

News story: Rock fall at Oxwich beach in Wales

Milford Haven coastguard operations centre received a call from South Wales police at 3pm today reporting a substantial rock fall at Oxwich Bay beach, along the coastline towards Oxwich Point. Police and Oxwich and Rhossili coastguard rescue teams attended to keep nearby members of the public safe and to cordon the area off to prevent anyone unknowingly putting themselves in danger.

The photograph taken by Oxwich and Rhossili coastguard rescue teams, shows one part of the fall which has slid down the cliff as a block, with trees remaining on the top.

The size of the fall is estimated to cover an area of 30 metres by 30 metres and is reportedly larger than a previous significant rock fall in 2009 in the same area. The local council, natural resources Wales and the landowners have also been informed.

News story: Two cases of resistant gonorrhoea diagnosed in the UK

Public Health England (PHE) is investigating 2 cases of *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* in heterosexual females with similar resistance patterns to the antibiotics (ceftriaxone and azithromycin) that are used as the first line treatment for gonorrhoea. While this type of resistance is unusual, there have been cases in other countries. Both cases were successfully treated and we are following up sexual contacts to minimise the risk of any onward transmission.

One of these cases appears to have been acquired in Europe and the other has links to Europe but was acquired in the UK.

Finding this sort of extensively drug resistant gonorrhoea in the UK serves as an important reminder of the need to practice safer sex. This includes using condoms consistently and correctly with all new and casual sexual partners. Anyone with symptoms of a sexually transmitted infection (STI) or who is concerned they may have an STI should seek advice from their sexual health clinic.

Investigations are actively looking for any links between these 2 cases to determine if they may be connected.

A case of resistant gonorrhoea was acquired in South East Asia by a UK

national in 2018. The type of resistance seen in these 2 cases is different and therefore unrelated.

PHE actively monitors, and acts on, the spread of antibiotic resistance in gonorrhoea and potential treatment failures, and has introduced enhanced surveillance to identify and manage resistant strains of infection promptly to help reduce further spread.

Dr Nick Phin, Deputy Director of the National Infection Service at Public Health England, said:

Although these 2 cases of extensively resistant gonorrhoea have been successfully treated, contact tracing is underway to ensure there is no onward spread. This is a timely reminder of the importance of avoiding getting or passing on gonorrhoea.

Everyone can substantially reduce their risk by using condoms consistently and correctly with all new and casual partners. Anyone who thinks they may have been at risk of getting an STI should seek an STI screen at a sexual health clinic.

Background

About gonorrhoea

You can read more about gonorrhoea on the [NHS website](#).

Gonorrhoea is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by bacteria called *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* or gonococcus. The bacteria are mainly found in discharge from the penis (1 in 10 infected men do not have a discharge) and in vaginal fluid but can also infect the rectum and throat.

Gonorrhoea is easily passed between people through unprotected vaginal, oral or anal sex or sharing vibrators or other sex toys that have not been washed or covered with a new condom each time they're used.

Typical symptoms of gonorrhoea include a thick green or yellow discharge from the vagina or penis, pain when urinating, pain and discomfort in the rectum and, in women, lower abdominal pain and bleeding between periods. However, around 1 in 10 infected men and almost half of infected women do not experience any symptoms.

If you have any of the symptoms of gonorrhoea, or you're worried you may have an STI, you should visit your local sexual health clinic for a sexual health test.

Gonorrhoea can be easily diagnosed in both men and women, either from a vaginal swab in women or a sample of urine from men. All of these tests can be self-administered.

Treating gonorrhoea as soon as possible is very important because gonorrhoea

can lead to serious long-term health problems including pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) in women (infection of the womb) that may result in infertility and infection in the testicles in men.

Gonorrhoea and other STIs can be successfully prevented by:

- using male or female condoms every time you have vaginal sex or male condoms during anal sex
- using a condom to cover the penis if you have oral sex
- not sharing sex toys, or washing them and covering them with a new condom before anyone else uses them

News story: New strategy for a measles and rubella free future

The new [measles and rubella elimination strategy](#) maps out how the UK can achieve a future that is free of measles, rubella and congenital rubella syndrome (CRS).

