry to discuss medical countermeasures but it has been insufficient to enable companies to adapt their own research programmes with confidence. (Paragraph 93)

Recommendation 21: We are pleased that our probings have prompted action to improve the dialogue with the pharmaceutical industry and that Mr Hutton accepts the criticism that the existing dialogue with the pharmaceutical industry has been inadequate. We are less pleased that it took Ministers so long to recognise the crucial role that industry must play in developing biomedical countermeasures. We look forward to learning of his progress in the Government's response to this report. (Paragraph 94)

Recommendation 22: The UK is a relatively small consumer for the global pharmaceutical industry and it is in a weak position to provide powerful incentives to develop particular products. A UK BioShield is not justified but there is much the Government could achieve, in collaboration with the pharmaceutical industry, to improve the market for medical CBRN countermeasures. (Paragraph 99)

67. The Government shares the Committee's view that the pharmaceutical industry has a key role to play in the development of medical countermeasures to CBRN threats and continues to actively engage industry. As the Committee recognised, economic incentives on the scale of the US BioShield programme are neither viable nor valid for the UK. However, we recognise the need for greater joint working between government and the pharmaceutical industry and incentives for the industry are provided through a number of initiatives, which include:

- **Ongoing procurement programmes** – a range of programmes involving over 40 companies have been undertaken, providing an economic rationale for the companies to develop specific medical countermeasures, such as vaccines, immunoglobulins, antibiotics and nerve agent and radiation antidotes.
- **Face-to-face meetings** – senior Department of Health officials have met with key industry leaders to discuss strategic CBRN needs and the potential for industry involvement. Since the Government submitted its written evidence to the Committee in February there has been a renewed commitment to this important dialogue.

68. More generally, the Government maintains close working relationships at Ministerial and official level with the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries, including regular liaison meetings where issues of strategic interest can be discussed. Despite this ongoing liaison, the Government is not complacent and is committed to making further progress in this important area. As the Minister for Health, John Hutton, told the Committee, the Government is actively working to improve the incentives for leading pharmaceutical companies to invest in vaccine research and production.

Recommendation 23: The international surveillance of biological agents should embrace animal and plant diseases as well as human ones. We recommend that the Government take action to improve the coordination between the relevant international bodies.(Paragraph 104)

69. The global situation with regard to animal diseases is monitored closely by the European Commission (EC) and the UK, through direct contact with third country trading partners, via the Office Internationale des Epizooties (OIE) and through the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). This is partly achieved through a system of international (EU, OIE, FAO) and national reference laboratories, many of which exist in the UK. The EU has harmonised controls aimed at preventing the introduction and spread of exotic animal diseases and at eradicating diseases when they occur and works closely with the OIE and FAO to establish standards for preventing the spread of disease.

70. The FAO hosts the secretariat of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) whose treaty states that parties shall conduct surveillance for pests and develop and maintain adequate information on pest status in order to support the categorisation of pests, and for the development of appropriate phytosanitary measures. The IPPC is wholly concerned with plant health and not human health issues. The secretariat is a very small part of the FAO, it is severely under resourced and has no knowledge or expertise in the area of human pathogens. It would be more effective if the WHO approached the FAO about this issue requesting that they make it a priority. Issues could be raised with the FAO or the IPPC secretariat by the UK, but a coordinated approach by the EC would have much greater impact. The EC coordinates and oversees the surveillance activities of Member States with respect to invasive pests and diseases harmful to plants and it sets standards to restrict the spread of these organisms into new areas.

Recommendation 24: The New Dimension programme seems a sensible and comprehensive attempt to address the CBRN terrorist threat, for which we commend the Fire Service. (Paragraph 108)

71. The Government welcomes the Committee's recognition of the action being taken through the New Dimension Programme to enhance the capability of the Fire and Rescue Service to respond effectively to catastrophic terrorist incidents. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has already deployed interim capability for mass decontamination to the Fire and Rescue Service and is due to deploy permanent capability by Spring 2004.

72. Nick Raynsford, the Fire Service Minister, announced on 19 September 2003, the Fire and Rescue Service is to benefit from £132m capital investment over three years to take forward Phase Two of the Programme. This additional investment will include the purchase of ultra modern search and rescue equipment as well as leading to the creation of a central command and control and training infrastructure.

Recommendation 25: We had been assured that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister would resume publication of the New Dimension newsletters to inform the fire community of the programme's progress. To our knowledge this has not occurred and we recommend that this takes place without delay. (Paragraph 110)

73. The Government took action in advance of the Committee's recommendation to reintroduce publication of its New Dimension newsletters.

74. Newsletter 4, focusing on the project's first phase of work relating to mass decontamination, was issued on 16 September 2003 to regional planners for onward distribution to brigades. Newsletter 5, reporting progress on phase 1 and introducing detail on urban search and rescue being taken forward under phase 2, is due for publication in early 2004.

75. During the interval between the issue of newsletters 3 and 4 ODPM continued to communicate information on the New Dimension Programme through regional planners, its regional resilience network and through articles in the specialist press.

Recommendation 26: Government had shown a willingness to communicate the progress of the New Dimension programme, which we welcome. It is our view, however, that the fire dispute did not provide adequate grounds to change this policy. We regret that Ministers apparently felt unable to give the real reason for not cooperating with this part of our inquiry. It is a sorry indictment of the Government's policy on releasing information on security issues that Government witnesses were unaware of, or unwilling to stick to, the reasons advanced by Ministers for refusing permission for them to appear in public. (Paragraph 111)

76. The Government rejects this criticism. Government policy on releasing information has been entirely clear and consistent throughout this inquiry and accords with the principles of the Code of Practice on Access to Government Information. Our prime consideration in deciding what to disclose is always the safety of the public. In this case ODPM Ministers were concerned that the Committee's investigation would include discussion and disclosure of sensitive operational issues that could pose a threat to public safety.

