



PHE Bulletin

News and views for the public health sector

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PHE Bulletin, Public Health England's regular update, provides news and information on PHE and the public health landscape for all those concerned with the public's health. For more information see our website: www.gov.uk/phe

Public health news

Public Health England's Health Profiles 2014 published

PHE's Health Profiles, published earlier this month, bring together existing information into one place to provide a snapshot of health and wellbeing across each local authority in England. They contain data on a range of indicators for local populations such as the proportion of children in poverty, adult smoking rates, levels of child and adult obesity, hospital stays and early mortality rates. Health Profiles have been published annually since 2007, and this is the second time PHE is responsible for publishing them. For more information see PHE's [news story](#).

Legionella contamination found in more heated birthing pools

Latest evidence from PHE about the risks from legionella associated with heated birthing pools used at home was published last week in the European scientific journal [Eurosurveillance](#). In the article PHE reinforces its advice not to use heated birthing pools filled in advance of labour for home births after a case of Legionnaires' disease in a newborn baby occurred after birth at home in a heated birthing pool. In addition four pools of this type have now tested positive for legionella, the bug which can cause Legionnaires' disease. PHE has also written to all known suppliers of heated birthing pools for use at home, sharing the latest test results and reinforcing the advice that heated birthing pools filled in advance of labour should not be used for home births. For more information see PHE's [press release](#).

Ebola cases in West Africa continue to rise

PHE is continuing to support and provide surveillance for the [Ebola virus disease \(EVD\)](#) outbreak in West Africa. Ebola is a form of viral haemorrhagic fever and more than 1000 cases have been reported in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, of which there have been more than 650 deaths. This is the first documented EVD outbreak in West Africa, and it is already the largest ever known outbreak of this disease. There have been no imported cases in this country and the risk remains very low in England. PHE continues to work with the World Health Organisation and a wide range of partners including UNICEF, Médecins Sans Frontières, to provide support to the affected countries. By the end of August, PHE will have deployed 10 staff to the affected areas, providing virological and epidemiological support. For more information see PHE's [news story](#).

New report describes the relationship between obesity and diabetes

A new PHE report provides an overview of obesity and type 2 diabetes among adults, describing the epidemiology of each disorder, how the two conditions are linked and why they present a major public health challenge. The report also contains new analysis showing that adults with large waist circumferences are more likely to develop type 2 diabetes. For more information see PHE's [news story](#).

Child flu vaccine pilots announced for second year

More than 700,000 healthy school-aged children across England are to be offered a free flu vaccination for the winter, as the successful child flu vaccine pilot programme launched in 2013 by PHE enters the second year. In 2013 to 2014 vaccinations were offered to primary school-aged children in a cross-section of urban, rural and inner city settings. New for this year, there will also be further pilots for children in years 7 and 8 (aged around 11 to 13 years) in selected secondary schools around the country. For more information see PHE's [news story](#).

Hepatitis C annual report show progress made, but much more to do

PHE's annual report on hepatitis C in the UK, published on World Hepatitis Day, has shown that hospital admissions from hepatitis C-related end stage liver disease have risen from 608 in 1998 to 2,390 in 2012, while deaths have risen from 98 in 1996 to 428 in 2012. The report highlights where national progress in tackling the infection has been made, but it also shows the scale of the challenge ahead. For more information see PHE's [news story](#).

Chlamydia screening and condom schemes encourage safer sexual behaviour in young adults

Young adults report that being offered a chlamydia test has a positive impact on their subsequent healthcare-seeking and sexual behaviour, according to PHE report, '[Components of chlamydia screening and the impact of screening on behaviour](#)' out earlier this month. After testing for chlamydia, 62% of respondents to an anonymous web survey reported they were more likely to use condoms with a new partner and 66% reported they were more likely to test for chlamydia again. PHE and Brook have also launched an updated Condom-Card Scheme guide, '[C-Card condom distribution schemes. Why, what and how](#)'. Condom schemes, such as C-Card, aim to ensure easy access to sexual health advice and free condoms for young people. For more information see PHE's [press release](#).

