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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

Sustainability and transformation plans guidance

NHS arms-length bodies have written to local health and care systems to set out the next steps in developing multi-year, place-based sustainability and transformation plans (STPs). The letter explains more about the STP process; outlines support that will be available; and provides a timeline for local systems. The guidance has some key messages about local government being partners in the production of the STPs and the need for local organisations to work together to link the work across the different local footprints together. For more information, [see the letter](#).

Report on trends in life expectancy at older ages

A report published by PHE on [Recent Trends in Life Expectancy at Older Ages: update to 2014](#), shows that life expectancy at older ages in England has risen to its highest ever level. This follows a PHE report last year of a drop in life expectancy at some older ages between 2011 and 2012. In all but one region of England, male and female life expectancy at age 65 increased between 2013 and 2014 and is higher in 2014 than in any other year presented. For more information, see the PHE [press release](#).

Unnecessary antibiotics prescriptions reduced in new trial

A trial conducted by PHE, the Chief Medical Officer and the Behavioral Insights Team, involving over 1,500 GP practices, found that writing to GPs about their

antibiotics prescribing resulted in 73,000 fewer prescriptions (a 3.3% reduction) over six months. Increasing resistance to antibiotics and a lack of new drugs means there is a greater risk of infections that cannot be treated. For more information, see the [press release](#) and [Antimicrobial Resistance pages](#).

Results of PHE stakeholder survey 2015/16 published

PHE has published the findings of the [2015-16 stakeholder survey](#), including a [video](#) from Ipsos MORI summarising the findings. The survey is run annually to provide important insight into how key partners and stakeholders perceive PHE and the work that we do. The findings of the survey are again encouraging, as PHE had the fourth highest score for any public body Ipsos has studied in the last decade. The findings will be used to develop our approach to engaging and working with our partners and stakeholders.

Zika virus: guidance updated

PHE and the National Travel Health Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) have been carefully monitoring the evolving Zika virus outbreak in South and Central America and the Caribbean, and have produced further [clinical guidance](#) and issued updated travel advice for pregnant women and advice on preventing sexual transmission. For more information, see PHE's [news story](#).

Middle aged men rate their health as more important than money or career

New research from PHE shows a discrepancy between how much men value their health, and what they do to look after it. Three-quarters (74%) of men in England aged 40 to 60 place their health in the top three most important things in their life but only a third (35%) feel confident that they know all the risk factors for heart disease. For more information, see the PHE [press release](#).

Scotland leads hepatitis C patient notification exercise

PHE has been working closely with NHS Lanarkshire, NHS England and other agencies in parts of the UK to notify patients who may have had a surgical procedure carried out by a former healthcare worker between 1982 and 2008. Advice from Scottish and UK experts is that the risk of the hepatitis C virus having been transmitted to a patient during surgery involving the healthcare worker is low. For more information, see the PHE [press release](#).

Renewed funding for drug and alcohol treatment services

PHE has announced the successful applicants for over £10 million of capital funding for services that are helping people in England with alcohol or drug problems to recover from their addiction. Over 50 projects across England, in partnership with local authorities, will receive grants from PHE. For more information, visit the [NTA website](#).

Older people encouraged to get shingles vaccine

PHE are encouraging eligible people to get their shingles vaccine after figures showed a drop in coverage. From 1 September 2015, the shingles vaccine has been offered to people aged 70 years on 1 September 2015. People aged 78 years on 1 September 2015 can also get vaccinated. For more information, see the PHE [press release](#).

Faster DNA analysis could shorten infectious disease outbreaks

Rapid genetic fingerprinting using a new portable sequencing device could revolutionise how infectious disease outbreaks, including Ebola, are responded to. In a [study published in Nature](#), led by PHE and University of Birmingham, researchers in Guinea used a sequencer to analyse 142 Ebola samples to give real-time information about the virus' genetic fingerprint including details about where the strain originated. After receiving a positive Ebola sample, scientists were able to generate results in less than 24 hours, with the sequencing process taking as little as 15-60 minutes.

Health and housing reports published

The Housing Learning and Improvement Network, with support from PHE, has published [two practical resources](#) aimed at improving the housing sector's contribution to the health and wellbeing of people with long-term conditions and older people. The free resources focus on improving end of life care and enabling the built environment to promote active ageing. For more information, see the PHE [news story](#).

Families toolkit released

The PHE alcohol, drugs and tobacco team has released a [Families Toolkit](#) that provides local authorities with guidance on how to gather local data to estimate the social return on investment from treating substance misusing parents. Alongside

this, the [Commissioning Tool](#), including a cost calculator and a local cost-effectiveness analysis, has been published.

Neurology data catalogue published

PHE's Neurology Intelligence Network has published a [neurology data catalogue](#). It lists resources related to neurological conditions and signposts to relevant national datasets published at CCG, local authority or provider level. The catalogue will be continuously developed and improved, and aims to generate conversation about what data is available, what is needed to improve the care of people with neurological conditionals and to identify gaps and priority areas.

Mental Health Intelligence Network – profiling tools update

A suite of National Mental Health Intelligence Network profiling tools have been developed to support an intelligence driven approach to understanding and meeting need. Three different profiles have recently been updated; the [Severe Mental Health profiling tool](#), [Common Mental Health Disorders profiling tool](#), and the [Co-existing Substance Misuse and Mental Health Issues profile](#).