The strategy, developed by Public Health England (PHE) and supported by partners across the NHS and the devolved administrations, builds on the experience and success of 50 years of measles vaccination and 30 years of the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) immunisation programme.

Since the introduction of the measles vaccine, an estimated 20 million cases and 4,500 deaths have been prevented in the UK. In addition, it is estimated that rubella vaccination has prevented an estimated 1.4 million cases of rubella, 1,300 CRS births, and averted 25,000 terminations. CRS is caused when rubella disrupts the development of an unborn baby, leading to serious birth defects.

However, new analysis conducted by PHE also shows that immunity levels within some age groups across the UK – especially young people aged 15 to 20 years – are well below the levels needed to prevent measles from spreading. Measles is one of the most infectious known diseases, so it can take only one infected person in an area with lower vaccination rates to cause an outbreak. Anyone who has not received 2 doses of MMR vaccine is at risk.

The World Health Organization (WHO) confirmed that the UK eliminated rubella in 2015 and measles in 2016. Elimination means that measles and rubella are no longer native to the UK. It does not mean that these diseases have been completely wiped out. Measles and rubella remain endemic in many countries around the world and with recent large measles outbreaks across Europe, imported infections pose a very real threat to the UK's achievements.

In 2016 and 2017, uptake of the first dose of the MMR vaccine in 5 year olds

in the UK exceeded 95% for the first time. However, 2 doses of MMR vaccine are required, to ensure full protection from measles. Uptake of the second dose of MMR in 5 year old children is currently 88% and well below the 95% WHO target required to sustain elimination going forward.

Dr Mary Ramsay, Head of Immunisation at PHE, said:

Our achievements to date are a testament to the hard work of health professionals in the NHS. But, if we wish to build on our successes, and sustain measles and rubella elimination for future generations action needs to be taken now.

A future free of measles and rubella is within reach if we continue to focus our efforts on reaching 95% uptake with 2 doses of MMR for all children and catch up teenagers and young adults who missed out.

The new strategy is clear that partners in the local health economy need to work together to continue to increase uptake of the MMR vaccine in all children, and address immunity gaps across the population by catching up teenagers and young adults who missed out on the vaccine when they were younger.

It includes a number of recommendations to maintain measles and rubella elimination going forward which cover 4 main areas:

1. Achieve and sustain over 95% coverage with 2 doses of MMR vaccine in the routine childhood immunisation programme.
2. Achieve over 95% coverage with 2 doses of MMR vaccine in older age groups.
3. Strengthen measles and rubella monitoring.
4. Ensure easy access to high-quality, evidence-based information for health professionals and the public.

The UK National Verification Committee (NVC) and all of the UK nations have independently assessed and endorsed the strategy, and have committed to implementing the recommendations.

[News story: Visits from Japan to the UK expected to grow in 2019](#)

- National tourism agency VisitBritain expects visit numbers from Japan to reach 270,000 in 2019, a 9% increase on 2017.
- Spending by Japanese visitors in the UK is expected to reach £285 million this year, up from £250 million in 2017.

Nationals from Japan will be able to use ePassport gates to enter the UK from summer 2019 as part of the government's commitment to develop a new global immigration system as we leave the EU. ePassport gates, which are currently available for British and EU nationals, provide a faster route through the border as they allow eligible passengers to be processed quickly and securely.

Growing airline connectivity with a new direct, non-stop route from Osaka to London scheduled for April 2019 by British Airways is also expected to boost visitor numbers.

The news comes as the PM is set to welcome the Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to Downing Street tomorrow (Thursday 10).

Michael Ellis, UK Tourism Minister, said:

The UK and Japan have strong cultural, artistic and sporting ties and this is translating into increased visitor numbers to our shores.

Tourism is good for our understanding of each other's cultures and can help strengthen our economies. With thousands of Brits expected to travel to Japan for the Rugby World Cup this year and the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, our continued close relationship will benefit both nations.

