



Public Health
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health



Duncan Selbie
Chief Executive

Friday message

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Dear everyone

I want to begin with a reflection on our second annual conference, held over two days this week at Warwick University, by recognising and thanking the tremendous number of excellent contributors from within the UK and around the world, and of course the 1,400-plus people who joined us. I would, in particular, highlight three of the contributions. Firstly from Jane Ellison, MP, Minister for Public Health, who remarked on the very encouraging beginning for the new public health system and a number of notable achievements both in local government and by PHE, more often than not through working together and with the local NHS. She expressed the Government's commitment to the public health agenda and to taking action nationally where that was appropriate and in turn wished to see improvements being taken forward at pace locally and genuine excellence spread. The only infection she wished spread was enthusiasm! Councillor Jonathan McShane, from Hackney, and Chair of the Public Health System Group, talked of local authority determination to make the very most of the opportunity to improve the health of their people. He explained that for local government, whilst comfortable with numbers and data, what they really cared about was how life was for real people living real lives in places that they are responsible for and that they constantly challenge themselves over what they are trying to achieve and whether they are making the most of every asset available and then making it happen. Finally, Simon Stevens, Chief Executive of NHS England, provided a compelling reminder of the human and economic cost of failing to address the rising tide of obesity, the cause of so many health problems from diabetes to cancer, and the need to refocus our efforts from treatment to prevention and early intervention. We have committed to work together on tackling obesity and have also agreed to make the necessary investments to eradicate TB from England. The conference was a great opportunity to reflect on how we can move even faster and with greater effect in the years to come.

On Tuesday, we launched [Antibiotic Guardian](#), a pledge campaign also supported by NHS England and the Chief Medical Officer. It is critical that we act to prevent the overuse and misuse of antibiotics which is resulting in many bacteria becoming resistant to these vital medicines and unless we take greater care, our current antibiotics could soon be useless. Each year in Europe alone, 25,000 people already die due to antibiotic resistant bacteria. The Antibiotic Guardian pledge commits health professionals and the public to taking at least one action to avoid unnecessary antibiotic use.

This week we also published our [Global Health Strategy](#) which sets out our priorities for the next five years in responding to humanitarian disasters and in public health capacity building. The current ebola outbreak has been a sharp reminder of how relatively rare infections can become a threat to the entire global family. As John Donne, the renowned metaphysical poet said: "No man is an island". The UK is blessed with the talent and experience of public health professionals who have worked on every continent and in every conceivable circumstance and we are looking to draw on this fabulous resource in making our global contribution wherever it is most needed.

And finally, on Wednesday evening Professor Kevin Fenton, our Director of Health and Wellbeing, had the honour of being selected as one of the [HSJ's LGBT role models](#). The judges considered him to be one of the most visible, highest ranking black gay men in healthcare in the UK and described him as "an extraordinary role model." I congratulate Kevin on this prestigious recognition as a consummate professional and an exceptional role model.

With best wishes