



Public Health
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health



Duncan Selbie
Chief Executive

Friday message

Thursday 26 March 2015

Dear everyone

PHE is celebrating its second birthday. We have so much to be proud of, so much more to do. I would argue there has never been a time when public health has had a more pertinent role to play in securing the future good of populations across the world. This century offers unrivalled opportunities to use knowledge and technology to the benefit of people everywhere. For public health this means closing the gap in cost, quality and availability of great health for everyone. That is not going to be by getting better at treating sickness, but by winning the arguments globally, nationally and locally for prevention and showing people and the politicians who serve them what can be done. I have, as many know, visited more than 130 councils, very often including their CCG partners. If there is one lesson that stands out more than any other, it is not that public health returned to local government two years ago. We never left. From Redcar to Telford to Dorset and all points north, west, east and south, I have witnessed the profound association between public health and its roots in civic pride and endeavour. People living in places where what matters most to their health and wellbeing is having a job, a decent home and companionship in their life. The best barometer for improving health is economic prosperity and ensuring that local people are benefiting from this.

PHE has a central role in making the case for prevention and to do this, we are changing as an organisation and I know this is painful for some. As we do this, we are focusing on three core themes:

- ensuring that our science continues to compete with the best in the world and this is underpinning the creation of a unified National Infections Service
- bringing that same research rigour to bear on our health improvement work, combining our assets in knowledge and intelligence, health and wellbeing and strategy, to develop and deliver the products and services that the front line wants
- Mapping our local presence around how local government organises itself, moving from 14 local centres plus London, to eight plus London

I do want to say thank you to all those who are helping us through this period and especially to those staff experiencing the greatest change. This will create PHE as a knowledge-based, scientifically orientated public health agency that aims to be truly values based, focused on evidence and judged on outcomes.

I am glad to say we have received our remit [letter](#) for the coming year from the Public Health Minister Jane Ellison and you will see from this our objectives against our four functions. This will inform our business plan which we will publish in due course.

We are very proud that our scientists are heading a consortium researching a rapid 'in the field' Ebola test, following the [award](#) of a £1million grant. Chief Medical Officer Dame Sally Davies, acknowledged their work when she said: "A rapid diagnostic test has the potential to reduce the devastating effects of Ebola that have affected West Africa during the recent outbreak. This is a fantastic opportunity for Public Health England to significantly improve how we treat Ebola patients and ultimately stop the spread of the virus."

And finally, you will have noted this is a Thursday. The pre-election sensitivity begins tomorrow and my next Friday message will be post the election.

With best wishes