Continuation of whooping cough vaccination programme in pregnancy advised

PHE has welcomed the announcement from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation advising the Department of Health that the whooping cough (*Bordetella pertussis*) vaccination programme for pregnant women should continue for a further five years. The advice reflects new data on vaccine effectiveness published by PHE in [The Lancet Infectious Diseases](#) and on vaccine safety published by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency in the [British Medical Journal](#). Vaccinating women against whooping cough in pregnancy means that the mother passes immunity on to her unborn child, protecting the baby until it receives its first whooping cough vaccination at two months of age. Other [PHE data](#) published this month showed an overall decline in whooping cough cases since the pregnancy programme started in October 2012. For more information see PHE's [press release](#).

PHE publish dengue fever and chikungunya annual data

PHE has published annual 2013 data for [dengue fever](#) and [chikungunya](#). In 2013, 541 cases of dengue fever were reported in travellers returning from [dengue-affected countries](#), an overall increase of 58% compared to 2012. India and Thailand continue to be the most frequent countries of travel reported by dengue cases. There was also an increase in chikungunya with 24 cases reported in 2013 compared to 15 cases in 2012, mostly acquired in India and South East Asia. For more information see PHE's [press release](#).

Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever case identified in UK

PHE is aware of a laboratory-confirmed case of Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF) in a UK traveller who was bitten by a tick while on holiday in Bulgaria. The patient is responding well to treatment and there is no risk to the general population. This is the second laboratory-confirmed case of CCHF in the UK, following the diagnosis in 2012 of CCHF in a UK resident who had recently returned from Afghanistan. For more information see PHE's [press release](#).

PHE welcomes publication of Science and Technology Committee report on antibiotic resistance

PHE has welcomed the publication of the Science and Technology Committee [report on antimicrobial resistance](#). Experts from PHE provided evidence to the committee that is cited in the report. The Department of Health has prepared a five-year cross government strategy to tackle the threat of antimicrobial resistance and PHE is leading the implementation of four of the seven key areas where improvements need to be made. For more information see PHE's [news story](#).

Report finds some retailers ignoring age of sale warnings on e-cigarettes

The [Youth access to e-cigarettes and associated products report](#), published earlier this month by the Trading Standards Institute, reveals the results of a test-purchasing study involving young people aged under 18 years attempting to buy e-cigarettes and related products from a variety of retailers. While there is currently no legal restriction placed on the age at which e-cigarettes may be sold, the majority of these products carry a voluntary age warning that they are not for sale to people under 18 years old. New powers in the [Children and Families Act 2014](#) allow for the introduction of a ban on selling e-cigarettes to people under 18 years of age. These regulations are subject to future consultation and the study was commissioned by PHE to assist this work. For more information see PHE's [press release](#)

Keep healthy when travelling abroad this summer

PHE and the National Travel Health Network and Centre have published an essential factsheet to keep travellers healthy and safe while abroad on holidays. The [factsheet](#) advises travellers who are preparing for holidays abroad to visit a travel health professional before departing, to talk about vaccinations and other preventive measures. It also includes helpful tips on how to avoid sunburn, insect bites and

travellers' diarrhoea, plus advice about travel sickness and sexual health. For more information see PHE's [news story](#).

NHS Health Check competence framework launched

The [NHS Health Check competence framework](#) has been launched replacing the vascular risk assessment: workforce competences document. The framework sets out the competences required of providers in general practice, pharmacy, community and other settings, with an increased focus on behaviour change skills to improve health outcomes. An updated NHS Health Check e-learning tool is also now available on the [NHS Health Check website](#). The e-learning tool has been updated by the West Midlands PHE Centre and reflects the changes introduced to the NHS Health Check Programme from April last year.

Framework for personalised care and population health

PHE and the Department of Health have published [Framework for personalised care and population health](#). The framework has been developed to give nurses, midwives, health visitors and allied health professionals access to best evidence, and support them in delivery of their public health role. It has been developed with practitioners and nurse leaders.

