



FPH Distinguished Lecture Series

UKHSA: achievements and lessons for health protection in the UK

Thursday 12 December 2024, 15:30 - 17:00

Speaker biographies

Professor Dame Jenny Harries **Chief Executive, UK Health Security Agency**

Professor Dame Jenny Harries is the first Chief Executive of the UK Health Security Agency – an executive agency of the Department of Health and Social Care established in October 2021. She leads the agency and is accountable for its strategy and operations, and the effective and efficient use of public funds, with a remit to protect the nation from external hazards to health.

After medical studies at Birmingham University, she undertook specialist training in Public Health Medicine in Wales. She has wide experience of clinical and public health science and practice, as well as health service commissioning from work in the NHS and in local, regional, and national government. Having played central roles in the UK's response to a number of significant public health incidents – including Ebola, Zika, MERS and the Novichok attacks in Salisbury – she was appointed Deputy Chief Medical Officer for England in July 2019 and served through the Covid-19 pandemic until taking up her present role.

She has previously served on the UK's Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation, and the Expert Advisory Group on the NHS Constitution. Jenny has worked in policy, evaluation and clinical roles in many countries including Pakistan, Albania, India, Brazil and New Zealand. In addition to a medical degree, she holds formal qualifications in pharmacology, business administration, health economics and strategic health service planning.





Professor Kevin Fenton **President, Faculty of Public Health**

Kevin Fenton is the President of the Faculty of Public Health. He is a senior public health expert and infectious disease epidemiologist who has worked in a variety of public health executive leadership roles across government and academia in the United Kingdom and internationally. His specialist interests are in tackling health inequalities, infectious disease prevention and control, climate justice and urban health.

Professor Fenton is the Regional Director for London in the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) within the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). Within this role, he is also the statutory public health advisor to the Mayor of London and the Greater London Authority and the Regional Director of Public Health for NHS London. He is also the government's Chief Advisor on HIV and Chair of the HIV Action Plan Implementation Steering Group for England.



Dominic Mellon **South West Regional Deputy Director for Health Protection, UK Health Security Agency**

Dominic is a public health specialist, senior Civil Servant, and Visiting Professor at the University of the West of England, where he is alumnus-turned-lecturer on the MSc Public Health programme. He is a dynamic regional system leader who enjoys working across strategic, tactical and operational tiers, and at the interface between organisations.

Following an early career in emergency preparedness, response and recovery working in both local government and the NHS, Dominic completed public health specialty training and then held various Consultant in Public Health and Health Protection roles in both local government and Public Health England. Dominic is currently the UK Health Security Agency South West Regional Deputy Director for Health Protection, with responsibility for protecting the health and wellbeing of the population from Gloucestershire in the north, down to Dorset in the south, and west to the Isle of Scilly.



Dominic graduated from Coventry University with a first-class honours degree in Development and Health in Disaster Management and now combines both public health and emergency management disciplines as a national lead for regional preparedness and response. Dominic is an active Fellow of the Faculty of Public Health, chairing the Health Protection Committee and supporting several national policy steering groups.

Dominic has experience of leading high-profile, complex and sensitive incidents at local, regional, and national levels. He has been awarded two special service medals by the Faculty of Public Health – one for his role in supporting the local response to the Novichok incident in Salisbury, Wiltshire, the other for his regional leadership during the Covid-19 pandemic. He lives in Berkeley, Gloucestershire with his family and other animals.



FACULTY OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Rachel Johns **Deputy Regional Director of Public Health, North East and Yorkshire**

Rachel has worked in the public health and healthcare system for many years, with roles in the NHS, local government and Public Health England. She is currently Deputy Regional Director of Public Health (North East and Yorkshire) across NHS England and OHID (DHSC), having previously held positions as Director of Public Health. She has extensive experience in NHS commissioning and of partnership working to improve health and wellbeing.

She has served on a number of national advisory boards including NIHR and NICE, where she also chaired the guideline for integrated health and social care for people experiencing homelessness. She is Chair of the Health Improvement Committee of the Faculty of Public Health.



Shivan Thakrar **Public Health Registrar**

Shivan Thakrar is an ST4 Public Health Registrar based in the East Midlands who is a co-chair of the Faculty's Health Protection (Education and Training) Special Interest Group. He is currently working with the NHS England Public Health Highly Specialised Services Team and has completed training with the Field Service Midlands Team. Maximising the value of co-production to improve the effectiveness of public health services are particular areas of interest.

As a public health registrar, he has worked with the Recruitment Executive Group to support public health speciality recruitment. Prior to public health training, he completed an academic foundation program in Public Health and Primary Care in the East of England. He qualified from Imperial College School of Medicine in 2019.

