



Health E-News Bulletin

ISSUE 02 - FEBRUARY 2009

Health Improvement - Keeping you informed

Welcome to the monthly issue of the Health E-News Bulletin. We aim to keep you updated with national, regional and local news, events and other relevant information which relates to the six key areas of the Department of Health's White Paper "Choosing Health: Making Healthier Choices Easier". We will also include more broader public health information. This is being produced collaboratively by the Halton & St Helens Health Improvement Library Service, the Library & Knowledge Service, and St Helens Health Partnership.

ALCOHOL

Five-point plan for Alcohol-free Childhood

For the first time, young people and their parents will have clear medical guidance on alcohol consumption. The guidance, will be announced today by Chief Medical Officer, Sir Liam Donaldson, to be published for consultation. It will recommend that young people up to the age of 15 should avoid alcohol altogether. The five-point guidance document will form part of a consultation on alcohol and young people launched by Children Schools and Families Secretary, Ed Balls, Health Secretary, Alan Johnson, and the Chief Medical Officer, Sir Liam Donaldson.

http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2009_0020

House of Commons Health Select Committee – Inquiry into alcohol

The House of Commons Health Select Committee has announced that they will be carrying out an Inquiry into alcohol: looking at the scale of ill-health related to alcohol misuse; the consequences for the NHS; central government policy; the role of the NHS and other bodies (including local government, the voluntary sector, the alcohol industry); and solutions including whether the drinking culture in England should change. Organisations and individuals are invited to submit written evidence by Thursday 12 March 2009.

http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/health_committee/hc0809pn08.cfm

National Statistics – Alcohol related deaths

The Office for National Statistics has published figures indicating the trend in alcohol-related deaths is now levelling out, showing that there were 8,724 alcohol-related deaths in 2007, lower than in 2006

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=1091>

CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE

Change4Life launches largest ever children's health survey

The biggest health survey of children's health, How Are the Kids?, has been launched. Millions of families in England will be asked to give information about their eating and activity habits - in return they will receive a specially tailored plan to help them eat well, move more and live longer. It's a well known fact that, without intervention, nine out of 10 children could be overweight or obese by 2050 if current trends continue. At present, almost a third of 10 and 11-year-olds are overweight or obese.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/News/Recentstories/DH_093993

Measles cases rise to record high

Last year saw the highest number of measles cases in England and Wales since records began, the Health Protection Agency has revealed. The number of confirmed cases jumped by more than a third to 1,348 in 2008 - a trend that the agency has attributed to parents shunning the MMR vaccine. Health Protection Agency immunisation specialist Mary Ramsay said: "There are still many children out there who were not vaccinated as toddlers over the past decade and remain unprotected.

http://www.hpa.org.uk/webw/HPAweb&HPAwebStandard/HPAweb_C/1233822584984?p=1231252394302

Provisional HPV vaccine uptake data for Year 8 Girls (12-13 year olds), December 2008

More than 77 per cent of 12-13 year old girls have already had their first HPV (human papillomavirus) jab since the vaccination campaign started in September.

http://www.immunisation.nhs.uk/Library/News/hpv_uptake_dec08

Strengthened Guidance to help keep the cost of schooling down for parents

Children's Secretary Ed Balls warned today that schools need to take more account of tighter family finances in drawing up charging and uniform policies. Publishing revised guidance for heads on charging policies, ministers said that schools needed to publicise financial support available for parents better and do everything they can to keep uniform and educational trip costs down in the current downturn. It comes as the Cost of Schooling 2007 report was also published today looking at uniform, PE kit, trips, lunch, travel, stationery, extra classes and voluntary contributions.

http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2009_0023

School costs too high for poor families

Commenting on today's publication of the report from the Department for Children, Schools and Families on 'the cost of Schooling 2007', the Chief Executive of Child Poverty Action Group, Kate Green, said: "This thorough research shows school costs take far too big a bite out of the incomes of families who cannot afford it. This excludes the poorest children from many activities and leaves families struggling to pay for school uniforms, school trips, and school meals.'