77. In his letter of 12 June 2003 to the Committee, Nick Raynsford, the responsible ODPM Minister, indicated willingness to supply information on the scientific factors taken into account in action being taken, through the New Dimension Programme, to reinforce the capability of the Fire Service to respond to CBRN incidents. The Minister was concerned that, although the Programme was not classified, evidence should be presented in a way that would remove any risk that sensitive information about the scope, effectiveness or deployment of New Dimension capability might be disclosed and threaten public safety. For this reason the Minister offered to supply the Committee with a confidential memorandum setting out the scientific and biological evidence underpinning the New Dimension Programme. In response to assurances that the focus of the Committee would not include discussion of current capabilities, the Minister agreed that ODPM officials could give oral evidence in a private session covering the Programme's scientific, technological and research aspects.

78. It is wrong to suggest the Minister was unable to give the real reason for not cooperating with part of the inquiry. Throughout, the Minister's prime concern was the protection of public safety and not, as the Committee suggests, sensitivities surrounding the fire dispute. However, as ODPM officials told the Committee when they gave evidence, issues surrounding the deployment of the equipment during the dispute had national security implications.

79. Following receipt of the session transcript, Ministers agreed that it could be made public after the removal of two references to sensitive information potentially useful to terrorists. It was entirely right for the Government to take measures to ensure that we do not divulge information that would pose a threat to national security and we make no apology for doing so. It is surprising that the Committee should criticise the Government given that Ministers subsequently

agreed, other than in respect of the two references mentioned, to declassify the whole session, in line with the Committee's request.

Recommendation 27: We welcome the move to install radiation detectors at ports and its public announcement. This will contribute to the public's confidence in the measures taken by the Government and could act as a deterrent to potential terrorist groups. The communication of this initiative is at odds with the Government's usual policy on CBRN countermeasures. We urge the Government to take a more consistent and open approach. (Paragraph 114)

80. The Government welcomes the Committee's support for this important measure, but does not agree that the communication of this initiative is at odds with government policy on counter-terrorism. It is entirely consistent with the Government's pragmatic approach, which is to assure the public that measures are in place for their protection, with the proviso that in some cases it would be wrong to specify the precise nature of those measures as this information would be of use to terrorists.

81. The Government keeps its communication guidelines under constant review and we will continue to explore areas where it is possible to give the public more information. As the implementation of the radiation detectors project begins, we will initiate a communications programme for HM Customs and Excise staff and the travelling public.

Recommendation 28: The Government's refusal to allow us to examine the technologies employed by the London Underground is wrong. We fear that the Government's refusal to discuss the problems simply creates the impression that it does not know how to solve them. (Paragraph 119)

82. The Government does not accept this criticism. The Government has a duty to protect sensitive information that could be of use to terrorists, and the operation of security systems in the London Underground is a highly classified area of work that falls into this category.

83. Throughout this inquiry, Ministers carefully considered all the Committee's requests for access to sensitive material before taking a measured view of what should be disclosed, based on the nature of the information and its relevance to the remit of the Committee's inquiry. In this case, Ministers judged that the potential harm to national security of disclosing the operational information outweighed the public interest in doing so. It is right that sensitive information should not be treated lightly, and the Government is satisfied that the level of disclosure is consistent with its responsibilities under the Code of Access to Government Information.

Recommendation 29: The HSE has made the case for a strong role in informing CBRN countermeasures but we do not have the impression that it has been sufficiently proactive in providing that advice nor adequately consulted by other parts of Government. It is right that the HSE has a degree of autonomy but it seems the Department for Work and Pensions provides little input to its activities. We believe that the HSE needs stronger ministerial direction which its sponsoring Department is either unable or unwilling to provide. (Paragraph 121)

84. The Government rejects this criticism. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) contributed to the written Home Office evidence to the Committee and gave oral evidence followed up by a classified letter clarifying certain issues raised at the hearing. No part of that evidence raises any issue that could have supported the Committee's latter conclusions, which it is felt are based on a misunderstanding of the position.

85. HSE disagrees that it is insufficiently proactive in respect of providing scientific expertise. HSE's Chief Scientific Adviser is already part of the cross-Whitehall network of Chief Scientific Advisers who meet on a regular basis to consider issues of common interest. HSE's scientists are represented on several cross-government Committees and are particularly valuable in supporting the Government's scientific work on general civil contingencies issues in relation to industry vulnerabilities and resilience, and specifically on the response to CBRN terrorism.

86. In addition to the scientific work, HSE's policy staff have been assisting the Cabinet Office with the development of the Civil Contingencies Bill (CCB), giving input based on a broad experience of industry. The CCB has classed HSE as a second-tier responder, which is appropriate given that HSE is not part of the emergency services. However the CCB recognises the special position of HSE's Nuclear Inspectorate. In discussions with other government departments, no opportunity is missed to explain how HSE's scientific and industrial experience could assist the overall government anti-terrorist strategy.

87. HSE does, however, accept that its strategic approach to civil contingencies issues could be more proactive. To address this, it has recently appointed a member of the Senior Civil Service with a remit to support and develop HSE's contribution to the Government's civil contingencies work.

