



UKHSA Advisory Board

Title of paper UKHSA strategic plan – outcome measures
Date Wednesday 19 July 2023
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1. Purpose of the paper

1.1 The purpose of the paper is to:

- update the Advisory board on the finalisation and publication of UKHSA's strategic plan;
- set out the next steps needed to support the implementation of the strategy; and
- share initial ideas on 3-year metrics for measuring progress on UKHSA's strategic priorities.

2. Recommendation

2.1 The Advisory Board is asked to:

- a) **NOTE** the near-final draft of UKHSA's strategic plan.
- b) **COMMENT** on the three-year metrics for measuring progress on UKHSA's strategic priorities. Comments are particularly welcome on whether the metrics focus on the right aspects of each priority, what the optimal overall number of metrics should be and which metrics the Advisory board would prioritise for inclusion.

3. UKHSA strategic plan and next steps on supporting implementation

3.1 The UKHSA strategic plan is currently with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) for final comment, which will be followed by Ministerial approval ahead of publication later in July. The plan sets a clear direction of travel for the organisation and will be a key tool for communicating our goals and objectives internally, across government, and to stakeholders more widely.

3.2 The draft at incorporates feedback from the advisory board's workshop in May, from ExCo, from DHSC and from a number of external partners, such as NHS England.

3.3 Alongside the finalisation and publication of the strategy itself, other actions we need to take to support the implementation of the strategy include:

- Agreeing governance arrangements for the assurance of delivery against the strategic priorities.

- Ensuring we have effective 3-year plans for the priorities.
- Identifying how we will measure success.

3.4 This paper focuses chiefly on how we will measure success: asking for the board's advice on setting three-year metrics for the strategic priorities.

4. Outcome measures and metrics for strategic priorities

4.1 While the strategic plan sets out in broad terms what we would like to achieve for each priority and our main deliverables, it does not set out the specific outcomes we will aim to achieve over the three years of the plan or the metrics we will use to measure success.

4.2 The UKHSA business plan, now being finalised for publication alongside the strategic plan, sets out the key one-year deliverables and activities for UKHSA (including the activities that will enable UKHSA to deliver against its remit letter). Progress against these is then tracked by the outcomes framework.

4.3 The three-year metrics are intended to assess the overall success of the implementation of each priority, with a focus on the medium-term effects and consequences. The one-year deliverables in the business plan and outcomes framework represent the key actions UKHSA will take in year one in pursuit of those longer-term aims. Setting measurable three-year outcomes is critical to our ability to quantify the ambition of the organisation, and to be in a position to assess whether our annual deliverables are taking us in the right direction at the right speed.

4.4 The proposed metrics map onto the key component parts of each priority as articulated in the strategic plan at annex A (e.g. the third strategic priority has a focus on COVID-19, blood-borne viruses and antimicrobial resistance (AMR). This is replicated in the metrics).

4.5 The metrics are intended to be specific, quantifiable measurements that can be used to assess progress towards the intended outcome. Our aim wherever possible is to express the improvement target we wish to achieve (e.g. a percentage increase in vaccine coverage). We want these improvement targets to be stretching but realistic. We have not yet determined the most appropriate improvement targets in the majority of cases.

4.6 The proposals for three-year metrics represent our initial ideas. We would welcome your comments on these. This is the first time that UKHSA has attempted to measure progress on its priorities on a timeframe longer than a single year. Various underlying complexities – the long time-lags between action and many public health outcomes, the difficulty in measuring important but intangible outcomes such as preparedness – present particular challenges. However, we are committed to identifying the best outcomes and metrics available at the moment, and then evolving and improving our approach in the future.

- 4.7 In developing these ideas, we have included the outcomes we want to see, even where they are not fully within our control, such as reduced deaths from Hepatitis B and C. However, we have not included measures that lie significantly outside our control, such as reduced exposure to air pollution. We will need to test this approach with our delivery partners, as success or otherwise will depend in part on their contribution. We will also make very clear when sharing our metrics that we have taken this approach to ensure we can assess whether our outputs are contributing to the desired system-wide outcomes, but that these outcomes can only be delivered as part of a system-wide effort.
- 4.8 Our approach has been to identify 'sentinel' metrics that support judgements on progress against the outcomes as a whole. We have focused on metrics that already exist or will do very shortly, as we are already part-way through the three years of the strategy and so want to be able to start measuring our progress as soon as possible. However, over time, we will likely want to consider establishing new data collection, where this would improve our understanding of progress against our priorities.
- 4.9 The key considerations and rationale for the initial proposals on three-year metrics are set out.
- 4.10 There are some topics where it appears no suitable data is available to support a metric at present or where existing metrics are currently the subject of fundamental review. For these topics we suggest either a stop-gap metric or leaving a gap in our set of metrics, to be filled later, once a more satisfactory metric is available. This is the case, for example, with AMR.
- 4.11 We would be grateful for your comments on the potential metrics for the strategic priorities. We are particularly keen for your views on:
- Whether we have focussed on the right aspects of each priority. For instance, should people, partnerships and science be the focus for metrics for the priority on 'developing UKHSA'?
 - The optimal number of metrics, recognising the balance between simplicity and comprehensiveness. If you feel there are too many metrics, which ones would you prioritise?

5. Next steps

- 5.1 We expect to undertake rapid work to further develop the metrics during the rest of July, with the aim of finalising and then publishing them in September. This would involve agreeing them internally by early August, engaging key partners in mid-August and agreeing them with DHSC by the end of August. In the event this timeframe is too compressed, we would look to finalise them for October.

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