



PHE Bulletin

News and views for the public health sector

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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

Public health news

New vaccine programmes protecting against meningococcal disease confirmed for this summer

The Secretary of State has confirmed that, later this summer, babies and young people will start to benefit from further protection against meningitis and septicaemia through the launch of two new meningococcal immunisation programmes in England. PHE and NHS England have published two letters to healthcare professionals giving details of the [MenACWY](#) and [MenB](#) vaccination programmes. From August 2015, a new adolescent MenACWY immunisation programme will be offered to teenage groups starting with all 17 and 18 year olds and any new university entrants. From 1 September 2015, infants will begin to be offered MenB immunisation through the NHS Childhood Immunisation Programme. For more information see the Department of Health [news story](#).

PHE study finds Ebola virus mutated slower than first thought

The Ebola virus responsible for the outbreak in West Africa mutated at a similar rate to previous outbreaks, according to a new international study led by PHE published in *Nature*. The scientists analysed 179 patient samples obtained by the European Mobile Laboratory, which was deployed to the epicentre of the outbreak in Guinea, to reveal how the Ebola virus mutated and spread. Early in the outbreak, research had suggested the virus' mutation rate was twice that of previous Ebola outbreaks. For more information see PHE's [press release](#).

End of life care improves according to report

There is a growing understanding within the health sector of what is important to people at the end of life, according to a new report published by PHE's National End of Life Care Intelligence Network. The [What We Know Now 2014](#) report finds that home continues to be the preferred place of death for people in England, followed by hospices and care homes. The proportion of people dying at home or in care homes has increased from 35% in 2004 to 44% (207,764) in 2013. The number of people dying in hospitals has dropped by 50,000 since 2004. In 2013 it was less than half of all deaths (227,748). For more information see PHE's [press release](#).

Reconfiguration of PHE regions and centres goes live

On Wednesday 1 July, new arrangements for strengthening PHE's local presence go live and PHE's geographical footprint will match the nine regions of local government. Each of the four PHE regions will continue to be led by a director who, as well as supporting the eight centre directors, will also be the public health adviser to NHS England in their region. London remains a combined centre and region.

PHE publishes Child Health Profiles 2015

The [Child Health Profiles 2015](#), published by PHE earlier this month, provide a snapshot of child health and wellbeing for each local authority in England using key health indicators, and allow comparison locally, regionally and nationally. Interactive maps and charts allow users to create customised views. PHE has also published a condensed version of the profiles for clinical commissioning groups which uses some of the same key indicators. For more information see PHE's [news story](#).

National screening programme for bladder cancer not recommended

The UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) has upheld its recommendation against screening adults in the UK for bladder cancer, the seventh most common cancer in the UK, following a review concluding that the available test is not accurate enough for identifying who would be at risk of the disease. The committee also recommended against introducing national screening programmes for depression in adults and screening newborn babies for amino acid metabolism disorders, fatty-acid oxidation disorders and galactosaemia. The recommendations

were made at the UK NSC committee meeting on 19 March 2015, the minutes of which were published on 9 June. For more information see PHE's [press release](#).

Alcohol-related hospital admissions decrease among under-18s

New figures from PHE show a repeated drop in the rate of hospital admissions due to alcohol among under-18s, evidence of a continuing decline in young people's harmful drinking. The figures in the latest update to the [Local Alcohol Profiles for England](#) data tool show that nationally, alcohol-specific hospital admissions for under-18s are down by 11% to 13,725 in the latest three year period and by 41% against the earliest comparable figures. There continues to be large variations between the most deprived and the least deprived areas. For more information see PHE's [news story](#).

Reducing high smoking rates among patients in mental health units

PHE and NHS England have published new [guidance](#) to help medium and low secure mental health units best implement the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence [recommendation](#) that all NHS funded sites should provide access to on-site stop smoking services and deliver care in an environment free of smoke. Nationally [33% of people with a mental health problem smoke](#) compared to [18.7% in the population as a whole](#). A PHE and NHS England survey found that smoking rates among service users in mental health units is even higher at 64%. High smoking rates among people with mental health problems are the single largest contributor to their 10 to 20 year reduced life expectancy. For more information see PHE's [press release](#).

