

The PHA's responsibility for the statutory health protection function includes emergency preparedness, the development of public health emergency plans for major incidents, and support for trusts and other Health and Social Care (HSC) and non-HSC organisations as required.

These roles also include giving public health advice to HSC organisations, multi-agency partners and to the public on more 'slow burning' chronic environmental hazards issues that could pose a threat to the health of the population.

Within the health protection service, this function is delivered by the emergency preparedness and environmental hazards team (EmpEnh).

Although individual team members have specific topic and lead responsibilities, the team works on a regional basis and provides cross-cover for all issues and areas.

The responsibilities of the team include:

- responding to public health emergencies (including chemical and biological) through the provision of robust local arrangements 24/7;
- providing an early risk assessment of the actual or likely impact these incidents may have on public health or public safety;
- ensuring that an effective ongoing public health response/advice is provided for chemical contamination or other pollution that could have an adverse impact on the health of the population;
- ensuring that out-of-hours contact and 'on-call' arrangements are maintained and that the provision of 24/7 public health advice is sufficient during an emergency response;
- establishing, running and contributing to a scientific and technical advice cell (STAC) as and when required;
- participating in multi-agency emergency preparedness and response as set out within the civil contingencies framework;
- working with the resources available to provide HSC organisations with emergency preparedness guidance, advice and training as required.



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