



Public Health
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health



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Chief Executive

Friday message

Friday 6 March 2015

Dear everyone

Some of you may know that 2015 is the year of Mexico in the UK and this week, with the Mexican President visiting London, I have had the pleasure of contributing to the 16th Public Health Research Congress of the Mexican National Institute of Public Health on Ebola and the 2013 changes to the public health system in England. This was at the invitation of their Director General, Mauricio Hernández-Avila, who is also the Secretary General of the International Association of National Public Health Institutes. Amongst other lessons from Ebola, arguably the most important is that, in future, the international community plans, trains and acts together for the next global public health crisis. On improving health, the leading cause of death in Mexico is diabetes and they face the same challenges on obesity and tobacco. They do differ in scale and in demographics, with 48% of the people being 25 years old and under. We have much to learn from each other and to collaborate on, in two areas particularly. First, on sugar reduction where just over a year ago they introduced a new tax on sugary drinks and junk food. Second, on digital technology and the opportunities this brings to support behavioural change.

Today we have published our [rapid review](#) updating the evidence for the Healthy Child Programme, ahead of the transfer of the commissioning of the 0-5 children's public health services from the NHS to local government in October this year. This brings together the evidence on 'what works' and will be followed by a suite of briefings which go into more depth. The transfer of 0-5 commissioning, with a full year budget of £850 million, is the final piece of the jigsaw in local government taking full responsibility for all the public health needs of children and young people.

We have announced the successful applicants for £10 million capital funding for services that are helping people in England with drug or alcohol problems to recover from their addiction. More than 50 projects, in partnership with local authorities, will receive grants and a substantial proportion of these have been awarded to those providing tailored education, training, skills and employment support to people in recovery. Evidence based drug and alcohol treatment services play a vital part in turning around people's lives, improving family and community cohesion and reducing health inequalities.

On Friday last, we launched our new [Rise Above](#) campaign which reaches out to 11-16 year olds on a range of topics that concern them including puberty, relationships, alcohol, smoking, drugs, peer pressure and mental health. The aim is to help them build emotional resilience by equipping them with the skills and knowledge they need to make informed decisions and also to help them deal with the pressures of growing up. In addition the website encourages online conversations amongst their peer group and with professional support.

And finally, this morning the Public Accounts Committee have published their [report](#) on *Public Health England's Grant to Local Authorities* and we welcome their acknowledgement that we have made a good start in our responsibility to protect and improve the public's health. We agree there is more to be done and the committee's recommendations will help guide us in our work with local government and the NHS.

With best wishes