



Public Health
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health



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Chief Executive

Friday message

Friday 13 March 2015

Dear everyone

Wednesday saw England take another major step towards the introduction of standardised packaging of tobacco, with a majority of MPs backing the measure. Should this be supported by the House of Lords, our country will have taken the most important public health measure of the decade. As I write, 600 children take up smoking every day and smoking remains the biggest cause of premature death and preventable illness in the UK. We want to do everything possible to protect our children from the harms caused by tobacco and this will in part address this.

Also on Wednesday we launched, with NHS England and Diabetes UK, the [National NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme](#), the seven local demonstrator sites we will work with to co-design and test the programme, and our intention is to use a national procurement to secure the capability and capacity to provide lifestyle programmes to cut the risk of developing diabetes. The programme will be based on well-established international evidence and will be scaled up to become a truly nationwide service. This is a real example of the NHS getting serious about prevention. The potential benefits are significant, every year around 20,000 people with diabetes die early, and it is a major contributor to preventable ill health. Doing something about this is what the NHS 5 Year Forward View is all about.

Responding to Ebola at home and in West Africa remains a significant call on our staff, with enhanced screening being provided at five major ports seven days a week, as well as diagnostic services at home and in the field. There are few if any areas of PHE that have not been affected by our response to the Ebola outbreak. Some have been directly involved on the ground and have severely disrupted their everyday lives to respond to the humanitarian crisis while others have supported port screening and yet others have quietly shouldered additional work through filling the gaps occasioned by this and their contribution has been as valuable. These demands are likely to continue for some months and I want to acknowledge all the good work of so many and to say a heartfelt thank you.

One big reason people leave an organisation is because the relationship with their line manager is not the best it could be. That is why we have held 11 management seminars across the country, and over 1,200 staff who are people managers have attended. These seminars ensure that we focus on how we do what we do, how we engage our people, as much as on what we deliver. We specifically explore our behaviours, how we invite, offer and respond to feedback, staff wellbeing, how we lead and develop our teams, and share best practice. The best managers spend significant time with their people, getting the balance right with the demands of the day-to-day job. They are visible, approachable, accessible and available, talk to their people frequently, ask questions. And listen. They are clear about what they expect, treat their people equally, and demonstrate that they are valued. They deliberately role model great behaviour, especially during times of change. Ultimately, the best managers put their people first. They focus on personal development, delegate to and empower their staff, acknowledge their own and others' mistakes, are positive and constructive with feedback, and learn accordingly. They get out there. They say 'good morning', and 'well done', and 'thank you'. They make their people feel good about themselves, well cared for and well supported. Behaving well as a manager is not just the right thing to do, it delivers better outcomes. I want PHE to be a place where people can do their best work and where we celebrate and welcome difference and diversity.

With best wishes