



Public Health
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health



Duncan Selbie
Chief Executive

Friday message

Friday 22 August 2014

Dear everyone

Some of the most important functions entrusted to PHE are those we carry out on behalf of the whole health and care system. A good example is the work of the National Disease Registration (NDR) service, others include our national surveillance systems and our reference laboratory services. The NDR group specialises in patient-level data collection from the whole population to deliver a set of core resources for England and can be thought of as our "Data Utility Company" – we are responsible for the delivery of the National Cancer Registration Service, National Drug Treatment Monitoring Service and the development of the new national Congenital Anomaly and Rare Disease Registration Service. We collect, quality assure and feedback timely, high-quality data on a range of diseases from hundreds of local and national data sources. This is used to support major programmes such as the Cancer Drugs Fund, to provide the clinical data on patients in the 100,000 genome sequencing initiative and underpins the data used by national and official statistics, PHOF, public health, acute providers, clinical commissioning, research, service evaluation and interventions. By its very nature, much of this work is below the radar on a day-to-day basis, but functions like these are fundamental to a well-founded health and care system.

In addition to our work here in the UK, our staff have also been on the frontline as part of the international effort to tackle Ebola in West Africa, and we were delighted this week to welcome back our team leader in Sierra Leone, Professor Dilys Morgan, and her team, including Dr Emma Aarons, Dr Sam Bracebridge and Tom Inns. They have been supporting the Sierra Leone Ministry of Health by providing expert guidance on managing the outbreak and preventing the spread of the virus in health care facilities and in the community. Earlier this year Chris Lane also worked on the ground in Sierra Leone, as part of the WHO global response. As well as providing support in Sierra Leone, four of our scientists – Dr Edmund Newman, Andrew Bosworth, Barry Atkinson and Lisa Jameson – have provided expert virological support with the EU Mobile Lab in Guinea and Dr Christopher Logue joined up with the lab earlier this week. All who have been and those who are going to West Africa have shown selfless dedication and are of great credit to the UK. The British contribution is often understated but always valued by those we support.

On Wednesday I had the pleasure of visiting South Tyneside Council and meeting their Chief Executive, Martin Swales and Director of Public Health, Amanda Healy. On a beautiful day in the brand new leisure centre overlooking the sea in South Shields and the finishing line for the Great North Run (which Martin will compete in next month after completing a triathlon only a couple of weeks ago), they gave witness once again to the depth and significance of the three 'ps' – people, place and prosperity – as the drivers for great health. South Tyneside is also an integration pioneer and they have many successes to build on and not least the partnership with Sunderland City Council resulting in the International Advanced Manufacturing Park on the A19 corridor, which in time will create up to 20,000 new jobs, with many of them being taken up by local people. In truth, the time I get to spend with frontline organisations and teams is by far the most motivational for me as I get to see and learn about the challenges each are facing and how they are going about tackling them.

With best wishes