

Public Health England

Friday message



Duncan Selbie
Chief Executive Designate

9 November 2012

Dear everyone

The people transition for Public Health England is now really getting into gear. This week we told over 70 organisations who have staff joining PHE the results of the matching exercise for most groups of staff. In the next few days we will be able to confirm the names of those who will move to PHE in "lift and shift" teams so by the following week we expect the great majority of public health staff whose work is moving to PHE to hear from their managers that they have a confirmed role in PHE. For those who may not have certainty after this we will be continuing to expend every effort to settle their futures too.

I contributed to the National Learning Network's conference for health and wellbeing boards this week and was encouraged to learn that great progress is being made in most areas of the country, with clear priorities agreed between local government and their partner clinical commissioning groups. The health and wellbeing boards are the frontline in bringing the whole system together as they are best placed to shape local priorities and act on them. Improving health and reducing health inequalities goes so much wider than the NHS and no one organisation can address these on their own. We are, in effect, all in this together. Partnership working is tough – and we have not always succeeded – but local Government does have a strong track record in this and can lead the way. Health and wellbeing boards must be bold in their prioritising and mature in their choices and this will involve moving resource to where it can have the most impact. Our responsibility will be to distribute knowledge about what works, offer practical "know-how" and make this truly accessible to everyone.

Our Extreme Events team has, in partnership with the Met Office and the Department of Health, led the development of the [Cold Weather Plan](#) for this winter. The Plan, which is supported by Age UK and many other voluntary sector partners as well as local government, is genuinely excellent and aims to help raise awareness of the dangers of severe cold weather with the general public and health professionals. It spells out the steps individuals and organisations can take to reduce risk and particularly for the most vulnerable. The average number of excess winter deaths over the last decade in England has been just over 25,000 a year. Other countries such as Finland experience lower numbers despite lower temperatures, suggesting that we could do better by making the right preparations.

And finally, I was privileged to speak at a conference to celebrate 25 years of the work of MEDFASH (the Medical Foundation for HIV and Sexual Health), the independent charity dedicated to supporting health professionals and policy makers working in HIV and sexual healthcare. I remember like yesterday the apocalyptic fear felt back in 1987 and I lost a number of friends to AIDs at that time. When you think how far we have come, to the point where HIV is now managed as a long term condition rather than an automatic death sentence, there is much to be celebrated and MEDFASH is to be thanked and congratulated on its massive contribution.

With best wishes

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