Latest Legionnaires' disease data published for England and Wales

[Legionnaires' disease data](#) including local summaries published last week by PHE reveal that 306 confirmed cases of the disease were reported in 2012, and that 40% were associated with travel abroad. The disease usually affects older people, especially those with an existing health problem. Those who smoke or drink regularly are also at a greater risk of infection. A high level of mortality remains among individuals diagnosed with Legionnaires' disease with no improvement over the period 2003 to 2012. For more information see PHE's [news story](#).

PHE responds to health inequalities facing gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men

PHE has published a [summary](#) of the initial findings on the health inequalities experienced by gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men (MSM) based on the evidence and expertise gathered from consultation with stakeholders. This initial work has identified three distinct but overlapping areas, in which MSM bear a disproportionate burden of ill health: sexual health and HIV, mental health and the use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco. For more information see PHE's [news story](#).

Proposals to make private vehicles smokefree when carrying children

The Government is [consulting](#) on proposed draft regulations for ending smoking in private vehicles carrying children. The draft regulations explain how the ban would work in practice. The Children and Families Act 2014 gave the Secretary of State for Health the power to legislate against smoking in vehicles to protect children's health. Alongside the consultation, the Department of Health has also published an impact assessment and equality analysis. The consultation closes on 27 August 2014.

Enhanced support for local tobacco control

PHE is backing local authorities, tobacco control alliances, and health and wellbeing boards to undertake the [CLeaR tobacco control assessment](#). Originally developed by Action on Smoking and Health, CLeaR supports local public health organisations to review their current tobacco control efforts and develop further actions to reduce smoking rates. As part of its commitment to supporting local tobacco control, PHE will provide CLeaR assessment training for two people engaged in tobacco control in each local authority area. For more information see PHE's [press release](#).

PHE's National End of Life Care Intelligence Network's impact evaluation report published

PHE's National End of Life Care Intelligence Network has published the results of an [impact evaluation](#) of the network undertaken earlier this year. Views were sought from a wide range of users and stakeholders on perceptions, resources and impact of the network.

Leptospirosis associated with a triathlon event

PHE is aware of two confirmed and one possible case of leptospirosis associated with a weekend of triathlon events which took place at the Avon Tyrrell Outdoor Activity Centre, in the New Forest, Hampshire between 30 May and 2 June 2014. There were also two possible cases in non-UK residents, one of which has been confirmed. Leptospirosis is an infection caught through contact with urine from infected animals (mainly rodents, cattle and pigs) in water or soil. For more information see PHE's [press release](#).

Recent PHE Blogs

[A hepatitis C story worth telling](#) by Helen Harris (30 June 2014). PHE's Dr Helen Harris blogs about recent research on tackling England's 160,000 chronic hepatitis C cases.

[Giving staff strong foundations and opportunities](#) by Tony Vickers-Byrne (2 July 2014). Having to publically report on employee wellbeing, in schemes like BITC's Workwell Benchmark Programme, offers a strong incentive for employers to improve quickly, argues PHE HR Director Tony Vickers-Byrne.

[Addressing London's inequality](#) by Yvonne Doyle (7 July 2014). Inequalities in London are hurting the city's economy, and everyone, from the government to the health service to the financial sector, has a role to play in reducing them. That's the argument from PHE Regional Director for London Dr Yvonne Doyle.

[Open innovation: big opportunities and a few challenges](#) by David Rhodes (9 July 2014). "Open innovation" isn't just a business buzzword and public bodies like PHE have really woken up to the opportunities it presents. In a new blog, Head of Business Development David Rhodes explains how open innovation can help us develop better solutions to public health problems.

[Small change, big difference](#) by Viv Bennett (10 July 2014). PHE and DH Director of Nursing Viv Bennett blogs about the opportunities for nurses, midwives and allied health professionals to make an impact on population health.

[Encouraging safer sexual behaviour with high quality services](#) by Tony Nardone (14 July 2014). Promoting sexual health awareness with schemes like chlamydia screening and condom-cards is vital for the health of young people says PHE's Sexual Health Promotion lead Dr Anthony Nardone.

