



Public Health  
England



Duncan Selbie  
Chief Executive

## Friday message

Friday 10 May 2013

**Dear everyone**

I know there is great disappointment that neither minimum unit pricing nor plain packaging were included in the Queen's Speech on Wednesday. The Government has made no decision on either measure, despite what the media say, and having the time to consider carefully all the responses to both consultations is sensible and no mention in the Queen's Speech does not mean no commitment to national action. We know that tobacco is the number one killer in the UK and that alcohol is number five and that both cause immense misery for the individuals concerned, for their families and for the wider community. Smoking is at heart an addiction of childhood, with the great majority taking up the habit before adulthood. Much, of course, can be best achieved locally and we look forward to supporting you on this, but national action and leadership is also necessary.

Una O'Brien, Permanent Secretary of the Department of Health, met our national team on Tuesday and emphasised the Department's strong support for our mission. We are determined to establish Public Health England as a fully contributing partner in the health and care system. Core to this is developing a shared narrative on health and wellbeing, including but not dominated by sickness and hospitals, and as everyone's narrative rather than ours alone with successful implementation dependent on each of us in health and local government being willing to work 'with and through' each other. Only in this way will we see the shift from treatment and hospital based care to prevention and early intervention and home based care, a shift of greatest importance in the care of the frail elderly.

Working in partnership with the LGA and others we have been supporting eight leadership pilots across the country. These aim to address difficult and perennial problems facing the health and care system by enabling partners to work to their strengths and approach obstacles from a different perspective and find solutions that work for them. [Applications](#) are now being sought from a further 22 Health and Wellbeing Boards. This is the kind of hands-on, practical approach we are keen to see rolled out nationally to help local leaders in ways they own.

I am glad to say we have made our two final Centre Director [appointments](#): Dr Diana Grice, currently Director of Public Health in East Sussex, will be Director of our Thames Valley Centre; and Dr Jenifer Smith, currently Director of Public Health and Chief Medical Adviser for the Isle of Wight, will be Director of our South Midlands and Hertfordshire Centre.

And finally, Sunday is International Nurses Day and a great opportunity to celebrate the contribution nurses make to improving and protecting the public's health – remember Florence Nightingale was the first nurse to use painstakingly collected evidence to improve the health of soldiers during the Crimean War when more of them died of infections than in battle. PHE will support nurses and midwives to do the best job they can and we hope to see many of you at our [Public Health Nursing and Midwifery conference](#) on 26 June.

**With best wishes**