



Public Health  
England



Duncan Selbie  
Chief Executive

## Friday message

Friday 21 February 2014

### Dear everyone

Our first duty as the national public health agency is to protect the public's health and our microbiologists, epidemiologists, surveillance teams, chemical and environmental experts have all been working tirelessly in support of our local teams who are leading our frontline response and are the public face of PHE in those areas affected by flooding. They in turn have been supporting our colleagues in local government, the emergency services, the Environment Agency and the NHS to ensure they and the public have the advice and guidance they need. On Wednesday we [published](#) our integrated Guidance on Recovery from Flooding for frontline responders which pulls together and expands on all the guidance we have published to date. I want to again express my thanks and appreciation to everyone involved as we look forward to getting on with the cleanup.

I am also glad to say that our independent Board is being strengthened with two new non-executive members, both [appointed](#) by the Secretary of State. Poppy Jaman is Chief Executive of Mental Health First Aid England and a founding member of the City Mental Health Alliance. Rosie Glazebrook, has significant experience in research ethics and research funding and is also on the Board of the Human Tissue Authority. Our Board, under the chairmanship of Professor David Heymann, exists to assure the independence of our science and advice and is an important safeguard and source of challenge and support to me and to the national team.

Unsung heroes on the frontline who have embraced the opportunities afforded by the new public health system to improve the public's health are to be recognised by the Public Health Minister Jane Ellison at a special event in the House of Lords on Thursday 3 April. The Minister has written to Directors of Public Health and MPs asking them to nominate, by 6 March, one person, project or partnership from their community who they feel most deserves recognition. Local Government, the NHS, the voluntary and community sector and others can send their nominations to their local Directors of Public Health or MPs. This is a great opportunity to honour, amongst a sea of great people, those who have been truly outstanding.

Together with other national organisations, PHE has committed to the [Crisis Care Concordat](#) which aims to drive up standards of care for people experiencing a mental health crisis such as suicidal thoughts or significant anxiety. The Concordat is an excellent example of cross-sector collaboration, setting out how different agencies can work together to help ensure vulnerable people get the right support quickly and in the right setting. The whole public health system can play its part by helping ensure that people recovering from mental health challenges are supported in employment, to live in decent housing and have the same opportunities as everyone else. This can help prevent crises happening and will also help address the health inequalities experienced by those living with, and recovering from mental health problems.

And finally, we can achieve so much more when we work collaboratively and the Be Clear on Cancer campaigns are a great example where we work in close partnership with NHS England. We have just launched two regional pilots: the North West is running a campaign on the symptoms of ovarian cancer, and North Cumbria and the North East are focusing on the symptoms of oesophago-gastric cancer.

With best wishes