88. HSE particularly welcomes the Committee's conclusion that HSE has not always been adequately consulted by other parts of government, as it has considerable expertise in relation to CBRN matters that many parts of government and the emergency services could call upon. HSE will therefore prepare a paper for a future meeting of the Chief Scientific Advisers Committee, setting out details of its scientific expertise and capabilities, and of its willingness to use this expertise, as appropriate, to support other parts of government.

89. Ministers at the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) strongly reject the criticism that insufficient support is given to HSE. They are particularly concerned that the Committee chose to develop and publish those critical comments without any basis in the recorded evidence and without giving DWP an opportunity to give evidence to the Committee.

90. HSE has kept DWP Ministers informed and briefed on all the issues covered by the Committee's inquiry, and they in turn have supported HSE wherever it has been appropriate to do so.

91. DWP has its own Chief Scientific Adviser, who also participates in the Whitehall network of Chief Scientific Advisers, and has supported the use of HSE's expertise on CBRN issues. DWP has extensive internal expertise in sciences commensurate with its responsibilities, particularly social research. DWP also has access to high quality independent advice on occupational diseases and accidents through the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council. DWP neither has nor needs its own laboratory. DWP Ministers therefore have access to internal and external independent scientific advice when necessary.

92. In the absence of evidence on such issues, the Committee may have misunderstood the roles of the Health and Safety Commission (HSC) and the HSE in relation to DWP. They are independent government bodies, reporting to DWP Ministers who are responsible to Parliament and who sponsor the HSC/E. However HSC/E also provide advice to a number of different departments, both in Whitehall and the devolved administrations. On civil contingencies issues, HSC/E would normally relate to the Home Office and the Cabinet Office and their Ministers, rather than seeking specific guidance from those at DWP.

Recommendation 30: TRANSEC is charged with providing security guidance to transport operators yet we are told that an important part of security will now be dealt with by another department. Transport operators need clear lines of communication with Government. We recommend that either the transport security is brought under the remit of the Home Office or that the DfT is left to deal with all transport security issues. (Paragraph 122)

93. In the Government's view, the lines of communication with transport operators are clear and the roles of the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Home Office in relation to the CBRN threat to the transport industries are quite distinct. DfT is the security regulator and as such provides support in relation to countermeasures for the full range of terrorist and other threats to the transport industries. The Home Office is the lead department for the Government's overall response to the threat from terrorism within the UK, including that from CBRN for which it provides a focal point. The two departments work closely together on the terrorist threat to transport. Transport operators regard the Transport Security Directorate (TRANSEC) as their primary point of contact on any security issue, including CBRN. They do not have to go to different departments for advice depending on the nature of threat.

94. The Committee is of the view that the issue of CBRN countermeasures in the UK transport system was 'curiously absent' from the Government's written evidence to the inquiry. It reported that no TRANSEC official gave evidence. However, it was not the intention of DfT to be unhelpful to the Committee. DfT submitted a written briefing to the Committee but the evidence that the Committee wanted to examine at the oral hearing was simply too sensitive.

95. DfT maintains clear lines of communication with the industries it regulates for transport security, and indeed this is an area of expansion. For example, in February 2003 DfT assumed responsibility for the regulation of security on the London Underground. This was not a criticism of the good job already being done by London Underground and the British Transport Police, but was in order to bring legal force to security measures and to give better focus to communications between all the parties involved.

96. The Committee can also rest assured that DfT is undertaking a substantial programme of work on the security of dangerous goods to ensure compliance with the recent amendments to the UN Model Regulations on the transport of dangerous goods (which were themselves introduced primarily due to a DfT initiative).

97. Thanks to the UK's existing security programmes in respect of the aviation, maritime and railways sectors, we are already delivering on the majority of the UN's recommendations, which are currently in the process of being adopted by the various international modal bodies with a view to their coming into effect by July 2005. Where there are gaps we shall ensure they are plugged as quickly as possible.

98. In respect of road transport, which represents the major concern in terms of its vulnerability to attack, DfT issued security advice in the immediate aftermath of the 11 September 2001 attacks. This advice is due to be replaced early in 2004 by a voluntary Code of Practice that has been developed in close cooperation with the road haulage industry. The Code of Practice is itself based on the United Nations recommendations currently being considered for adoption by ADR, which is the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) body responsible for the regulation of road transport in Europe.

Recommendation 31: We commend BAA on its initiative in working to develop technological solutions to the issue of CBRN security. We recommend that the Government assist BAA in its efforts and investigate how the US PROACT system could be tested in the UK. (Paragraph 128)

99. The Government welcomes and encourages initiatives by private sector organisations to address security issues which directly affect them. Such initiatives can be an important contribution to the national counter-terrorist effort. BAA have worked closely with DfT on a number of key developments. We anticipate that this mutually beneficial arrangement will continue. In particular, BAA (and other transport operators) are willing to give access to their operational facilities so that new technology can be trialled. This is a key aspect of development, as a 'real life' commercial environment invariably places greater demands on equipment than a laboratory environment and very different demands from a military environment.

100. The PROACT system (and the similar PROTECT system) is under development by the US Sandia National Laboratories, funded by the US Department of Homeland Security. The Government has been tracking its development and deployment for some time. Officials of the US and UK governments have met to discuss the requirements for such a system and the operational issues affecting deployment. The system is by no means completed and remains one of a number of possible techniques for monitoring transport nodes for chemical and biological agents.

