



Public Health  
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health



Duncan Selbie  
Chief Executive

## Friday message

Friday 30 January 2015

**Dear everyone**

Over the past few months we have been undertaking a review of our working arrangements. It is important that the outcome strengthens our value to the public health system and to our partners, ensures we are prepared for what will inevitably be a challenging future and that we use our resources as efficiently as we possibly can. In making changes we will never lose sight of our core purpose which is to protect and improve health, provide practical support to local government and the NHS, and build capability and capacity across the public health system. These in turn are underpinned by three guiding concerns: to be values based - concerned for people rather than diseases and conditions; to be focused on the evidence and what works; and to be judged on outcomes. We have also been listening closely to what you have told us and as our world evolves and adapts, so must we. For example, our local Centres are as fundamental to our relationships with place and community as our labs are to great science. We must strengthen and develop them. That is why we have reviewed the footprint of our Centres and are reconfiguring them to fully align with how local government organises itself and I have written to local government and other partners today with more details of these changes. It is why we have asked the Government to consider our plan to relocate many of our national scientific services and functions to a new public health science hub in Harlow, Essex. The 2013 changes to the public health system and our own reducing resources have inevitably resulted in a refocusing of our priorities and a change in roles from the old structures and relationships to the new and we recognise the loss that this can bring to some individuals, as well as the very real opportunities that have and are opening up. We are preparing for the future and ensuring that the organisational changes are managed with as much sensitivity and decency and with as little disruption as possible. I am indebted to everyone for their forbearance and understanding as we go through these.

In October we set out the evidence behind promoting physical activity in *Everybody Active Every Day*. Being active is essential to good health, with inactivity being the fourth largest cause of disability in the UK. What the evidence emphasises is the need to create environments and public spaces that positively encourage people to be active. So we very much welcome the amendment this week to the Infrastructure Bill which will place a legal obligation on the next Government creating a duty to develop a long-term Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy.

This week also saw Ministerial clearance given to lay the draft order for the statutory regulation of registered public health specialists. Subject to Privy Council Office and Parliamentary approvals, this will bring all specialists, irrespective of original profession, onto the same statutory footing, addressing a long-standing concern that the current arrangements no longer reflect the wide diversity of those entering higher professional training.

And finally, I am very glad to say that responsibility for the leadership for public health nursing and midwifery will transfer wholly to PHE from April, replacing the current joint arrangement with the Department of Health. In her PHE role, Viv Bennett will continue to be the Government's principal adviser on public health nursing and midwifery in the same way the Chief Nursing Officer in NHS England acts as the principal adviser on the NHS.

**With best wishes**