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PHE Bulletin, Public Health England's regular update, provides news and information on PHE and the public health landscape for all those concerned with the public's health. For more information see our website: www.gov.uk/phe

Public health news

Thirteen Health Protection Research Units created

Thirteen new Health Protection Research Units have been announced today in a new collaboration between PHE and leading academic centres. The research partnerships are the outcome of a competitive exercise run by the National Institute for Health Research and will cover 12 public health priority areas ranging from gastroenterology and novel viruses to innovations in methodology. For more information see the [news story](#).

PHE publishes the NHS Atlas of Variation in Diagnostic Services

Significant differences in how health conditions are identified and monitored have been published in the first [NHS Atlas of Variation in Diagnostic Services](#). The atlas identifies local variations for a wide range of diagnostic services covering imaging, endoscopy, physiological diagnostics, pathology, and genetics. Maps provide information down to the level of former primary care trusts and in some cases, for clinical commissioning groups. The atlas is published by PHE, working with NHS Right Care and a wide range of expert clinicians. For more information, see [PHE's press release](#).

New National Cardiovascular Intelligence Network

PHE has hosted the first major event bringing together key stakeholders from the new [National Cardiovascular Intelligence Network](#) (NCVIN). Announced earlier this year in the cardiovascular disease outcomes strategy, the NCVIN aims to use data and information to improve the quality of care and outcomes of communities,

patients and their families affected with diabetes, heart, stroke and renal diseases, viewing these as a single “family of conditions”. It will operate across organisations, including NHS England, National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), local authorities, charities, and academic institutions. See [PHE’s news story](#) for more details

Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) update

On Tuesday, *The Lancet Infectious Diseases* published the findings from research using gene-sequencing techniques that showed that three camels from a site where two humans contracted MERS-CoV were infected with the virus. More studies are needed to shed light on any animal-human links, as exposure to animals has only been documented for a limited number of human MERS-CoV cases. PHE is continuing to liaise closely with international colleagues to assess whether our recommendations need to change. For more information, see [PHE’s news story](#)

Latest PHE National Child Measurement Programme figures available

Latest [annual figures](#) from the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) published by the Health and Social Care Information Centre show obesity levels among four to five year old children have leveled out and levels in 10 to 11 year old children have stabilised for the first time since the programme started. PHE will publish a more detailed analysis on trends in early 2014. See [PHE’s press release](#) for more information.

PHE has published [annual guidance advising local commissioners and providers](#) on NCMP implementation for the 2013 to 2014 school year and [guidance for school leaders, staff, governing bodies and academies](#) on key tasks for schools to help the programme run smoothly.

G8 Dementia Summit

A [declaration and communique](#) setting out what has been agreed at the G8 dementia summit earlier this month has been published. Health ministers and experts from the eight nations addressed the summit. PHE Chief Executive Duncan Selbie welcomed the opportunity to collaborate on the prevention of dementia and helping people to live well with the condition. See [PHE’s press release](#) for more information.

Survival improving for lung cancer but the number of women diagnosed continues to rise

New analysis from PHE's National Cancer Intelligence Network shows that the one year survival for lung cancer has improved significantly, but that incidence for women continues to rise. Between 1990 and 2011, almost 720,000 people were diagnosed with lung cancer in England. During this time, the number of male lung cancer diagnoses declined, whereas the number of female lung cancer diagnoses increased. See [PHE's press release](#) for more details.

New clinical trial for severe *Clostridium difficile* infection treatment

A clinical trial will soon look at whether injections of polyclonal antibodies can be used to treat severe infections caused by *Clostridium difficile* bacteria. Pre-clinical studies have shown great promise and this next stage is part of the legislative process of getting therapies into mainstream clinical use. This work is an ongoing collaboration between PHE and MicroPharm Limited since 2008. MicroPharm, along with PHE and the University of Leeds, have been awarded £2.1 million grant from the Technology Strategy Board to conduct clinical trials. For more information, see [PHE's press release](#).

