



Public Health
England



Duncan Selbie
Chief Executive

Friday message

Friday 5 July 2013

Dear everyone

I am delighted to say that today sees the completion of the national rollout of our [NHS Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening Programme](#) for all 65-year-old men. Every year about 4,000 older men die in England from ruptured abdominal aortic aneurysm – a weakening and enlargement of the main blood vessel in the body – yet most of these deaths are preventable through early detection. Those most at risk are current and former smokers and those with high blood pressure or high cholesterol and the extended screening programme will prevent around 2,000 of these deaths each year.

Our Knowledge and Intelligence teams have developed [Local Health](#), an online tool which presents information on populations in England, including health outcomes and factors affecting health such as housing and education, at the level of upper and lower tier local authorities, as well as by ward, using maps, summary charts and more detailed reports. This was developed to help councillors, local authority officers and other partners identify their local priorities for health improvement and we were pleased to demonstrate it yesterday at the Local Government Association conference. As with *Longer Lives*, your feedback would be really appreciated.

On Monday I met with the Chief Executives of four of the six local authorities that work together as the Liverpool City Region and preceded this with a tour of the Port of Liverpool dockyards and Bootle. They are very experienced in working together where that makes sense and in not standing on ceremony over boundary or budget. The dominant conversation was on the needs of vulnerable pre-school children and the transfer from the NHS to local government of the commissioning responsibility for 0-5s in 2015 which offers a new opportunity to tailor and integrate services for these children. We also focused on the work of our chemicals experts and the respect these local authorities have for their contribution in helping the region recover contaminated ex-industrial sites and the support they receive in keeping local industry safe.

As a science and evidence-based agency, PHE is obviously very focused on facts and what they tell us, recognising that being right isn't always sufficient and there are sometimes other considerations that decision makers need to take into account. Often it is a social movement that achieves change rather than politicians and professionals – for example seat belt legislation and smoking in public places. On Wednesday Public Health Minister Anna Soubry spoke at the Faculty of Public Health (FPH) annual conference in Coventry and she openly addressed alcohol minimum unit pricing, standardised packaging, and the dangers of sugar. She was clear that she was open to evidence-based persuasion on further measures to improve the public's health and her desire to see a balance between carrot and stick, recognising the contribution of both. The Minister also emphasised PHE's duty to fearlessly present the evidence and speak and publish the truth, even if this might sometimes be uncomfortable for the Government.

And finally, a big thank you to Professor Lindsey Davies, outgoing president of the FPH, for her brilliant leadership through an unparalleled period of change and importance, and a warm welcome to her successor, Professor John Ashton.

With best wishes