



Public Health  
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health



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Chief Executive

## Friday message

Friday 18 March 2016

**Dear everyone**

The sugary drinks levy announced by the Chancellor in Wednesday's Budget is fabulous news for children and families in helping them to cut back on sugar. This is a great step towards helping to reduce the risks of life-threatening conditions like obesity and the misery of tooth decay in our children. This is public health in action and a great foundation ahead of the child obesity strategy later this summer. A levy was one of eight recommendations from [PHE's evidence review](#) on sugar reduction and is a stunning early indication of the Government's commitment to reducing child obesity. The Chancellor has firmly set this in the context of every child having the right to a good start to life, and it is especially good that the money raised will be used to boost funding for school based exercise and sport. Of the many positive reactions, one of the best came from Michael Bloomberg, former New York Mayor, who said that the UK is now at the forefront of the global fight to reduce obesity and diabetes.

A healthy balanced diet is the cornerstone of good health and the new [Eatwell Guide](#), based on robust scientific evidence, can help achieve this. Based on new government recommendations, the new guide offers easy-to-follow advice for the public and is a valuable resource for health professionals, caterers and the food and drink industry who all play a vital role in supporting the nation to eat well. Our refreshed 5 A DAY advice and logo are now aligned with our Change4Life campaign.

National policy changes like the sugar levy will benefit a generation of children not yet born. At a local level, changes individuals, families and communities make have an even greater direct benefit in improving the health of people in the places where they live. The traditional divide between healthcare and other local services will increasingly dissolve, and local organisations are finding new ways to work together to provide services that are integrated around the person. Yesterday the independent Commission on Place-Based Health, chaired by Lord Victor Adebawale, a non-executive director of NHS England, published a [report](#) arguing that a focus on 'place' not only reflects the emerging direction of travel for the NHS and local government, but represents the best hope for achieving a sustainable health system for the future: a genuine chance to close both the 'health' gap and the longer term 'finance' gap described in the NHS Five Year Forward View. PHE has actively championed the relentless focus that local government has on people and place, and continues to support the healthcare system to make this paradigm shift. The Commission provides yet more evidence and a clear route map to making further progress and at pace.

People with learning difficulties die, on average, 20 years earlier than the rest of the population and have a higher risk of obesity, diabetes and mental health problems. At the PHE Learning Disabilities Conference on Tuesday delegates heard from people with learning disabilities describing their experiences of NHS services, with a particular focus on the importance of communication and health checks. The event also marked the launch of a new set of national and local primary care [data](#) about the health of people with learning disabilities and the care they get. This data can be used by local areas to plan tailored services and will play an important part in the new annual learning disabilities self-assessment process, run in partnership with NHS England, the Local Government Association and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services.

I am delighted to say that Adrian Masters will be joining PHE from NHS Improvement as our Director of Strategy. We will hugely benefit from his wealth of knowledge and skills in the health and care sector and as we all strive to achieve better outcomes for people come 2020. Adrian will join us in the early summer and we look forward to welcoming him at what is an exciting time for the public's health.

**With best wishes**