Extreme Risks

Evidence and policy challenges of a hostile attack using a chemical weapon

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Defra’s LGD role

We are required to:

• prepare for handover from response to recovery
• coordinate recovery efforts cross government coordination and oversee decontamination operations
• produce a national level recovery plan
• coordinate national level communications on recovery to the public and media
• ensure effective interface between government and local Recovery Coordinating Groups
• account to Parliament for the recovery process
Salisbury incident

4 March 2018
Mr and Miss Skripal
DS Bailey
DSTL detect Novichok nerve agent
OPCW verified 12 April
All 3 survived
Amesbury incident
Saturday 30 June
Major Incident declared by Wiltshire Police 4 July
Ms Sturgess died 8 July
Mr Rowley recovered
Response disrupted decontamination operations in Salisbury area
More sites into Recovery process
DSTL confirm presence of Novichok
OPCW again verified (4 Sept)
Spread of potential novichok contamination

- Contamination takes form of liquid drops (or streaks) on surfaces.
- Spread by contact transfer
- Potential spread by contaminated people and objects
- Salisbury: single primary source, initially spread by 2 individuals
- External environment & interior surfaces

Liquid droplets spread under gravity (image is for illustrative purposes only)
Sites transferred to Recovery phase from Salisbury incident

1. Policeman's House
2A. Salisbury Ambulance Station
2B. Amesbury Ambulance Station
3A. Cemetery: London Road Cemetery
3B. Park: The Maltings
4A. Bourne Hill Police Station
4B. Ashley Wood Vehicle Recovery
5A. The Mill Pub: 7 The Maltings
5B. Zizzi's: 1/3 Castle Street (released as at 8 April).
6. Home Address: 47 Christie Miller Road, Salisbury
Decontamination challenge

The nature of Novichok – high toxicity. persistent
Number and variety of sites and surfaces within each site
Approach to decon – sample, decon, sample (repeat)...release
Scientific advice & assurance
Physically conducting the work
Disposal of waste
Decontamination Process

• The **objective** of the decontamination process was to make the contaminated areas safe and return the affected areas back to normal

• **Sample** (characterise the spread & level of contamination)

• **Decontaminate**

• **Resample** (assurance- is the site safe to release?)

• **Governance** to provide advice & assurance