Recommendation 32: The food industry has established practices to deal with tampering but concerted effort by an international terrorist organisation is a problem on a different scale. It would be regrettable if it allowed a misplaced confidence in its procedures to lead to vulnerabilities. (Paragraph 131)

101. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) is responsible for issues relating to the contamination of food. In the event that deliberate contamination led to a disruption of the supply of food to retail outlets in England, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) would take lead responsibility for this aspect. The FSA and DEFRA would continue to work closely together.

102. The Food Chain Emergency Liaison Group (FCELG), which is chaired by DEFRA and brings together stakeholders in the food chain, has considered the preparedness of industry. As a result of this, advice for trade associations to issue to their members has been agreed.

103. The security services provide advice to major food businesses on an individual basis. In addition, arrangements are in hand for members of the security services to brief the FCELG in the near future.

104. The Government and the food industry recognise that terrorist action directed at other economic sectors (e.g. the transport system or fuel supplies) would have a major impact on food distribution. We are therefore working closely with other government departments to ensure that, where appropriate, the emergency planning process takes the food industry into account. To this end, both the DTI and DfT have made presentations to the FCELG in the past year.

Recommendation 33: We recommend that the Government provide detailed guidance to companies on CBRN countermeasures and their development, and satisfy itself that it has the powers, if necessary, to demand the introduction of the necessary security measures. This should be complemented with a system of fiscal incentives or grants to offset the cost. (Paragraph 144)

105. The Government has established mechanisms for providing advice on protection against current terrorist threats to companies considered part of critical national infrastructure. Since Autumn 2001 this has included advice on countering CBRN threats and this work has received priority in staffing and research funding.

106. All this is effected through consensus rather than enforcement but the relative merits of these two approaches are kept under review. The practicalities of wider outreach are now being actively considered by a number of government departments, led by the Home Office.

Recommendation 34: We recommend that the Government consider a standard vetting scheme for workers at high risk facilities. This should not be compulsory and the Government should work with the industry to develop an efficient scheme with minimum bureaucracy. (Paragraph 145)

107. The Government continues to work closely with industry to advise on matters of protective security, including personnel security. Part of that ongoing work will involve considering the viability of vetting or screening arrangements for each industry/sector.

Emergency and operational response

Recommendation 35: We recommend that it should become a medium term aim to provide the ambulance service with a basic level of detector technology for CBRN incidents in high risk areas, along with the necessary training and access to scientific expertise. (Paragraph 153)

108. The Government recognises the importance of rapid and reliable detection, both at the scene of an incident and in acute hospitals. Work is currently underway to procure radiation monitors for all NHS accident and emergency (A&E) departments and personal radiation dosimeters for ambulance crews. At the same time, guidance and standard operating procedures for their use is being developed.

109. Work is also in hand to explore what equipment is available in the field of chemical detection technology – particularly for use in hospitals and by any specialist teams that may be developed to advance medical aid into the most contaminated areas at an incident. A range of devices is currently available, but the majority of these have been developed with a military application as the main focus, which limits the number of compounds that can be detected.

110. There are also potential operational issues associated with multi-organisational detection at the site of an incident that need to be carefully considered before detection equipment is provided more widely.

Recommendation 36: We recommend that the Government provide the means for all ambulance services to get access to CBRN training, regardless of their size. (Paragraph 154)

111. The Government has already taken steps to address the CBRN training needs of Ambulance Trust staff. The Department of Health has contributed funding to the Ambulance Service Association to support their work in developing national training programmes and courses designed to produce a cadre of trained instructors so that in-service training can be provided for specialist teams.

112. Significant numbers of staff have already been trained and all operational staff engaged on front line emergency duties are also being made fully aware of the precautions and procedures that need to be adopted to recognise and deal with such incidents. To help accelerate and maintain this training, the Department of Health is making a specific financial contribution available to assist Ambulance Trusts in meeting additional costs.

Recommendation 37: Unless GPs are able to give authoritative information the health service risks being overwhelmed by concerned members of the public. The Government should work with the media to feed information to the public about counter-terrorist activity. (Paragraph 155)

113. The Government agrees the need for GPs to be in a position to give authoritative information in the event of an incident, and has recognised the importance of NHS Direct data as part of the range of surveillance techniques to give early notification of a CBRN attack. The HPA is also establishing a medical intelligence unit to analyse and assess all sources of information relating to potential biological, chemical and radiological hazards which will enable timely and authoritative information to be transmitted to the health service.

114. The Government has been working since 1996 with the media to establish:

- The mechanisms where the media have a role in assisting government to provide information to the public – before, during and after an incident
- What the media would need to provide information (access to press officers and specific information)
- Understanding within the media about resilience issues including counter-terrorism
- A common use and understanding of how government and the media use the terms ‘threat’, ‘alert’ and ‘warning’

115. A national Media Emergency Forum (MEF) was established in 1996 following a recommendation of a report for the Home Office by the Education and Broadcasting Trust (“Together in Emergency: a report on effective working relationships between media, the emergency services and all those responding to disaster”). This group is made up of representatives from government departments, Government Offices for the Regions, emergency services and the media. The MEF allows government and the media to raise issues for resolution and has a strategic focus across the range of civil emergencies from floods to counter-terrorism. It has produced a report on dealing with a catastrophic incident in London and a technical working party produced a report of communications issues following a tabletop exercise to tease out the practical problems (both are available on the UK Resilience website).

116. Regional Media Emergency Forums have also been created to complement the MEF on a regional basis and the newly established Regional Resilience Teams set up in 2003. The forums include representatives from a region’s local authorities, emergency planning officers and local and regional media. These have a more operational focus but, as with the national MEF, this is across the range of civil emergencies from floods to counter-terrorism and as applicable to the specific region.

