



Public Health
England



Duncan Selbie
Chief Executive

Friday message

Friday 23 August 2013

Dear everyone

One of the most valuable legacies PHE has inherited is an enormous wealth of scientific knowledge, skill and expertise. We are proud to have a culture of innovation which has prompted the development of a number of commercially successful products. Many of them may not be household names but they do make a difference to people's lives. Some recent success stories from our scientists include Ipsen's acquisition of Syntaxin (a spin-out company from the former HPA), Voraxaze royalties from BTG plc, and growing income from Jazz Pharmaceuticals for Erwinase which is used in the treatment of childhood Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia.

Our inherited 'pipeline' projects include antibodies to treat severe infections from the hospital superbug *Clostridium difficile*, a phosphor plate test pack for assessing dental X-ray sets, and rapid detection and point of care diagnostics for anthrax, meningitis, respiratory virus, and TB. All these projects exhibit the quality of innovation and science which supports so much of our work in public health. As well as generating welcome income, these projects are translating science into key methods for protecting everyone's health. The National Executive has therefore created a 'PHE Pipeline Fund' to nurture future scientific advances. The first round of funding will support a number of projects in the next financial year and presents a great opportunity for staff from across PHE to develop innovative public health solutions with the potential for commercialisation and delivery of significant return on investment. We particularly seek projects which demonstrate genuine collaboration across the different disciplines and have the potential to contribute to the UK's public health and wealth creation priorities.

This week's challenge on the [NHS Health Check](#) programme was interesting. What it has demonstrated is that we have to work harder to get across the message that this is primarily a health improvement programme offering a genuine opportunity to engage people in discussions about healthy lifestyles before they get sick. The basic elements in the programme are all grounded in evidence and underpinned by NICE guidance. What hasn't been tested is their inclusion in a single comprehensive programme and we will, of course, be independently evaluating this and other dimensions. Some have commented that it may lead to overtreatment. Again, NICE guidance is clear about who should be treated. Local Government is rolling out this programme with our support and we are already seeing some great follow-up offers to help people make the changes in their lives for their future wellbeing. We cannot walk away from such an opportunity to take preventative action in tackling the growing burden of disease.

I am delighted that the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) has this month announced its 20 Early Intervention "[Pioneering Places](#)" which will provide first hand evidence of what works in delivering effective early intervention. In return, the EIF will provide expertise, advice and a vital link-up service so those taking part can also learn from one another. Those taking part across the country, including Local Government Directors of Public Health, Police and Crime Commissioners and Clinical Commissioning Groups, are to be congratulated for their vision and commitment in volunteering to take part. I very much hope that over time other communities learn from them about what works in early intervention until the value of the concept is embraced nationwide.

With best wishes