[The human cost of falls](#) by Kevin Fenton (17 July 14). Falls are a major public health issue with a serious human cost. How can we help prevent them? PHE director for health and wellbeing Professor Kevin Fenton shares his thoughts.

[Fighting congenital anomalies and rare diseases with information](#) by Christine Harvey, Jem Rashbass and Sarah Stevens (23 July 14) One in 17 people will be affected by a rare disease in their lifetimes. Can we use data to better understand and treat these conditions? Christine Harvey, Jem Rashbass and Sarah Stevens blog about how we're working with partners to do just that.

[Mythbuster: Low risk or no risk?](#) (24 July 14)

When one of our reports says something "poses very low risk" to public health people often want to know why we didn't say it posed no risk. Our mythbuster blog explains why we don't (and can't) make that claim.

Heat health warnings: are we stating the obvious? by Paul Cosford (28 July 14)

Despite some of the criticism, our heatwave plan isn't just about keeping cool: Director of Health Protection Dr Paul Cosford explains how our advice helps protect the most vulnerable from heat-related illness and death.

Hepatitis C: progress through partnership by Helen Harris and Éamonn O'Moore (1 Aug 14)

Following World Hepatitis Day Helen Harris & Éamonn O'Moore discuss the hepatitis C challenge the UK faces and an exciting new hep C screening programme for prisoners.

Campaigns news

Purchase of sugary drinks falls during healthy swaps campaign

New figures show that the purchase of sugary fizzy drinks fell by more than 8% following PHE's Change4Life January 2014 campaign when compared with January 2013. This drop has been sustained; from January to May 2014 the average fall in purchasing overall was more than 5%. More than 400,000 families signed up to Change4Life's Smart Swaps campaign, which aimed to encourage families to make one easy swap to help cut sugar and fat from their everyday food and drink. For more information see PHE's [press release](#).

PHE's major new Change4Life campaign in partnership with Disney to get kids more active this summer holidays, the summer 10 Minute Shake Up campaign, began earlier this month. For more information see PHE's [press release](#).

PHE publishes new marketing strategy

PHE has published its [marketing strategy for 2014 to 2017](#) setting out how PHE will motivate and support millions more people to make and sustain changes that improve their health. This strategy sets out PHE's three-year strategic framework and planned calendar of activity for the next 18 months. For more information see PHE's [press release](#).

Other confirmed autumn campaign dates

The 2014 Stoptober campaign's media launch will be on 8 September and Stoptober will begin on 1 October.

The Be Clear on Cancer national ‘Blood in Pee’ reminder campaign will run from 13 October. This focuses on bladder and kidney cancer, encouraging people to look out for blood in their pee and, if they notice the symptom, to visit their GP. Campaign activity will include PR and advertising across the country.

News from other organisations

Tackling Tuberculosis – local government's public health role published by Local Government Association

The Local Government Association and PHE have produced a set of frequently asked questions on [Tackling Tuberculosis: Local government's public health role](#). They aim to address questions that councillors and officers in local government may have about TB and its burden in the UK.

NICE publishes three new local government briefings

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has published new local government briefings on [HIV testing](#), [looked-after children and young people](#), and [domestic violence](#).

School pupil survey: smoking, drinking and drug use at decade low

A [report](#) from the Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC) shows that the prevalence of smoking, drinking or drug use among school pupils is considerably lower than ten years ago. The report contains results from an annual survey of secondary school pupils in England in years 7 to 11 (mostly aged 11 to 15). For more information see the HSCIC [news story](#).

Events news

PHE annual conference 2014

PHE’s second annual conference will be held on 16 to 17 September 2014 at Warwick University and will include a keynote addresses by Secretary of State for Health Jeremy Hunt, Permanent Secretary at the Department of Health, Una O’Brien and another by Simon Stevens, chief executive of NHS England. The full programme for the conference and booking details can be found on the [conference website](#).

PHE Board's next open meeting

The eighth open meeting of PHE's Board will take place on 24 September 2014, from 11am to 3pm, in London. The meeting will include a panel discussion on antimicrobial resistance with external experts. Meeting [details](#), including board papers for earlier meetings and information on future board meetings, are available online.