

# Public Health England

## Friday message



Duncan Selbie  
Chief Executive Designate

26 October 2012

### Dear everyone

This week's announcement of a proposed common basis for food labelling, with support from the main supermarkets, was the culmination of years of patient negotiation on the part of Government, industry, consumers, and the public health community. It is an important and most welcome achievement and is exactly the sort of practical public health measure the public are very much behind. Everybody understands the need for lower sugar, salt and fats in foods and this clear new system should be hugely helpful in enabling individuals and families to make more informed choices.

Our international programme will be a very significant part of our work and we will get off to a flying start. For example, the Health Protection Agency supports a wide global health portfolio. Working with the World Health Organization (WHO), the HPA has recently sent six members of staff on two missions: to Qatar in support of the coronavirus incident; and to Sierra Leone in response to their cholera outbreak. They are also about to appoint staff on secondments to Thailand, Taiwan and Vietnam where they will focus on strengthening relationships, improving collaboration, and public health capacity building. This is a contribution to meeting the UK's obligations under the International Health Regulations (IHR) and we are planning to extend this programme within PHE.

There are already clear signs that the transition to PHE is thankfully not disrupting international partnerships, far from it, as is evidenced by some really good news coming through on the research front. For example, the US Government, through their National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) has just awarded us, in partnership with NanoBio Corporation, a contract worth £4 million to develop a next generation anthrax vaccine, while other contracts are in the pipeline. These are encouraging signs and critical to our mission to translate research into practical benefits that make a real difference to the public's health.

Improving the public's health is everybody's business and this is really taking hold across local government. Last week in Greater Manchester Alan Higgins, the Director of Public Health for Oldham, described a [Public Health Charter](#) for their residents and this was approved by the full council this week. Its straightforward aim is to ensure that all their decisions – which influence economic opportunity, early childhood development, schools, housing, workplaces and environment – contribute positively to the health and wellbeing of their residents. This is exactly the approach PHE will be advocating – we will all need to pool our resources and our expertise if we are to address the health inequalities across the country.

And finally, we are close to settling the locations for all our staff. Although for most this will mean no change, some people will be on the move. If anyone is unsure of their own position they should check with their line manager – we are determined to get this right.

With best wishes

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