



Public Health  
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health



Duncan Selbie  
Chief Executive

## Friday message

Friday 14 November 2014

**Dear everyone**

On Monday and Wednesday I visited our teams who have got the enhanced Ebola screening programme up and running smoothly at Birmingham and Manchester airports, a tremendous achievement in such a tight time frame. I know how much work this has entailed from our earlier experience in London and I cannot sufficiently convey my appreciation for all that has been done. I witnessed fabulous cooperation between the Border Force and Airport personnel and our own staff, people coming together from every discipline and function across the Midlands and the North West. We are now providing enhanced screening at all five major ports of entry.

I am continuing to meet the leadership teams of local authorities and CCGs around the country and spent Wednesday morning with Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council. Stockport has had a long-standing interest in improving the public's health, with a jointly appointed Director of Public Health for many years. The new duty placed on them last year to improve the health of their people has seen this accelerate to the extent that the whole council considers itself a public health authority. This focus, and the partnership they have forged with Stockport CCG, is far from unusual but it is standout brilliant at putting prevention at the heart of all their thinking. For example, they recognise that the local population suffers from poor heart health and this is driving their priority setting. The CCG has made a joint appointment with the Council of a clinical director for public health, and at the most recent annual meeting of the CCG the focus was on prevention. We are shortly to publish a plan for tackling high blood pressure, the second highest risk factor in early avoidable death, but again Stockport are ahead of the curve and have checked the blood pressure of 6,000 people over the past six months. Of these, 75 per cent needed to take some action to improve their blood pressure and the CCG and Council have this in hand.

We now know that families supported through the Troubled Families programme, led by the incomparable Louise Casey, face on average nine different serious problems, with 71 per cent suffering from poor health and 46 per cent having a mental health condition. Last week, in partnership with NHS England, the Department of Health and the Department for Communities and Local Government, we launched a ['health offer'](#) for the programme, which will result in local doctors, nurses and community health workers taking a more integrated approach to working with councils' Troubled Families teams and other local authority services. It also means that Troubled Families teams can more easily get the information they need on health concerns and specialist health training. In addition, there is new guidance on sharing health information, which hopefully will help identify a family's health problems at an earlier stage. Including health as an objective in the national programme should also encourage and support families to access the services they need, such as GPs, pharmacies and dentists, rather than as now, for many, relying on A&E. The 51 'early starter' local authorities in the programme will now begin to use the 'health offer', in advance of the roll out across the country from 1 April 2015, helping up to 400,000 families over the next five years.

Poignantly, given the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First World War, teams from our Culture Collections at Porton and the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute, are to be congratulated on a landmark [collaboration](#) which has unlocked the history and genetic code of a strain of *Shigella flexneri*, isolated from WW1 soldier, Private Ernest Cable. Their work will help researchers in their fight against dysentery, a disease that kills hundreds of thousands of children under five in developing nations each year.

**With best wishes**