

UK-Japan: A Partnership in Global Public Health

SIN Japan has been supporting the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to strengthen the UK-Japan partnership on global public health. Practical activities include the regular exchange of public health doctors, learning from each other's public health methods, working together on emergency preparedness and increasing UK-Japan research collaboration.



Picture of PHE-MHLW MOU ceremony

Japan is a world leader in global and national public health, with amongst the world's best health outcomes. Japan has significant expertise in preparing for and responding to emergencies. Japan is also a key partner for the UK in the global battle against antimicrobial resistance and infectious diseases.

SIN Japan has been working with DHSC and its arm-length bodies, in this particular instance with Public Health England (PHE). In May 2017, SIN Japan organised the visit of Duncan Selbie, CEO of PHE to Japan. During the visit, PHE and Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) signed an MOU to underpin the development of joint work on infectious diseases, outbreak management, AMR and health emergency preparedness; as well as public health planning and response for mass gathering events. Since the visit SIN Japan have been working closely with DHSC, PHE and partners in Japan to further the links on global public health issues and preparations for public health emergencies. As a result, MHLW have put in place a regular secondment programme with PHE, which sends medical officials to the UK for one year at a time. This has enabled the exchange of expertise by both sides, helping both countries better address public health issues, for example AMR surveillance systems, rabies control, vaccination strategies and emerging infectious diseases.

In addition, a legacy of the 2012 London Olympics is PHE's commitment to share best practice on public health planning, including emergency preparedness with countries around the world. With SIN Japan's support, PHE have been working with Japan's National Institute of Infectious Diseases and MHLW to improve infectious disease surveillance systems for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympics. SIN Japan held a joint seminar with MHLW in October 2018 that particularly focused on coordination between central and local government. This in turn has led to an agreement to conduct joint research on mental illness after natural disasters in both countries and in third countries, including the Caribbean.

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