

Public Health England

Friday message



Duncan Selbie
Chief Executive Designate

3 August 2012

Dear everyone

We are steadily putting in place the practical arrangements to support the new public health system in England. This week the legal basis for the transfer of public health staff into local government has been agreed. Whilst this does not affect staff transferring into PHE, it is vitally important to local government and to our public health colleagues transferring from the NHS.

Important as these building blocks are, they do not of themselves secure improving outcomes. I have been meeting many people across the country to build our understanding of how PHE will best contribute to the wider system. The commitment to local action led by local government is absolute, and our objective is to support this in every way we can. The rationale for a national public health agency is to bring together for the first time the full range of public health expertise and to focus this on the poorest and most poorly in society. We exist to improve the public's health and will be held accountable for this. I believe we can show a sustained improvement within three to five years and that we will have learned as a nation how to make this irreversible within ten years.

I have been very grateful for the positive feedback I have received about the behaviours I expect from all of us since these appeared in the first Friday message. As we grow and develop the culture and identity of Public Health England our behaviours truly matter. They are anchored in the reality of how we must conduct our business and ourselves. What we do first is what gets noticed and remembered. That is why I attach such importance to good leadership. There has been much written about this but four things stand out:

- Looking out for our people
- Setting a clear direction
- Everyone knowing what matters
- Knowing whether you are on track

Whoever you are, everyone will be leading something whether it is a field project, a research programme, a service or buying supplies. In each case the same simple things matter.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Duncan Selbie". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.