117. These forums enable the government and the media to work together on counter-terrorism issues, and to agree on media involvement that is both in line with the Government’s ‘alert not alarm’ policy on counter-terrorism

communications and maintains the security of certain information. This has been particularly valuable in making more counter-terrorism exercises public. For example, the Government worked with the media before the exercise at Bank Tube Station on 7 September 2003, which enabled the media to view certain procedures without interrupting the exercise and without compromising sensitive information.

118. The media is just one method for getting information to the public before, during and after an incident. The Government already uses a variety of means to inform the public including the internet (the UK Resilience website and Home Office Terrorism website), statements in parliament, and announcements to provide information on counter-terrorism work.

119. The general policy remains that the Government and the police will issue warnings with information about what the public can do if a specific terrorist threat becomes apparent. The Government keeps this under constant review.

Recommendation 38: We recommend that the Health Protection Agency take steps to disseminate information on potential biological agents through other channels or employ means to improve awareness of its website. (Paragraph 156)

Recommendation 40: There are no easy answers to the problem of improving awareness of potential biological agents, particularly in general practice. Training will help but there is a danger that, unless it is regularly reinforced, it will be hard to condition GPs and other front-line health professionals to recognise and deal with the unexpected. We recommend that the Government make sufficient resources available to achieve this. (Paragraph 163)

120. The Government recognises the importance of ensuring that information on biological agents is disseminated to front-line health professionals. The Department of Health has funded the Health Protection Agency (HPA) this year to undertake a programme of work designed to raise awareness. This is being achieved through the following initiatives:

- Two-day training sessions for A&E staff, together with Police, Fire Service and Ambulance personnel, are being delivered in each region
- Clinical action cards for GPs have been produced and are to be distributed to every GP
- Training sessions for GPs are being delivered locally through the 'train the trainer' mechanism and provision of standard training material for use in GP postgraduate courses
- A series of 10 exercises designed to test responses at local level on a multi-disciplinary and multi-agency basis
- Training of consultants in communicable disease control and more training of medical microbiologists, infectious disease physicians and biomedical scientists to ensure that front line doctors have trained support available
- Guidance posted on the HPA website is publicised through all of these training initiatives

Recommendation 39: We endorse the findings of the House of Lords Committee report on Fighting Infection that action is needed to tackle the shortages in several clinical specialties and urge the Government to address them promptly. (Paragraph 159)

121. The Government gave its detailed response to these findings (Recommendations 8, 9 & 10 of the House of Lords Select Committee's Report refer) in its document "The Government Response to 'Fighting Infection', the 4th Report of the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology 2002-2003", which was published on 7 November 2003.

122. The full text of the Government's response to Recommendations 8, 9, 10 of "Fighting Infection" is available at: <http://www.doh.gov.uk/infectioncontrol/>

Recommendation 40: *See response to recommendation 38, paragraph 117.*

Recommendation 41: The Fire Service says it does not have the skills to work with biohazard detection equipment yet the other emergency services are relying on its expertise. If this arrangement is to remain in place then the Government must move rapidly to provide the Fire Service with effective detection and identification technology and the skills to use it. (Paragraph 169)

123. In the interests of efficiency and economy the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister agreed to acquire equipment for the detection of biological hazards and chemical vapours through the national arrangements agreed by the Home Office led CBRN Resilience Programme Board. This would ensure that research and testing would only be carried out once but would be to the benefit of all government departments and emergency services. The Home Office was responsible for this particular aspect of the Board's work. The results of the research have been received and detection equipment is being procured and supplied to fire and rescue sources with appropriate training.

124. The Fire Service has adequate equipment to detect other forms of hazard.

Recommendation 42: The military, and in particular Dstl Porton Down, provide a potentially valuable resource in the response to a real or suspected CBRN incident. Nevertheless, it should be recognised that Dstl's priority is the support of the military. We therefore recommend that the deployment of scientists to a suspected CBRN incident through immediate response teams should come under the control of and be financed by our proposed Centre for Home Defence. (Paragraph 174)

125. The Government does not accept this recommendation. Although its primary role is to provide scientific support to the military, it is right that the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) should support the immediate response to a civil chemical or biological incident as part of long-standing Military Aid to the Civil Power arrangements. To not consult Dstl scientists would be a needless waste of their considerable expertise and experience. The Home Office provides funding for the immediate response under current arrangements. In recognition of the potential for Dstl to have conflicting priorities between their military and civil roles, the Home Office has increased funding to Dstl to ensure that the additional staff and resources needed to cover both are available.

Recommendation 43: We recommend that one of the first steps for our proposed Centre for Home Defence is to conduct or commission new research into decontamination processes and procedures. (Paragraph 176)

126. The Government agrees that research into improving decontamination processes and procedures should be commissioned, and undertakes to do so. This was recognised as a high priority area for research in the cross-government prioritisation process.

Recommendation 44: We recommend that the Government consider providing a national template for the procurement of CBRN countermeasures for the emergency services as a whole. Its most appropriate deployment could then be established at a local level. (Paragraph 178)

127. The Government agrees with this recommendation. Following 11 September 2001, the importance of preparing for potential terrorist incidents involving CBRN material was highlighted and, as a consequence, activity increased in many government departments. Gaps in capability emerged and led to the procurement of CBRN protection, detection and decontamination equipment.

128. A dedicated procurement team is being set up in the Office of Government Commerce to improve general CBRN equipment procurement and to work with suppliers to make the Government marketplace more efficient and attractive to business. The team, working closely with the Home Office and other government departments, would be in a position to ensure that the private sector is properly engaged, and suppliers would see clear evidence of a coordinated approach by government to the supply market. The benefits to the emergency services and other stakeholders needing to procure this equipment will begin to emerge during the course of 2004.

