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PHE Bulletin, Public Health England's regular update, provides news and information on PHE and the public health landscape for all those concerned with the public's health. For more information see our website: [www.gov.uk/phe](http://www.gov.uk/phe)

## Public health news

### Public Health Outcomes Framework data tool updated

The Public Health Outcomes Framework [data tool](#) has been updated and indicators on cancers diagnosed at an early stage have been included as a preliminary data for the first time. Alcohol-related hospital admissions from the Local Alcohol Profiles for England have also been added. The web-based tool, which is refreshed quarterly, brings together available indicators from the framework to help local authorities and others understand how well public health is being improved and protected. The next update is due in August.

### National Diet and Nutrition Survey

The latest [National Diet and Nutrition Survey \(NDNS\) data](#) released earlier this month by PHE shows that overall the population is still consuming too much saturated fat, added sugars and salt, and not enough fruit, vegetables, oily fish and fibre. The annual survey is designed to assess the food consumption and nutritional status of a UK representative sample of 1,000 people per year (500 children, 500 adults) aged 18 months upwards living in private households. The report presents results from the first four years of the programme (2008/2009 to 2011/2012) combined. For more information see PHE's [press release](#).

### Scarlet fever levels show a decline across England

PHE has reported a decline in levels of scarlet fever across the country with 415 new cases reported in the week 5 to 11 May 2014. While the weekly number of cases has reduced by half compared to mid-April, levels remain substantially elevated

across the country. The total number of cases notified so far for 2014 is 8,322. This is the highest number of cases reported in a calendar year since 1980 when 11,118 notifications were made. Scarlet fever is a seasonal disease and this is the time of year when we would expect to see a decline in the number of cases. For more information see PHE's [press release](#).

### **Opiate and crack use continues to fall, alongside significant decrease in injecting**

The number of opiate and crack cocaine users in England has fallen again according to independent research published last week by PHE. Overall there has been a 10% fall in the number of opiate and crack users since 2004 to 2005 with the largest reductions being seen in the last few years. The figures also reveal a significant fall in the number of people injecting these drugs – from 93,401 in 2010 to 2011, to 87,302 in 2011 to 2012. For more information see PHE's [news story](#).

### **PHE update on MERS-CoV**

PHE has reaffirmed a commitment to monitoring and studying Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) in the UK and globally. This follows the World Health Organization (WHO) MERS-Coronavirus Emergency Committee announcement on 14 May 2014 that although the conditions for a public health emergency of international concern have not yet been met, concern about the current global MERS-CoV situation had “significantly increased”. Earlier that week, PHE was advised of a case of MERS-CoV identified in a person flying from Saudi Arabia to the US and transiting through London. This followed a similar case in April 2014 involving a person transiting through London, although the two incidents were not linked. For more information see PHE's press releases on the [WHO announcement](#) and the [May MERS-CoV case](#).

### **Call for new policy focus on brain health to reduce the risk of dementia**

Action to tackle smoking, drinking, sedentary behaviour and poor diet could reduce the risk of dementia in later life alongside other conditions such as heart disease, stroke and many cancers, according to the UK Health Forum and PHE in a joint consensus statement published last week. Fifty-nine organisations and experts from across the dementia and public health community, including practitioners and researchers, have signed the consensus statement, known as the [Blackfriars Consensus Statement](#), which is accompanied by correspondence in *The Lancet*. For more information, see PHE's [press release](#).

### **UK National Screening Committee announces new screening and a new test for newborn babies**

The UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) has announced its recommendation to screen every newborn baby in the UK for four new genetic disorders. This means expanding the current NHS Newborn Blood Spot Screening programme to screen for homocystinuria, maple syrup urine disease, glutaric aciduria type 1 and isovaleric acidaemia. Testing for these conditions as part of the current programme, leading to early detection and treatment, will prevent those babies affected from dying or being severely disabled for the rest of their lives. The UK NSC is supported by PHE. For more information see PHE's [press release](#).

The UK NSC also wants to pilot pulse oximetry in England. It is a simple test where a clip placed on a baby's fingers and toes measures the amount of oxygen in the blood. Its use can help the NHS find many more babies with serious heart disease. The committee wants to use the pilot to better understand the implications of using the test on services for newborn babies. For more information, see PHE's [press release](#).