New STI figures show rapid increases among gay men

Latest figures published by PHE last week show there were 439,243 sexually transmitted infections (STIs) reported in England in 2014. The impact of STIs remains greatest in young people under the age of 25 years and gay men. Chlamydia is the most commonly diagnosed STI accounting for 47% of diagnoses (206,774 cases). However, the largest proportional increases in diagnoses between 2013 and 2014 were reported for syphilis (33% increase) and gonorrhoea (19% increase). For more information see PHE's [press release](#).

New guidance aims to help prevent unexpected child deaths in London

PHE has published two new public safety updates on [reducing infant mortality](#) and [sudden unexpected death in infancy \(SUDI\)](#). In London, around ten babies a week

die before their first birthday. PHE London is raising awareness of the common risk factors and preventative measures to educate parents, carers and health professionals across the capital on how to reduce unexpected infant deaths. SUDI is a leading cause of infant mortality in children aged between one month and one year. For more information see PHE's [press release](#).

Hepatitis cases responsible for 93% of prison disease reports

New figures in PHE's [health and justice 2014 report](#), published earlier this month reveal hepatitis B and C cases accounted for 93% of the 1,268 infectious diseases reported in English prisons during 2014. The number of single reports of infectious diseases made to PHE has more than doubled since 2011. The increase in reports reflects significant improvements in testing for hepatitis and other bloodborne viruses in prisons. For more information see PHE's [press release](#).

Earlier diagnosis of bladder cancer could improve survival rates in women

New research by PHE's National Cancer Intelligence Network shows that survival rates for bladder cancer in women are worse than men by around 10%. Possible factors to explain the poorer outcomes for women include later diagnosis, and having rarer forms of the cancer. Women are being urged to act promptly when they see the warning signs, which include visible blood in pee and pain while urinating. For more information see PHE's [press release](#).

Government announces reduction in public health grant

The Department of Health (DH) has been asked to make a £200m reduction to the public health grant as part of the further savings in government departments this year [announced](#) by the Chancellor on 4 June. A period of consultation led by DH is planned and PHE will play its full part in working this through alongside local government. PHE chief executive Duncan Selbie said: "Local government is best placed to lead on prevention and since taking on public health in 2013 have made significant progress in improving the public's health. Though the government's decision is a difficult ask of them they are best placed to manage and prioritise resources and I am confident they will with the least possible impact."

Report examines progress on NHS England's Five Year Forward View

NHS England, PHE and other national agencies have launched the [NHS Five Year Forward View: Time to Deliver](#) report, which looks at the progress made

towards delivering the [Five Year Forward View](#), and sets out the next steps needed need to achieve the shared ambitions.

Screening content now on GOV.UK and NHS Choices

As part of PHE's work to improve all online screening content, information for professionals is now live on GOV.UK at www.gov.uk/population-screening-programmes. Screening information for the public is on [NHS Choices](#). Old screening websites will still be available via the [National Archives](#). For help please contact legacy.screening.nhs.uk/helpdesk.

Rise in patient numbers for specialist palliative care

Increasing numbers of people are accessing specialist palliative care across all settings – especially community-based services – according to a new [report](#) from PHE, the National Council for Palliative Care, and Hospice UK. Latest figures from the Minimum Data Set for Specialist Palliative Care for 2013-14 show that the average number of patients per service has risen for all specialist palliative care settings and service types by since 2008.

Resources to support the local integration of housing, health and care

Following recent changes in the grant funding of disabled facilities, [Care & Repair England](#) has launched a set of new [cameos](#), funded by PHE and endorsed by the national [Home Adaptations Consortium](#), which provide inspiring local examples of delivery of home adaptations. A [briefing](#) has been published alongside to explain the changes, clarify responsibilities and highlight opportunities for integration.

Reported malaria infections in UK in 2014

Latest figures from PHE published earlier this month show an overall increase of 5.7% in imported malaria infections reported in the UK in 2014 (1,586) compared with 2013 (1,501). There were three deaths from malaria reported in 2014 compared to seven in 2013, all from falciparum malaria acquired in Nigeria. There is a small variation in the number of deaths from malaria in the UK every year and the total for 2014 is low compared to the annual average of six over the last 10 years. For more information see PHE's [news story](#).

