

Public Health England

Friday message



Duncan Selbie
Chief Executive Designate

28 September 2012

Dear everyone

As I go round the country listening to people it is clear that the commitment the Government has given to Public Health England being free to publish its evidence-based advice and guidance without fear or favour has been universally welcomed. This impartiality, coupled with our operational independence, is an absolute priority for those who will be relying on our evidence and support. I spent last Friday in the South West and was witness to the treasure trove of public health evidence which, as we create our national intelligence service, will be opened out to everyone, along with our other knowledge assets joining PHE from across the country.

We need and want to make what we do even more accessible and useful to the frontline in protecting and improving health. For instance, the North West Public Health Observatory and Health Protection Agency North West worked with the National Treatment Agency North West, North West Cancer Intelligence Service and NHS/Department of Health North West to recently publish a joint report on the [Burden of Liver Disease and Inequalities in the North West of England](#), the type of partnership that will lead to further much needed improvements.

Partnership working has characterised a whole series of joined up health improvement programmes developed by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and their partner CCG. This is one of the most deprived areas in the country with 40% of adults not in paid work and the highest rates of child mortality. They have gone 'upstream' and provided free use of leisure facilities to absolutely everyone to encourage people to exercise and they are reaching the hardest to reach with dramatic results. They have also recognised that community pharmacists are open 'all hours' and often have the time to listen and, of course, give advice – so community pharmacy has been given a central and extended role. The pharmacy owner I met, Mr Mukhtar Sharif, was an advert for everything that community pharmacy has to offer. His team reaches into the whole community on issues from obesity to smoking. Blackburn with Darwen has also adopted a "first aid" approach to people experiencing mental health problems by training almost 300 volunteers in how to identify and support them. These are examples from a leadership team who recognise that only by truly working together can the determinants of good health be addressed through prevention and early intervention and they should be congratulated.

The Stoptober campaign to encourage people to stop smoking for 28 days from 1 October, has had a fantastic response. More than 230,000 support products have been ordered, including 100,000 packs and 80,000 apps downloaded. We have had over 300,000 visits to the Smokefree website and lots of social media interest. This is hugely encouraging and throughout October the campaign will be boosted by further TV, press, radio and online adverts to support those who are taking up the challenge.

Finally, this has been our first week in our new national home in Waterloo – an important step forward in bringing the team together.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Duncan Selbie". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.