



Public Health  
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health



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Chief Executive

# Friday message

Friday 15 July 2016

**Dear everyone**

First, I would like to warmly congratulate the Right Honourable Jeremy Hunt MP on his reappointment as Health Secretary by our new Prime Minister.

At PHE, recent analysis shows that we are making real progress in creating a diverse and talented workforce. Back in 2013, a survey of around 40 recruited posts showed that a white candidate was six times more likely than a black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME) candidate to be appointed to a role with our organisation. Over the past three months, 25% of people joining us have come from a BAME background, showing that we are gradually achieving a more level playing field. We, of course, have much more to do, but this demonstrates that by making diversity and inclusion part of our core business, we can create a workforce that truly reflects the UK population.

This week we launched our new [Be Clear On Cancer campaign](#), which is the first national campaign to raise awareness of symptoms of lung cancer, lung disease and heart disease – all leading causes of death in England. Around 1.7 million people could be living with undiagnosed lung cancer, lung disease or heart disease, and we are encouraging anyone with a persistent cough, or who gets out of breath doing things they used to be able to do, to visit their GP. Finding these conditions early makes them more treatable, so early diagnosis is crucial. Look out for our TV, radio, print, digital and outdoor advertising, as well as an events roadshow in shopping centres across the country.

Significant public health risks including flooding, overheating within homes and public buildings, and vector-borne diseases are among the biggest threats to the UK posed by climate change, according to a [report](#) published on Tuesday by the independent Committee on Climate Change. It is worth remembering that many of the measures designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions can also have positive and important public health outcomes, such as a reduction in illness and premature deaths from air pollution. The report highlights all the actions national and local Government, industry and others need to consider to protect against these risks but we can all play our own part too from using the car less to turning the thermostat down by one degree.

The [Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation](#) has this week advised that a catch-up programme to vaccinate children aged 1 to 2 years against group B meningococcal (MenB) disease cannot currently be supported. This is because vaccinating older children may divert vaccine stocks needed for the routine national programme, putting babies with the highest rate of disease at risk. We currently vaccinate babies against MenB with other routine vaccinations at 2 months, 4 months and 12 months of age to help protect them when they are most at risk of developing MenB disease. By May 2017, the first children vaccinated with MenB will have turned two years of age and so older children should benefit from this protection.

And finally, I am now away with my family for a week and so my next message will be on 29 July.

**With best wishes**