129. Within this overall framework, the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency (NHS PASA) is best placed to lead on the procurement of pharmaceuticals, medical equipment and devices. There are particular benefits to be derived from NHS PASA and the Medical Supplies Agency at the Ministry of Defence (MSA) sharing stocks of vaccines and medical countermeasures to ward against costly wastage. NHS PASA and MSA have cooperated on a one-off basis on a number of CBRN-related procurement projects in the past and are keen for greater collaboration in future. NHS PASA is also able to initiate discussions with other departments and agencies needing to purchase pharmaceuticals, medical equipment and devices.

Recommendation 45: We are pleased to learn that the Government plans to be more open about counter-terrorist exercises in the future. While some of their findings will be sensitive, we hope the Government is able release some information to the public. (Paragraph 180)

130. The Government agrees with the essence of the Committee's recommendation. We are keen to keep the public informed of the benefits and findings from these exercises in the future, as long as the information released poses no threat to national security by helping terrorists. However, the main purpose of exercises remains to test and improve the preparedness of government departments and first responders to deal with the consequences of potential CBRN incidents.

Recommendation 46: As this inquiry has demonstrated, most departments will need to learn lessons from the findings of anti-terrorist exercises. We therefore urge that detailed findings are disseminated throughout Government. (Paragraph 181)

131. The Government agrees that it is important that exercise findings are disseminated throughout government and to other relevant stakeholders.

132. Formal mechanisms have been in place for some time within central government for the management and coordination of national level civil emergency exercises, the development of credible and realistic scenarios,

effective methods for evaluation of exercises and the dissemination of lessons learned. A prioritised programme is designed to reflect and test effectively the range of lead government department responsibilities and the involvement of the Devolved Administrations, regional and local authorities and interdependent communities. This process is managed and coordinated through the Exercise Working Party, which reports to Ministers, with the Secretariat being provided by the Cabinet Office.

133. One of the main mechanisms through which the Government disseminates the lessons learned from exercises and real incidents to civil emergency stakeholders is the Library and Information Centre of the Emergency Planning College at Easingwold. The European Commission has designated this Library as the UK Document Centre for Emergency Planning.

Recommendation 47: The response to a radiological or biological incident will require different responses. We therefore recommend that the “more complex, larger scale exercises” conducted in the future test such scenarios. (Paragraph 182)

134. The Government agrees with this recommendation. The Home Office has already ensured that the scope of its own annual programme of counter-terrorist exercises has been expanded routinely to include realistic and challenging CBRN scenarios, which test the large-scale and complex interdependencies arising as a result of CBRN releases. The Home Office is also working closely with other key government departments and agencies, such as the Health Protection Agency, to ensure that CBRN consequence management issues are fully understood and developed in exercises. In addition, in line with statutory requirements, other departments conduct a large number of non counter-terrorist exercises that cover, for example, radiological leaks, which would have common consequence management issues.

Overseas cooperation

Recommendation 48: The scientific response to terrorism is a global pursuit. We are pleased to see an impressive level of collaboration between the UK and its allies, in particular with the US. We are concerned that our desire to increase security over research may hamper this co-operation by limiting the exchange of scientists and information. The level of co-operation within the EU is less evident. Whether this reflects reluctance on the UK’s part or on other Member States’ is not clear. We urge the Government to address this issue. (Paragraph 186)

135. The Government accepts this recommendation. The closer we work with our allies, the harder the terrorists’ job becomes.

136. We welcome the Committee’s endorsement of the close international links we have developed, especially with the US. We are keen to continue developing such links and accept that there is particular scope for doing so with our EU partners. To this end, we will continue to engage with our European partners through existing EU mechanisms and will explore opportunities to use the Schedule Six Framework Programme of the European Community to add value to the UK civil counter-terrorism research programme.

Security of research

Recommendation 49: We are pleased to hear the police are taking a sensible and measured approach in enforcing the provisions of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act. The confusion over the emergence of a second list of agents not covered under the Act is unfortunate, however. The Government seems to be under the impression that it can have one list of agents laid down in the Act, yet enforce another list which is beyond the scrutiny of Parliament. We recommend that the Government decide which organisms it wishes to control and amend the Act accordingly. (Paragraph 199)

137. When the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 (ATCSA) was drawn up it was decided to use the Australia Group List as the basis of Schedule 5. This was a familiar and logical starting point for this piece of UK counter-terrorism legislation, and used in the absence of any other considered criteria.

138. The Australia Group List primarily addressed State proliferation of chemical and biological weapons. A second list of agents (known internally as the Salisbury List) sought to identify those substances that were not captured by the Act but might be applicable in a terrorist context. The Salisbury List is currently not subject to enforcement under ATCSA, but a strengthening of protective security measures at sites handling substances on this List was taken forward effectively on a purely voluntary basis.

139. The present situation in relation to the Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act is unsatisfactory and the Government is considering recommendations for extending the range of organisms that should be included in the legislation.

Recommendation 50: The poor participation of some universities in the Voluntary Vetting Scheme means that it needs to be replaced. We do not want to see a compulsory scheme but unless universities cooperate in the new scheme, it may have to be. It is important that the UK does not become a scientific training ground for terrorists. (Paragraph 205)

140. The Government agrees wholeheartedly that the United Kingdom must not become a scientific training ground for terrorists. We disagree, however, with the Committee's conclusion that changes should be made to the way that the Voluntary Vetting Scheme (VVS) is organised to make it a useful tool for combating terrorism.

