



Friday message

Duncan Selbie
Chief Executive

Friday 26 July 2013

Dear everyone

This week we published a [paper](#), produced in partnership with NICE, the Local Government Association and NHS England, which sets out our approach to the evidence base for the NHS Health Checks programme. We also published our [review](#) of the implementation of the NHS Health Checks programme so far. We know that at least 650 lives a year could be saved, and 1,600 heart attacks and 4,000 cases of diabetes prevented if everyone eligible took up the offer of these simple health checks which include blood pressure, cholesterol, and weight. The implementation review shows what more we need to do and learn so that we can provide the most effective support to our partners in local government and primary care who are responsible for delivering the programme as it is extended. This will enable more lives to be saved and avoidable suffering and disability prevented. We are persuaded by the evidence that the Health Checks programme offers the English health and care system an outstanding opportunity to reduce the fast growing burden of non-communicable disease related to behavioural and physiological risk factors and are committed to building the evidence base going forward.

Tomorrow sees the launch of our Change4Life Get Going this Summer [campaign](#) to coincide with the start of the school holidays. We have worked with local authorities and leisure centres across the country to organise hundreds of events and sessions aimed at encouraging adults and children to take more exercise this summer. Organisations wanting to get involved, or anyone wanting to see what is going on in their area or get a free personalised activity plan should visit Change4Life.

We have made some definite progress over the past decade in returning drug addicts to full recovery and have data systems to demonstrate this that are the envy of the world. There is, however, a need to further improve recovery rates and, as you may remember, we have appointed Dr Tom McLellan, from Philadelphia in the USA, as our independent drug adviser to review our approach to recovery, the responsibility for which now rests with local government. We are keen to improve health outcomes for people who use drugs by learning from those around the world with different approaches and experiences. Dr McLellan is an internationally respected academic and co-authored the US review of their drugs policy for President Obama. We have just welcomed him on his first working visit to England.

On Monday our Board, led by Professor David Heymann, met in public for the first time and began with a panel presentation by four renowned experts in obesity. David is keen to have each meeting of the Board focus on a major public health concern and to always invite experts in the field to stimulate learning and debate. The next meeting is on 25 September and this will focus on public health research. The Board is currently working with the Department of Health to recruit two further non-executive members to widen diversity and further deepen the talent around the table.

And finally, I shall be on holiday in Ireland with my family for the next two weeks and hoping there will still be some sunshine left by the time we get there. My next Friday message will be on 23 August.

With best wishes