Making Every Contact Count practical tools launched

Making Every Contact Count (MECC) is an approach to behaviour change that uses day to day interactions that organisations and individuals have with other people to support them in making positive changes to their physical and mental health and wellbeing. These [practical resources](#) will support people and organisations when considering or reviewing MECC activity and aid local implementation. They were developed by PHE, Health Education England and the national MECC advisory group.

Arts for health and wellbeing

PHE has published [Arts for Health and Wellbeing: An evaluation Framework](#). The arts, including music, dance, theatre, visual arts and writing, are increasingly recognised as having the potential to support health and wellbeing. For arts to be included in commissioning of health and social care services, there needs to be robust evidence of their effectiveness, impacts and costs. The document sets out a standard framework for reporting of project activities that will strengthen understanding of what works in specific contexts.

‘Atrial Fibrillation and Stroke – We can do better’ materials available

Following on from the ‘AF and Stroke – We can do better’ conference in September 2015, British Heart Foundation, Atrial Fibrillation Alliance and PHE have launched [partnership webpages](#) where you can find posters, videos and presentations from the day. The webpage hosts a wealth of AF resources and tools for patients, commissioners and providers, and aims to inform improvements across the care pathway for people with atrial fibrillation.

Recent PHE blogs

[How and when is cancer diagnosed?](#)

by Lucy Ellis-Brookes (25 January)

[Preventing and reducing the risk of disasters](#)

by Virginia Murray (27 January)

[Healthcare providers are key partners for public health](#)

by Kevin Fenton (28 January)

[Why ‘Swine Flu’ is now considered normal, seasonal flu](#)

by Richard Pebody (28 January)

[Zika Virus: what you need to know](#)

by Blog Editor (1 February)

[Preventing and detecting disease before it harms people’s health](#)

by Kevin Fenton (2 February)

[Understanding cancer – the importance of patient data](#)

by Jem Rashbass (4 February)

[The health sector is on target to limit climate change](#)

by David Pencheon (5 February)

[e-Bug: educating young people on microbes and antimicrobial resistance](#)

by Charlotte Eley and Vicki Young (8 February)

[Working globally to tackle non-communicable diseases](#)

by Kevin Fenton (9 February)

[Answering the cancer commissioning questions that really matter](#)

by Luke Hounsome and Matthew Day (February 11)

[Bladder and kidney cancer – be clear on the signs](#)

by Jenny Harries (16 February)

[4 ways to eat greener and protect the environment](#)

by Louis Levy (18 February)

[The new 5 Year Forward View for mental health: opportunities for prevention and improving outcomes](#)

by Kevin Fenton (23 February 23)

Campaign News

Be Clear on Cancer Blood in Pee campaign

PHE's latest [Be Clear on Cancer](#) campaign, which began earlier this month, highlights blood in pee as a key symptom for both bladder and kidney cancers. The six-week campaign aims to encourage anyone who notices blood in their pee, even if it's 'just the once', to visit their GP. Around 17,450 people in England are diagnosed with bladder or kidney cancer every year and around 7,600 people die annually. Blood in pee is a symptom in over half of bladder cancers and almost a fifth of kidney cancers. For more information, see the PHE [press release](#).

News from other organisations

Department of Health publishes public health allocations

Earlier this month, the [allocations to local authorities](#) for public health spending and the conditions for using the money were published by DH. In the financial year ending 2017 local authorities will receive a £3.4 billion public health grant for their public health duties. This includes public health responsibilities for children aged 0 to 5, which transferred to local authorities in October 2015.

Independent mental health taskforce report published

The report from the [independent Mental Health taskforce](#) to the NHS in England has now been published. The report outlines a strategic approach to making

mental health as important as physical health, as well as making a much-needed shift towards prevention of mental illness and suicide. The report is important for the whole public health system.

National maternity review report available

The report of the [National Maternity Review](#), commissioned by NHS England, led by independent experts and chaired by Baroness Julia Cumberlege, sets out wide-ranging proposals designed to make care safer and give women greater control and more choice. The report finds that despite the increases in the number of births and the increasing complexity of cases, the quality and outcomes of maternity services have improved significantly over the last decade. For more information, see the NHS England [news story](#).

NICE guidance issued on risks and benefits of sunlight exposure

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has published new guidance on sunlight exposure that aims to help people understand the risks of skin cancer and vitamin D deficiency. The guideline includes recommendations for at risk groups including children, fair skinned people, outdoor workers and those who enjoy outdoor activities. It also makes recommendations on the need for consistent and balanced messages about the risks, the use of mass media campaigns to inform the public, and planning local strategies to raise awareness among at risk groups. For more information, see the NICE [press release](#).

Events

PHE Board's next open meeting

The next open meeting of the [PHE Board](#) is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 23 March, focusing on the public health workforce. Meeting [details](#) will be available online.

Learning disabilities conference 2016

The PHE [Learning Disabilities Conference 2016: Using primary care data to plan better services for people with learning disabilities](#) will take place on Tuesday 15 March 2016 in London. The conference will launch the first round of a new set of national and local information about the health and care of people with learning disabilities.

National seminars: creative commissioning for better outcomes

The Cultural Commissioning Programme, supported by PHE, the Local Government Association and the Royal Society for Public Health, has organised Arts Council England seminars for leaders, managers and commissioners of public services. Places can be booked in [London](#) on 13 April, [Torquay](#) on 28 April and [Birmingham](#) on 17 May.

Engaging people in service change national conference

Healthwatch England will be hosting a conference on [the value of engaging people in service change](#). It will take place on Monday 7 March in Birmingham. The event will bring together local Healthwatch and key stakeholders from service change programmes including New Models of Care, Success Regime, Better Care Fund and Devolution.