141. The VVS was set up in 1994 as a counter-proliferation tool. It is targeted at state proliferation programmes and has, over the years, been successful both in stopping potential proliferators from benefiting from our education system and also in keeping academics alive to the threat they pose. The VVS was not designed as a tool to combat terrorism, where the target is amorphous and much more difficult to categorise than a state programme.

142. We tasked our counter-terrorism experts to investigate the possibility of using the scheme effectively against acquisition by terrorists of WMD-related knowledge earlier this year (2003). They concluded it was not currently possible to put in place a mechanism that could distinguish a potential terrorist against the 'background noise' of other students.

143. The Government agrees with the Committee that the VVS has shortcomings as a counter-proliferation tool. It is committed to addressing these problems and to improving participation in the Scheme. As the Committee

acknowledges, the Cabinet Office is currently engaged, with other interested government departments, in finding a way forward for the Scheme that best meets the Government's counter-proliferation objectives.

144. We would like also to take this opportunity to address a factual point in the Committee report (last sentence of paragraph 200). The Immigration Rules do not allow a decision on student visas to be taken on proliferation grounds and, although this might change in the future (e.g. as part of the Cabinet Office review of VVS) it is not true now. The report is wrong in stating that the 'FCO may give a clear indication that a referred application to enter the UK is unlikely to be successful...'. We understand that this language may have been taken from Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice that was later withdrawn.

Recommendation 51: We urge scientific learned societies to consider introducing an overt ethical code of conduct as a prerequisite of membership and back this up with programmes to heighten awareness of the issues involved. (Paragraph 210)

Recommendation 52: If the scientific community does not take stronger action to regulate itself then it risks having ill-judged restrictions placed on it by politicians. (Paragraph 211)

Recommendation 53: An ethical code of conduct for scientists has value in promoting awareness and providing basis for better education of researchers. Learned and professional societies and Research Councils should develop an understanding of what such a code involves and enforce it by denying grants or refusing membership. By insisting that a code of ethical conduct is unworkable they are ducking their responsibility. (Paragraph 212)

145. The Government agrees that researchers should be aware of ethical considerations relating to science and its wider applications. The ethical code recommended by the Committee is an interesting proposal and we have already started consulting the research community on whether such a code is likely to deliver.

146. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office hosted a seminar involving the key Whitehall departments to discuss the issues on 15 December 2003. The following organisations were represented: the BioIndustry Association, the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, the British Medical Association, the Institute of Biology, the Medical Research Council, the Royal Society and the Wellcome Trust. The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry was invited but its representative was unable to attend.

147. Further consultations will take place in 2004 in preparation for the meetings in 2005, under the auspices of the Biological Weapons Convention, where the issue of a Code of Conduct is to be considered. The United Kingdom will chair the three weeks of discussion in Geneva.

Recommendation 54: See response to recommendation 6, paragraphs 30-32.

Recommendation 55: We recommend that the Government implement the Export Control Act in a sensible and sensitive manner and negotiate with our allies to ensure the efficient flow of knowledge in both directions. Scientific communication must not become a casualty of the "war on terrorism". (Paragraph 219)

148. The Government agrees that the Export Control Act must not become a barrier to scientific communication and has taken the necessary provisions.

149. Export control legislation already applies to certain transfers of technology, for example the electronic transfer of dual-use technology, which may be of relevance in academic or research fields. When it comes into force in 2004, the Export Control Act 2002 will introduce new controls that apply to commercial exports or transfers and those made in an academic environment alike. In particular there will be new controls on the electronic transfer of software and technology within the UK, on transfers of technology and software by any means and on the provision of technical assistance. These new controls will apply where the software, technology or technical assistance may be used in a weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programme outside the EC and where the transferrer or provider of technical assistance knows or has been informed of the WMD end-use.

150. The relevant legislation was made on 31 October 2003 following extensive consultation, and will come into force on 1 May 2004. Scientific communication is not the subject of any special attention under these Orders and the new controls will affect the academic community in the same way as they will affect anyone else involved in activities that are subject to the controls. However, the Government is working with all those affected by the new controls to ensure that legitimate international collaboration is not burdened with undue bureaucracy. It is important to note that the controls do not apply to the transfer of technology or software “in the public domain”.

151. Moreover, Section 8 of the Export Control Act 2002 prevents the Secretary of State from making an order which has the effect of prohibiting or regulating certain activities, including the communication of information in the ordinary course of scientific research. However, the Secretary of State may prohibit or regulate such activity where interference is necessary, as determined in accordance with Section 8(2) of the Act.

Recommendation 56: We are concerned that a representative of a major research university should not have been made aware of legislation governing the conduct of academics. We recommend that the Government survey awareness of the Act among universities and initiate an awareness campaign as necessary. (Paragraph 220)

152. The Government notes the Committee’s concern and undertakes to continue work to raise awareness of the Export Control Act 2002 and its implications.

153. Copies of the January consultation document on the secondary legislation were sent to the Royal Society and Universities UK. The Government has also discussed the operation of the new controls with representatives of the academic community. Officials will continue to work with them during the implementation period to help their members become aware of, understand and operate the new controls.

