

Public Health England

Friday message



Duncan Selbie
Chief Executive Designate

31 August 2012

Dear everyone

During these first weeks I have recognised how extraordinarily fortunate I am to have been given the responsibility to lead Public Health England. PHE is going to cover so many practical aspects of everyday life where positive differences can be made. These will not come from grand strategy or direction from Whitehall but in the choices ordinary people make about their health and how they are supported locally in this. I have highlighted some of these in mentioning the work of our health protection units, and local authority led programmes to improve life chances at every stage of growing up and growing older. I have also seen the exceptional research and science we lead in protecting health. This week I want to focus on the work undertaken in our national immunisation and screening programmes.

The UK attaches great importance to setting the standard internationally and we owe warm thanks to everyone involved in achieving our well deserved worldwide reputation for excellence in immunisation and screening. We have the highest childhood immunisation rates since the current data set collection began in 1995 and we have internationally recognised cancer screening programmes that have saved many lives through early detection and intervention. Our world leading HPV vaccination programme provides a perfect bridge between childhood immunisation and cancer prevention. There are many synergies in the outcomes frameworks for Public Health and the NHS and certainly in reducing the number of deaths from cancer. For example the NHS Outcomes Framework sets a goal of reducing mortality at one year and in Public Health we have an outcome to improve on early detection and of course each relies on the other. PHE will be taking on responsibility for the Cancer Registries and for the National Cancer Intelligence Network and will be working hand in glove with Professor Sir Mike Richards, National Clinical Director for Cancer and who will be leading on reducing premature mortality across all disease areas in the NHS Commissioning Board, to further reduce deaths from cancer and target our efforts where the risks are highest.

Immunisation is also core business for PHE and we are absolutely committed to maintaining and improving the current programmes at a time of unprecedented change for everyone. We have reached an agreement with the Department of Health and the NHS Commissioning Board on how immunisation is going to work over the next period. This has been set out in a [letter](#), but in essence PHE will appoint immunisation teams for each local area. Many staff currently involved in immunisation will match to these posts while others will have the opportunity to apply to join PHE. This field force will then be seconded and embedded in the local area teams of the NHS Commissioning Board who will be responsible for commissioning and ensuring delivery of immunisation. PHE will provide the professional oversight and development for the immunisation service as a whole and, together with the Director of Immunisation at the Department of Health, Professor David Salisbury, and the Commissioning Board, we will look at how to take this forward in future years. The immediate priority is to secure the workforce and do whatever it takes to maintain and enhance this crucial frontline service.

With best wishes

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