



Public Health
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health



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Chief Executive

Friday message

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Dear everyone

This week we published our Screening in England 2013/2014 [report](#), highlighting key achievements from the NHS Screening Programmes including the lowest ever rates of mother to baby HIV transmission in pregnancy. On bowel scope screening the objective of opening 60 per cent of screening centres by the end of March has been met and this is expected to reach 100 per cent by the end of next year. These are tremendous achievements and I congratulate everyone within PHE and across the NHS who has worked so hard to make them happen.

Today, in partnership with the Children & Young People's Mental Health Coalition, we published our [guidance](#) *Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing: A whole school and college approach*. Many schools and colleges are already investing a lot of time and resources into improving pupils' emotional health and this briefing builds on this work and on wider evidence. The eight evidence based principles outlined in the briefing, if applied consistently and comprehensively, will contribute towards helping protect and promote pupils emotional health and wellbeing.

Yesterday the Health & Social Care Information Centre published the Dental Health Survey of Children and Young People 2013, which is partly funded by PHE. The survey, which has been run every 10 years since 1973, showed that a third of five-year-olds and almost half of eight-year-olds have decay in their milk teeth and that tooth decay was still found in 34 per cent of 12-year-olds (43 per cent in 2003) and 46 per cent of 15-year-olds (56 per cent in 2003). It is really encouraging to see the overall fall in tooth decay levels and that more children now brush their teeth twice a day and regularly visit the dentist. However, there has been a virtual doubling of tooth decay rates in children from low income families so there is no room for complacency. Tooth decay is a serious but preventable disease and these findings highlight the urgent need to reduce the amount of sugary snacks and drinks in our children's diets. Our consultants in dental health advise local authorities on preventive programmes and have produced evidence based guidance for them and for dental health professionals on steps to improve and maintain the oral and general health of their patients.

On Wednesday the Greater London Authority published [Better Health for London: Next Steps](#) which builds on the work of the London Health Commission. The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, Public Health England, NHS England, London Councils and the 32 clinical commissioning groups have come together to outline how, individually and collaboratively, they will work towards London becoming the world's healthiest major city. Implementing this will be public health in action.

And finally, in an historic landmark moment, the House of Lords' support for the introduction of standardised packaging of tobacco means that this very important measure will become a reality. Such positive news for the protection of our children's health.

With best wishes