Security and the media

Recommendation 57: The Home Secretary has been unnecessarily sensitive about this inquiry. It is perplexing and disappointing that he took steps, belatedly, to prevent us hearing from certain witnesses from his department and that he apparently sought to instil this uncooperative attitude in other

Departments. The Home Secretary's actions have sought to undermine the role of select committees. We recommend the Liaison Committee establish clear ground rules on the nature and extent of co-operation which is expected from Government in select committee inquiries. (Paragraph 228)

Recommendation 59: We take the security of the UK and its allies very seriously and we have no wish to undermine Britain's response to the CBRN threat. We were pleased to hear Beverley Hughes say that "nobody, least of all ministers or officials, want to be secretive for the sake of it". This is not consistent with the Government's behaviour during this inquiry. The restricted disclosures the Government has made to us, in writing and orally, could be of very little use to anyone except the very people who are trying to develop countermeasures. Indeed, officials have sought to block publication of material that was already in the public domain. We suspect that the Government's reasons have less to do with security and more to do with control of information, avoiding embarrassment and a misguided belief that openness will panic the population. The culture of secrecy is embedded in the Home Office. (Paragraph 235)

154. The Government strongly rejects this criticism. The Home Secretary has a duty to be sensitive about any inquiry dealing with highly classified information and Ministers are satisfied that the Committee was given an appropriate level of access to such material given the remit of its inquiry. It is not for this Committee to decide what information needs to be protected.

155. The Committee's inquiry into 'The Scientific Response to Terrorism' centred on the contribution made by science to the Government's response to terrorism and how this contribution is being coordinated. Although the response to terrorism relies on more than technology alone, the Government recognises that the harnessing of science to its full potential is an important part of that response and Ministers cooperated with the Committee to ensure that the inquiry would add value to this part of the programme. However, the remit of the inquiry did not justify a detailed analysis of highly sensitive security systems and operational procedures. Ministers have a duty to ensure that information vital to national security is protected, and the Committee was advised from the outset that we would not disclose information where the harm likely to arise from disclosure outweighed the public interest in making the information available.

156. In light of this, it is disappointing that the Committee has not acknowledged the level of Government cooperation during this inquiry. In addition to the public hearings and the memorandum sent to the Committee in February, the Government agreed that the Committee would benefit from having limited access to sensitive information so that members could develop a broad appreciation of the challenges facing the counter-terrorism programme. During the inquiry, Ministers agreed to nearly all the Committee's requests for access to sensitive information. These included:

- a private briefing on the terrorist threat from Eliza Manningham-Buller, the Director General of the Security Service;
- several private sessions with officials across government, including with the Minister for Counter-Terrorism, Beverley Hughes, and the Director and Head Scientist of the team responsible for delivering a major part of the programme; and
- several confidential memoranda outlining some of the sensitive work being carried out across government.

157. Ministers considered every one the Committee's requests for access to sensitive material before taking a measured view of what should be disclosed. They based their decision on the nature of the information requested and its particular relevance to the remit of the Committee's inquiry. It is hard to see how this pragmatic approach by Ministers squares up with the Committee's accusations of a "culture of secrecy" and an attempt to "undermine the role of select committees".

Recommendation 58: Attempts at introducing blanket restrictions on research will be counterproductive. It is far more likely that a terrorist will undertake his research elsewhere yet if we hamper our research effort then we undermine our own ability to devise countermeasures, and indeed scientific research more generally. We recommend that the Government heed the experience of the USA in developing its security policies. (Paragraph 231)

158. The Government agrees that it is important to strike the right balance between ensuring that appropriate security measures are in place and harnessing our full scientific and research potential to develop countermeasures. There is no simple solution to this issue, but we are continuously evaluating the security controls applied to information, people and dangerous materials in the UK and abroad to ensure that we adopt proportionate measures.

159. The Government is putting in place legislative and regulatory controls, such as the Export Control Act (described in more detail at Paragraphs 148-151) and the minimum security standards guidance for laboratories. We are also considering other possible measures such as vetting schemes and an international ethical code of conduct for scientists. We continue to consult members of the research community in order to ensure that legitimate work is not unduly hindered as a result of existing and future measures.

Recommendation 59: See response to recommendation 57, paragraphs 154-157.

Recommendation 60: We believe that the Government is far too preoccupied with the danger of alarming the public. By being so selective about the information it provides to the public, the Government breeds cynicism and results in a public with even less confidence that adequate measures are in place, or being put in place, to protect it. (Paragraph 242)

160. The Government rejects the statement that it is too preoccupied with the danger of alarming the public. Public safety is always our top priority and this underpins our pre-incident and post-incident communication strategy. We believe that we are striking the right balance in this area but will continue to review the position to ensure this remains the case.

161. Before an incident, it is of course right to assure the public that measures are in place for their protection but it is not always appropriate to specify the precise nature of those measures. We would be irresponsible to risk national security and public safety for the sake of total disclosure.

162. Consistent with that approach and in response to broad public interest in issues related to terrorism, the Government has made information accessible to the public on the Home Office Terrorism website and the Cabinet Office UK Resilience website. Far from being overly secretive, these sites are designed to address the information demands of the public.

163. Moreover, the Government will not hesitate to issue a warning if doing so is the best way to protect any community or venue facing a specific and credible threat. Advice will be issued immediately if the public need to take specific action.

164. The Government is constantly reviewing how we communicate with the public on how they should respond in the event of an incident. The main challenge is that because of the wide variety of possible attacks there is no single, best way for the public to respond following an incident. This makes it difficult to give out detailed guidance, because the best response to one incident may be unsuitable for another incident. The Government believes that it is more effective to advise the public to 'go in, stay in and tune in' so that they benefit from specific, up-to-date post-incident advice, than to issue lengthy, complex information in advance on how to deal with every potential incident.



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