### **Get ready for summer with PHE's heatwave plan for England**

PHE has released guidance for the public and for health and social care professionals on managing the potential health effects of hot weather. The [Heatwave Plan for 2014](#) is based around the Met Office's Heat-Health Watch alert system, which alerts the public and health and social care services to forecast and actual severe hot weather in different parts of the country, so that appropriate action can be taken. It is a joint plan from PHE, NHS England, the Department of Health and the Local Government Association, with input from the voluntary and community sector and other stakeholders. For more information, see PHE's [news story](#).

### **Travel associated measles accounts for a third of England cases as numbers continue decline**

[New figures](#) published last week by PHE show there were 70 measles cases confirmed in England between January and March this year. This shows a significant decrease from the same period in 2013 when 673 cases were confirmed, and an increase from October to December, when there were 24 cases. Around a third of all new cases were infected while overseas. The figures also show there were 847 confirmed cases of mumps in the first quarter of 2014, compared to 1,036 cases confirmed between January and March 2013. For more information see PHE's [press release](#).

### HPV vaccination programme schedule changing from three to two doses

A [joint letter](#) from PHE, the Department of Health and NHS England announces changes to the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination programme. From September 2014 the schedule will change from three to two doses following a recommendation from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation earlier this year. The HPV vaccine is currently routinely offered to girls aged 12 to 13 in school year 8. Recent research shows that antibody response to the two-dose schedule in adolescent girls is equivalent to the response that correlated with protection against persistent infection and precancerous lesions in the initial vaccine trials. For more information see the PHE [news story](#).

### Decline in whooping cough cases continues

There were 4,623 laboratory confirmed cases of whooping cough (pertussis) in England in 2013, 51% fewer cases than in 2012 when 9,367 cases were reported, according to annual figures published earlier this month by PHE. Case numbers in infants under three months old have proportionally seen the greatest reduction, with 79% fewer cases in 2013 (85 cases) than in 2012 (407 cases). There were three deaths in infants with whooping cough confirmed in 2013, compared to 14 deaths in 2012. For more information see PHE's [press release](#).

### PHE publishes independent evidence papers on e-cigarettes

Two reports on e-cigarettes commissioned by PHE from leading academics have been published. [Electronic Cigarettes](#) by Professor John Britton and Dr Ilze Bogdanovica of the University of Nottingham takes a broad look at the issues relating to e-cigarettes including their role in tobacco harm reduction, potential hazards, potential benefits and regulation. [E-cigarette uptake and marketing](#) by Professor Linda Bauld, Kathryn Angus and Dr Marisa de Andrade of the University of Stirling examines use of e-cigarettes by children and young people, the scale and nature of current marketing and its implications, in particular in relation to its potential appeal to young people. For more information, see PHE's [news story](#).

### Strategic framework to improve the health and wellbeing of gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men

PHE is developing a strategic framework to promote the health and wellbeing of gay men, bisexual men and other men who have sex with men. Stakeholders are now being offered a final [opportunity to comment](#) on the draft framework before its publication in June. The deadline for comment is 6 June.

## **A guide to whole system sexual and reproductive health and HIV commissioning**

PHE announced plans earlier this year to develop a guide to whole system commissioning for sexual and reproductive health and HIV. Consultations have taken place with a range of stakeholders to inform this initiative and there a final opportunity [to comment](#) on the draft guide by 12 June before its publication in July.

## **Recent PHE Blogs**

[What is the right age for cervical screening?](#) by Anne Mackie (28 April 2014). What's involved in cervical cancer screening and at what age should it start? UK National Screening Committee director of programmes Anne Mackie sets out the facts on how this screening technique works and why the starting age is where it is.

[Why vaccinate?](#) by Joanne Yarwood (1 May 2014). After clean water, vaccination is the most effective public health intervention in the world for saving lives and promoting good health, according to PHE's immunisation programme manager Joanne Yarwood. But how do we choose what to vaccinate against?

[Making the economic case for public health](#) by Kevin Fenton and Brian Ferguson (6 May 2014). Unless public health recommendations stack up economically they are much less likely to be implemented. How do we demonstrate value for money then? PHE's director for health and wellbeing Professor Kevin Fenton and director for knowledge and intelligence (England) Brian Ferguson outline some suggestions.

