



Public Health
England



Duncan Selbie
Chief Executive

Friday message

Friday 5 April 2013

Dear everyone

'Thunderbirds are go' – well, Public Health England is. On Monday we made the transition from our 130-plus component parts to the single entity that is PHE with amazingly few hitches (minus some genuinely unpredictable IT glitches). Our scientists, public health professionals, data and intelligence analysts and many other professionals are now all together within one family and are fully focused on the task before us – to do everything within our professional and personal power to help improve the public's health. We exist to serve the public health system, a system led locally by elected members.

Over many months we have been making contact with our partners locally and nationally to agree how we will best work together. One of these is the Food Standards Agency. It was a pleasure to meet their Chief Executive, Catherine Brown, to discuss our shared interest in food-borne disease and healthy eating and we look forward to working collaboratively with the FSA in these areas and more, in particular in our relations with local government and industry, as well as in information and knowledge management.

Evidence-based local information and knowledge is critical for local government planning, a point Mick Burrows, Chief Executive of Nottinghamshire County Council, emphasised during my visit last week. He explained there is a £200-a-week wage difference between people living in the West Bridgford district of Nottinghamshire, compared with Mansfield, which is a mere 16 miles away, and that the council is adopting a 'locally sensitive' approach to planning and resourcing health services. This variation is often described locally as the 'grandad gap' because the knock-on effect is that life expectancy in men is 13 years less in Mansfield than in West Bridgford. This understanding is crucial when making resource decisions for improving the health of the whole population and in particular for those communities where there is the greatest need. Nottinghamshire County Council is showing what can be done by joining everything together and co-ordinating action across all the agencies through their Health and Wellbeing Board and strong local partnerships.

I am glad to say that Public Health England's first Annual Conference will be held on 10 - 11 September at Warwick University. The outline programme is now available on www.phe-conference.org.uk. We look forward to this opportunity to bring together our partners from local and national government, academia, industry, the voluntary and community sector, the NHS and internationally, to share and learn from each other. Abstract submissions (until 3 May) and bookings can now be made online via the conference website.

And finally, I am on leave with my family next week and the next Friday message will be on Friday 19 April.

With best wishes