National HPV vaccination coverage remains high and evidence shows programme effective in protecting women's health

According to new annual data published by PHE, the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) national vaccination programme coverage rate remained high in 2012 to 2013, with 86% of the target age group (12 to 13 year-old girls) in England receiving the full course. A recent PHE study published in [Vaccine](#) provides important new evidence that the programme is successfully preventing HPV infections in young women in England. The research found HPV infections (type 16 and 18) in around one in five sexually active women aged 16 to 18 years prior to the immunisation programme, dropping to one in 15 following its introduction. See [PHE's press release](#) for more information.

Flu vaccination uptake strong, but much more to do

Flu vaccination figures from part way through the seasonal flu programme released last month indicate many older people, pregnant women, people in at risk groups, and for the first time, children aged two and three, have been vaccinated to date as part of this season's ongoing flu vaccine campaign in preparation for the forthcoming winter flu season. This week's [influenza report](#) states that indicators of influenza activity are at low levels of intensity. See [PHE's press release](#) for more information.

Outbreak of *Salmonella enterica* Goldcoast infection associated with whelk consumption

An [article](#) in the *Eurosurveillance* journal this month submitted by PHE reports that an increase in the number of cases of *Salmonella enterica* serotype Goldcoast infection was observed in England during September 2013. A total of 38 cases were reported, with symptom onset dates between 21 June and 6 October 2013. Epidemiological, environmental, microbiological and food chain evidence all support the conclusion that this outbreak was associated with eating whelks processed by the same factory. For additional information, see PHE's earlier [statement](#).

Importance of mental wellbeing highlighted by North West Mental Wellbeing Survey

A [PHE report](#) published last month on mental wellbeing in the North West has found that while there has been a significant increase in people within the region reporting to be in "very good" health, and more people with greater life satisfaction, people with long-term conditions had a significantly lower level of mental wellbeing than average. The 2012/13 survey measured the positive mental health and wellbeing of 11,500 people across the North West of England through a series of questions.

PHE investigating *Salmonella* Mikawasima outbreak

PHE and Health Protection Scotland are investigating a national outbreak of *Salmonella* Mikawasima. Cases in Europe have also been identified. So far there have been 45 confirmed cases in England, three in Wales and one in Northern Ireland. Health Protection Scotland has reported 29 cases. In England the largest number of cases (19) has been reported in the North East and there are 14 in the West Midlands. See PHE's [health protection report](#) for further details.

PHE's National General Practice Profiles updated

PHE's [National General Practice Profiles](#) have been refreshed with 2012 to 2013 data including the latest Quality Outcomes Framework data which were released at the end of October. The profiles draw together a wide range of information to give an overview of the health needs and priorities for each GP practice in England. Other data sources include the GP Patient Survey and the Attribution Dataset of GP Registered Populations. The profiles help clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) and local authorities set commissioning priorities and allow individual practices to compare themselves against others and CCGs. See PHE's [news story](#) for further details.

Innovative e-learning package launched for doctors and midwives

A state-of-the-art [e-learning module](#) has been launched as part of PHE's Newborn and Infant Physical Examination Programme. The free module uses film clips and animations to illustrate best practice and is suitable for busy practitioners. The e-learning package is designed primarily for doctors and was developed with the assistance of leading neonatologists, midwives, advanced neonatal nurse practitioners, GPs, and representatives of the Royal College of General Practitioners and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.

Screening programmes live consultations

Public consultations on two screening policies by PHE's UK National Screening Committee are currently live. They are:

- [Rhesus D status and red cell alloantibodies](#) (closing on 8 January 2014)
- [Coeliac disease](#) (closing on 20 January 2014)

PHE campaign news

Smokefree Health Harms campaign

PHE is launching a new Smokefree Health Harms campaign on 29 December 2013, which will focus on the immediate harms smoking does to the body and encourage people who smoke to go online to get free support to stop smoking. Posters and leaflets can be ordered and the digital toolkit downloaded from the [Smokefree Resource Centre](#) to support the campaign and promote Smokefree in local areas.