Learning disabilities factsheets and report published

PHE's learning disabilities team has published three easy read [factsheets](#) on epilepsy and learning disabilities. It has also published a [report](#) on the findings of

the Joint Health and Social Care Learning Disability Self-Assessment Framework 2014.

Recent PHE blogs

[LGB&T health – celebrating with pride](#)

by Kevin Fenton and Justin Varney (26 June).

[Inviting debate around the NHS Health Check programme](#)

by Jamie Waterall (18 June).

[Alcohol - some encouraging trends](#)

by Rosanna O'Connor (17 June).

[Pedalling your way to better health](#)

by Justin Varney (16 June).

[How improving your diet is good for your health and can help tackle climate change](#)

by Alison Tedstone (15 June).

[Middle East Respiratory Syndrome \(MERS\): Who is at risk?](#)

by Richard Pebody (10 June).

[The Patient Portal: offering cancer patients access to their own records](#)

by Jem Rashbass and Sarah Stevens (9 June).

[United against cancer – locally, nationally and internationally](#)

by John Newton (8 June).

[Reducing smoking in secure mental health units](#)

by Kevin Fenton and Matthew Day (4 June).

People News

Public Health England staff awarded honours in Queen's Birthday lists

PHE's HIV and sexual health expert adviser Professor Jane Anderson has been awarded a CBE in the Queen's Birthday honours list, and dental consultant Jennifer Godson has received an OBE. Jane leads on HIV, sexual and

reproductive health, and is the immediate past chair of the British HIV Association. Jennifer is the regional consultant in dental public health for the North of England and the national lead in oral health improvement at PHE. She is the President Elect for the British Association for the Study of Community Dentistry. For more information see PHE's [news story](#).

New head of NaTHNaC announced.

Dr Rima Makarem has been appointed as chair of National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC). Rima will provide leadership to the NaTHNaC Technical Advisory Group. She has previously worked as non-executive director and audit chair at University College London Hospitals. For more information see PHE's [news story](#).

New PHE East of England centre director

Dr Aliko Ahmed, who was director of public health for Staffordshire and is a visiting professor of public health at Staffordshire University, is the new centre director of the East of England.

News from other organisations

New guideline on workplace health

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has published a [new guideline on workplace health](#). It makes recommendations on improving the health and wellbeing of employees, with a particular focus on organisational culture and context, and the role of line managers.

Local Government Association publications on public health role

Three new Local Government Association publications cover local government experiences of [commissioning sexual health services](#) since taking over this responsibility in April 2013, the [public health role of the fire and rescue service](#) and in [Local solutions for a healthy nation](#), the challenges and opportunities devolution could bring in terms of improving the public's health.

Nominations sought for Queen's Birthday honours

The Department of Health is seeking honour nominations for the Queen's Birthday 2016 of people who have made an outstanding contribution in the health and care sector. Nomination forms and guidance are on the [DH website](#) and the deadline for submission is 15 July 2015.

NHS jobs pledge for people with learning disabilities

NHS England and NHS Employers have launched [a new national framework](#), aiming to remove barriers and take steps to accelerate employment of people with learning disabilities in the NHS.

Smoking in pregnancy figures show steady decline

New [figures](#) published by the Health and Social Care Information Centre show that 11.4% of pregnant women were recorded as smokers at the time of giving birth in 2014-15. The latest figure is lower than in 2013-14 (12.0 %), continuing the steady decline from 2006-07 (15.1 %) to become the lowest on record.

Events

PHE annual conference 2015 – full programme now available

A detailed programme for the third PHE annual conference, from 15 to 16 September 2015 at the University of Warwick, is now available [online](#). The conference will bring together over 1,400 participants from across the health and care system and will focus on the application of evidence into action. Keynote speakers include Secretary of State for Health Jeremy Hunt, Minister for Public Health Jane Ellison and Chief Medical Officer Professor Dame Sally Davies. For more details including information on how to book, see the [conference website](#).

PHE National Cardiovascular Health Intelligence Network masterclasses

PHE's National Cardiovascular Health Intelligence Network is running a series of masterclasses to look at what local data is available across the cardiovascular family of diseases. The events are being delivered in partnership with NHS England's Strategic Clinical Networks. The next masterclasses are in [Leeds on 9 July](#) and in [Bolton on 3 September](#). Further details are at www.ncvin.org.uk.