VisitBritain Director Patricia Yates said:

Japan is an important market for VisitBritain and we want the UK to be the number one destination in Europe for Japanese visitors, so it is encouraging to see the expected growth this year. A passion for rugby is a strong connection between our countries and the Rugby World Cup in Japan this year also provides us with a valuable opportunity to promote Britain internationally as the 'home of rugby' and our associated destinations and tourism experiences.

Tourism is a fiercely competitive global industry and we continue promote the message of welcome and value, working with partners to make it easier to travel here and promote the amazing experiences that Japanese travellers can only have in Britain.

VisitBritain's global campaign ["I Travel For..."](#) that launched in Japan last year is also shining the spotlight on unexpected experiences and less explored destinations across the UK alongside its globally renowned and iconic landmarks and attractions to drive tourism from Japan. [VisitBritain](#) is working with travel trade and content partners to amplify its marketing reach in Japan and convert the inspiration to visit Britain into bookings.

Visitors from Japan spent, on average, £1,011 per visit in the UK in 2017,

compared to the all market average of £625.

Last year, the Prime Minister and Prime Minister Abe announced an arts and culture programme of UK in Japan in 2019-20, bringing together British and Japanese artists, technology experts and businesses to continue to build creative links between the two countries.

The programme, run by the British Council, will provide UK artists and their Japanese partners with opportunities to share state-of-the-art digital technology and showcase the best of UK and Japanese creativity in the run-up to the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and Paralympics.

To coincide with this, Japan will also stage a parallel cultural programme in the UK.

Japanese perceptions of the UK as a visitor destination are strong. Japan ranked the UK fourth out of 50 nations for its overall brand in the 2018 Anholt Nation Brands Index, and up one place on 2017. Japan also rated the UK highly for its vibrant cities and urban attractions and historic buildings and monuments.

Culture is one of the key attractions for tourists from Japan who enjoy visiting the UK's museums and art galleries, sightseeing at famous monuments and buildings and visiting castles or historic houses.

ENDS

- In the first six months of 2018, there were 119,000 visits from Japan to the UK, up 10% on the same period in 2017.
- The UK was Japan's fifth most popular destination in Europe in 2017.

News story: Making sense of business regulations: apply for contracts

A real challenge for the government is to understand how evolving regulations interact with each other and their impact on businesses, while maintaining important protections for citizens and the environment.

Innovate UK – working with the [Better Regulation Executive](#) and the [Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy](#) – has up to £1.25 million for ideas to better understand the complexity of regulations and where they place disproportionate burdens on businesses.

This is a Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) competition. Funding is through the GovTech Catalyst, which helps the public sector to identify and work with innovative businesses.

A 2-phase competition

The competition will potentially run in 2 phases.

Phase 1 will award up to 5 organisations with contracts to demonstrate the technical feasibility of an idea for identifying regulatory obligations placed on businesses. These contracts will be worth up to £50,000 each.

Organisations that are successful could then get the chance to apply in a second phase. This would award contracts of up to £500,000 each for 2 applicants to develop a prototype of their technical solution and undertake testing.

Rationalising a complex regulatory system

Projects need to focus on at least 1 of 3 themes initially. They should address all themes if they go through to phase 2. These are:

- analysing existing regulations and identifying the requirements that apply to different businesses and sectors
- assessing how challenging individual regulatory requirements are for businesses and their ability to comply
- assessing how challenging multiple, cumulative regulations are for businesses and their ability to comply

Proposals must be accessible and easy to use for UK government policymakers. They could also have the potential to be used by public and private sector organisations worldwide.

Competition information

- the competition opens on 14 January 2019 and the deadline for registration is midday on 20 February 2019
- organisations of all sizes are eligible to apply, working alone or with other businesses, researchers, charities or public sector organisations
- up to £250,000 including VAT is available in phase 1
- phase 1 projects must start by 17 May 2019 and can last up to 3 months
- there will be a briefing event on [16 January 2019 in London](#) where organisations can find out more about the competition and applying