[Getting by with a little help from our friends](#) by Sally Warren (7 May 2014). In May PHE launched the new Dementia Friends campaign. PHE's director of programmes Sally Warren gives some background on the campaign and the work PHE is doing to help people with dementia to live well.

['Nothing about us without us': why listening to children and young people makes for good public health](#) by Viv Bennett (8 May 2014). What do young people think are the big public health messages? The best way to find out is to ask them, argues Viv Bennett, PHE and Department of Health director for nursing and head of PHE's children and young people priority area.

[Right people, right time, right place](#) by Tony Vickers-Byrne (14 May 2014). Workforce development is all about getting the right people in the right place at the right time. PHE's human resources director Tony Vickers-Byrne explains how we contribute to the development of the public health workforce.

[Mental health: more than just an awareness week](#) by Gregor Henderson (15 May 2014). Mental Health Awareness Week was from 12 to 18 May. PHE's lead for wellbeing and mental health Gregor Henderson explains how PHE marked the week, and outlines PHE's plans to focus on mental health and wellbeing all year round.

[Healthcare public health: who doesn't do it?](#) by Jenny Harries (19 May 2014). What is healthcare public health and who is responsible for delivering it in the new public health system? PHE's regional director for the south of England Dr Jenny Harries argues that we all have a role to play.

[E-cigarettes and harm reduction: where are we now and what next?](#) by Kevin Fenton (21 May 2014). On 15 May PHE held a symposium to bring together the public health community and discuss the role of e-cigarettes in harm reduction strategies. PHE's director for health and wellbeing Kevin Fenton blogs on the debates around e-cigarettes and the next steps.

## PHE campaign news

### **New dementia campaign launches as research reveals the true cost to business of dementia**

PHE and the Alzheimer's Society have joined forces in a major new campaign to help create a more dementia friendly society. The campaign has released new research showing signs of a shift in willingness from business to become more dementia friendly. The report has been compiled by the Centre for Economics and Business Research for Dementia Friends. Many large employers, more than 80 local authorities and as many NHS organisations have committed to train their staff as Dementia Friends. For more information on the research and the campaign, see PHE's [press release](#).

## News from other organisations

### **NICE drafts guidance on vitamin D supplements and a briefing for local authorities on tackling drugs use**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has released [draft guidance](#) on easier access to vitamin D supplements for those at risk of deficiency. NICE has also issued a public health briefing for local authorities summarising its recommendations on tackling drug use and offering information on how to put the advice into practice. For more information, see the [NICE briefing](#).

### **Review on radium contamination in Dalgety Bay area published**

The 15th report of the Committee on Medical Aspects of Radiation in the Environment (COMARE), published this month, presents a comprehensive review of the radium contamination in the area around Dalgety Bay, Fife, Scotland. PHE provides the secretariat to COMARE, an [independent expert advisory committee](#). For more information, see the COMARE [news story](#).

### **Changes to rehabilitation and provision of treatment to offenders**

Ministers at the Department of Health and the Ministry of Justice have [written](#) to local authorities and health partners about reforms to probation that are taking place as part of the Transforming Rehabilitation programme. These will have implications for those who commission and provide services that support rehabilitation.

### **Progress needed across children and young people's healthcare**

Support for children and young people's health is getting better but there is still work to do, according to a new report. The [first annual report by the Children and Young People's Health Outcomes Forum](#) praised the progress but has also highlighted areas where more needs to be done.

## **Events news**

### **PHE annual conference 2014**

PHE's second annual conference will be held on 16-17 September 2014 at Warwick University and will include a keynote address by Jeremy Hunt, Secretary of State for Health. Booking details and the outline programme can be found on the [conference website](#).

### **PHE Board's seventh open meeting**

The seventh open meeting of PHE's Board was held at Skipton House in London on 23 May 2014. Meeting [details](#), including board papers for this and earlier meetings and information on future board meetings, are available online.

### **Cancer outcomes conference 2014**

The Cancer Outcomes Conference 2014 of PHE's National Cancer Intelligence Network and UK and Ireland Association of Cancer Registries will be held on 9-10 June in Birmingham. [Details](#) are available online.