



Public Health
England



Duncan Selbie
Chief Executive

Friday message

Friday 26 April 2013

Dear everyone

I am very pleased to say that today we have published our [Priorities for 2013/14](#). As the document itself says: We exist to serve the public through the public health system, a system led locally by elected members where responsibility for the public's health sits alongside responsibility for jobs, housing and communities. This system is new – the combination of local government leadership for the public's health supported by an expert national body is a first for England. Our aim is to cement a reputation with local authorities for our credibility and expertise, as the foundation upon which PHE will help the new system to drive transformation. We have listened carefully to those in the field, and to our Secretary of State and the leaders of local government, on where our priorities need to be. We can make early progress in some areas and in others it will take generations. The key is to get the balance right.

The delivery of the measles catch-up campaign through PHE, NHS England, and local Directors of Public Health will be a high profile example of the new system at work. We needed to act rapidly in the interests of protecting the public's health and maintaining the public's confidence. This is an opportunity to show how effective the new, integrated system can be in harnessing our national epidemiological expertise and local practical knowledge, intelligence and resource to target those children who are either unprotected or not fully protected against measles, through schools, GPs and other community settings. It is also the opportunity of a decade to get back on track to eliminate measles – we last achieved this in the 1990s and it must be our goal again.

Pharmacies have a major role to play in helping improve the public's health, with 1.8 million people visiting a pharmacy each day. On Monday, the evaluation of the [Healthy Living Pharmacy Programme](#) was launched at the Royal Pharmaceutical Society. Led by a collaboration of all the national pharmacy bodies and supported by the Department of Health and the public health organisations, there are now 508 Healthy Living Pharmacies in England. The results are really impressive. The public 'strongly' approved of the pharmacies which have signed up, with over 98% saying they would recommend them. Results have been equally encouraging in Stop Smoking services, with the Healthy Living Pharmacies delivering a significant improvement in the number of quits. The public and patients have also been much more positively engaged in other lifestyle areas where advice and support have been given by pharmacy Health Champions accredited by the Royal Society for Public Health.

And finally, I have given a commitment that we would work to secure a final decision by the end of September 2014 on our plan to bring our national epidemiology and microbiology services, together with other specialist public health functions, onto a single, integrated campus. This will be critical for PHE and the UK and we must get it right. Please be assured that should the argument prove to be compelling, we will prepare carefully and tirelessly to get the arrangements also right for our staff who are affected.

With best wishes