

COMARE Work Programme

April 2025 – March 2026

COMARE publications in progress:

The association of cardiovascular disease with radiation exposure

There is increasing evidence of cardiovascular effects resulting from exposure to ionising radiation. A subcommittee of COMARE is reviewing the evidence with a particular focus on low dose exposures and will advise DHSC on possible health implications for the UK. It is anticipated a report will be published during 2025.

Potential projects under consideration by COMARE:

The effects of light on human health

The report into the effects of light and noise pollution on human health by the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee made recommendations regarding the scientific evidence of health effects and public policy implications. The Committee concluded that environmental noise and light remain neglected pollutants and are poorly understood and poorly regulated despite their potential to negatively impact human health. COMARE will undertake a scoping exercise and advise on requirements for scientific review to determine what is known and what further information is required to provide evidence-based guidelines regarding the impact of artificial light on human health within the built environment.

The impact of UV tanning devices in the UK

COMARE published its 13th report ([*The health effects and risks arising from exposure to ultraviolet radiation from artificial tanning devices*](#)) in 2009 in response to requests to provide advice regarding the safety of UV sunbeds in the UK. Subsequent legislation banned use of sunbeds by those under 18 years of age, as recommended by COMARE. However, there are differences between UK administrations in how sunbed use is restricted, and other countries have since introduced greater controls. There is now interest in whether COMARE should update its review and advice. Accordingly, a scoping exercise is planned to review options for consideration by DHSC and the devolved administrations.

Review of COMARE publications:

Published reports

COMARE will continue to consider the outcomes of recommendations made in its published reports and will determine if further review is required.

The Small Area Health Statistics Unit (SASHU) has been asked by COMARE to examine childhood cancer incidence in the vicinity of nuclear installations in England, Wales and Scotland. This work follows recommendation 5 of the 11th COMARE report that the incidence of leukaemia, non-Hodgkin lymphoma and other cancers in the vicinities of Sellafield and Dounreay should be kept under surveillance and periodic review. This study has been submitted for publication and will be published in 2025.

Working Groups:

Contaminations

The Contaminations Working Group (CWG) will continue to consider updates on the beach monitoring programmes submitted from Dounreay and Sellafield, noting the particles detected at each site. The working group will also follow the monitoring work being undertaken at Dalgety Bay following the completion of the remediation programme. The CWG will continue to monitor information about the release of radioactive leachate from the Magnox Swarf Storage Silo (MSSS) at Sellafield and plans for its remediation.

Authorisations

COMARE has a standing commitment to advise on authorised discharges of radioactive materials as and when new or revised authorisations are produced. The Authorisations Working Group (AWG) will advise on draft authorisations and keep the Committee aware of its responses.

ICRP Recommendations

The International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP) has embarked on the process of developing new recommendations, the outcomes of which may impact on radiological protection regarding workers, patients, members of the public and the environment. The ICRP Recommendations Working Group (IRWG) will respond to relevant consultations by the ICRP. The IRWG will advise COMARE on ICRP developments towards new recommendations, inform COMARE of associated health implications for the UK and also maintain awareness of responses being formulated by other international and national groups.

EMF and Health

COMARE continues to recognise the public health concerns regarding exposures to electromagnetic fields (EMF). The EMF and Health Working Group (EAHWG) will advise COMARE on health impacts and concerns associated with exposure to electromagnetic fields (EMFs) in the UK. This will include reviewing available evidence on the UK public health impact of radiofrequency radiation, with consideration of both existing and new technologies, to determine if further review is warranted.

Updates received by COMARE:

UKHSA Updates

The Committee benefits from expert input from the UK Health Security Agency and will continue to receive updates in relation to possible health effects of EMFs and radon exposures and associated risks.