New Change4Life healthy swaps campaign

On 2 January, Change4Life will launch a new healthy swaps campaign to encourage and support families to cut sugar and saturated fat from their everyday snacks, drinks and meals. It's free for anyone to sign-up and Change4Life will provide free "taster recipes" leaflets to help start conversations about making healthier "like-for-like" swaps in local areas. Find out more about the campaign [here](#) and free resources can be ordered through the [Health and Social Care Orderline Website](#).

News from other organisations

The Kings Fund report

A report by The King's Fund, [Improving the public's health: a resource for local authorities](#) highlights the evidence base and the economic benefits of effective public health action across councils' work. The report and resources covers nine key areas, focussing on actions that can make a real difference, and is endorsed by Duncan Selbie, Sir Merrick Cockell, Janet Atherton and Sir Michael Marmot.

Results of third national survey of sexual attitudes and lifestyles published

Results published in [The Lancet](#) last month give the most detailed picture yet of the British population's sex lives over the last 10 years, as part of the third National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles (Natsal) survey. Led by University College London in partnership with the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and NatCen Social Research, over 15,000 adults aged 16-74 participated in interviews between September 2010 and August 2012. See [UCL News](#) for more information.

Independent review of standardised packaging for tobacco

The government has asked Sir Cyril Chantler to undertake an independent review of public health evidence for standardised tobacco packaging. PHE will be submitting evidence. His review will look at whether there is likely to be an effect on public health, particularly for children, if standardised tobacco packaging were to be introduced. It will report back by March 2014. See the [press release](#) for more information.

Universal free school meals funding

The Department for Education announced last week that it is providing £17.4m to support preparation for universal free school meals for infants, increased take-up of healthier school lunches, and the establishment of 500 breakfast clubs. Matched funding is being sought and local authorities and their health and wellbeing boards may wish to consider partnering with bidding organisations. The tender deadline is 17 January. See the [school food plan](#) and the [school food plan contracts](#) web pages for more information.

London healthy schools programme

[Healthy Schools London](#) is a new awards programme led by the Mayor of London from April 2013 to March 2016. The voluntary programme stimulates and recognises

schools' achievements in improving pupil health and wellbeing, particularly around reducing childhood obesity through healthy eating and physical activity, and builds on the success of the National Healthy Schools Programme, which ended in 2011.

Local government briefings on reducing harm from cold weather and cost effective public health interventions

The Local Government Association (LGA) has published a [briefing](#) for councillors and officers on the challenges facing councils and the opportunities they have to help to reduce harm to health from cold weather. Another LGA [briefing](#) explains the importance of assessing value for money in helping local authorities fulfil their public health responsibilities.

New mental health dashboard

A new [mental health dashboard](#) has been published. The first annual dashboard provides a clear, concise picture of mental health outcomes. It includes information on mental health services, the physical wellbeing of people with mental health problems and experiences of stigma and discrimination.

NICE guidance for smoke free hospitals

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has published [guidance](#) on smoking cessation in secondary care. It advises that patients who smoke should be offered smoking cessation drugs, nicotine patches, and counselling as soon as they are admitted to an acute, maternity or mental health setting to encourage them to quit.

Events news

PHE Advisory Board's fourth open meeting

The fourth public meeting of [Public Health England's Advisory Board](#) will be held on Monday 3 February 2014, and is expected to take place at Wellington House, London, from 10am to 1.30pm although location and time are to be confirmed.

Diabetes data and intelligence masterclasses

Next sessions of the free regional masterclasses for health professionals run by the National Diabetes Information Service are in Liverpool on 16 January and in Ely on 20 February. For information or to register for the events see [NDIS Masterclasses](#)

Health economics for public health practice and research course

Bangor University is holding a two day short course from 16-17 April 2014 for those wishing to gain an appreciation of public health economics. For further information, contact Mrs Ann Lawton at cheme@bangor.ac.uk, telephone 01248 382153.