



Public Health
England



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Chief Executive

Friday message

Thursday 28 March 2013

Dear everyone

The public's health in England enters a new phase on Monday when the statutory duty for health improvement transfers from the NHS to Local Government, supported practically and professionally by Public Health England. It has taken a great deal of careful work and the determined leadership of Local Government to make this happen. Cllr David Rogers, Chair of the Local Government Association's Community Wellbeing Board [said](#) on Wednesday: "The transfer of responsibility for public health to councils is the biggest change in local government for a generation....there is widespread confidence among council bosses that we are ready for the challenge."

On Monday we introduced PHE to the media. I explained that we have an "emphatic remit to tell the truth" and the next day The Independent quoted me thus: "We will look at the evidence whatever it says, wherever we find it. We will give straight answers. If the evidence is compelling we will say that. If the evidence is there but perhaps not conclusive we will say that as well. We are not going to be constrained in telling the truth about the evidence." In my first Friday message in July last year I set out the behaviours that characterise high performing organisations. In testing these behaviours over the past nine months, our people and our partners have endorsed them and been keen to emphasise additionally the importance of candour and courage, which is why I was so glad to see this also reflected by the media. As we begin our next phase I want to restate these behaviours which are of fundamental importance to our effectiveness and reputation:

- We work together, not undermine each other
- We speak well of each other, in public and in private
- We consistently spend our time on what we say we care about
- We behave well, especially when things go wrong
- We keep our promises, small and large
- We speak with candour and courage

These are not just words. Actions speak louder than words and how we behave matters enormously. As we adopt these six behaviours and remind each other when we fall short, including me, we will retain and get the best from our people. This is my ask of every manager at every level of every profession and discipline.

In an intense and honest handover meeting on Tuesday, led by the National Executive, our Chairman Professor David Heymann, and representatives speaking on behalf of most of the organisations coming into PHE, we reviewed our state of readiness and the remaining issues that needed sorting. It is with great pleasure and genuine humility that I can say we are as ready as we possibly can be and that the outstanding risks have been identified and are being tackled. It has been an incredible journey, involving so much work by so many people, and now we must all step up to harvest the benefits.

With best wishes