<http://www.cpag.org.uk/press/2009/030209.htm>

Vision for a 21st Century children's health service

The Government today (12 February 2009) published its long-term vision of a 21st Century children's health service aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of all children, including £340 million to support children with disabilities and their families. Together with funding previously announced this brings the total investment in services for disabled children over the next three years to a record £770 million. The joint strategy, Healthy lives, brighter future: the strategy for children and young people's health - published by Children's Secretary Ed Balls and Health Secretary Alan Johnson - sets out for the first time what children and their families can expect from child health services in their areas from birth through to the age of 19.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/News/Recentstories/DH_094405

Healthy lives, brighter future: the strategy for children and young people's health:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_094400

Health strategy will be more successful if child poverty targets are met

Commenting on the children's health strategy document published today, 'Healthy lives, brighter future: the strategy for children and young people's health', the Chief Executive of Child Poverty Action Group, Kate Green, said: "It is real progress to see the publication of a specific health strategy for children binding health more closely into the child poverty strategy. There is new investment too, particularly for disabled children, which we very much welcome."
<http://www.cpag.org.uk/press/2009/120209.htm>

The Good Childhood Inquiry

The Good Childhood Inquiry was commissioned by The Children's Society and launched in September 2006 as the UK's first independent national inquiry into childhood. Its aims were to renew society's understanding of modern childhood and to inform, improve and inspire all our relationships with children. With the launch of the report *A Good Childhood: Searching for Values in a Competitive Age* on 5 February 2009, evidence has been collected and used to inform the report, the recommendations and summaries of the themes discussed in the report.
http://www.childrensociety.org.uk/all_about_us/how_we_do_it/the_good_childhood_inquiry/1818.html

The Childhood Inquiry – what you told us about health

http://www.childrensociety.org.uk/resources/documents/good%20childhood/7081_full.pdf

Promoting physical activity for children and young people – NICE Guidance

See Section: **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

DRUGS

Cannabis is a Class B drug

The government reclassified cannabis from Class C to Class B in January 2009. The decision was part of the drug strategy: Drugs: protecting families and communities.
<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/drugs/drugs-law/cannabis-reclassification/>

New cannabis campaign shows teenagers the uninvited side effects

A new hard-hitting TV, radio and online FRANK advertising campaign that shows how cannabis can mess with your mind has been launched. The campaign shows that cannabis can quickly flip from being a talkative and relaxed experience to turning nasty and users becoming paranoid, having panic attacks and being sick.
http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/News/Recentstories/DH_094443

ACMD review of ecstasy

The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) has recommended further research into the harms of MDMA - also known as ecstasy - and the reclassification of the drug as Class B.
<http://drugs.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-events/latest-news/acmd-mdma-review>

MENTAL HEALTH

Dementia strategy published

Memory clinics will be set up in every town in England, doctors will get extra training to recognise the early signs of dementia and every hospital and care home will have a senior clinician with responsibility for dementia care, as part of a £150m five-year dementia strategy. Ministers said they were confident the new clinics, to which patients will be able to self-refer, would ultimately save the NHS money, as early diagnosis enables people with dementia to be treated earlier and remain independent for longer.

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/SocialCare/Deliveringadultsocialcare/Olderpeople/NationalDementiaStrategy/index.htm>

Don't forget the side effects when erasing memories

New research published today in Nature Neuroscience suggests that beta blockers could be the answer to weakening or erasing painful or emotional memories for patients who experience phobias or post-traumatic stress disorder. Commenting on these new findings, Mind's Chief Executive Paul Farmer said: "This is fascinating research that could transform the treatment for phobias and post traumatic stress disorder. Around 10 million people in the UK have a phobia and about 3.5% of the population will be affected by post traumatic stress disorder at some point yet our understanding of how to treat these conditions is still limited. While we welcome any advancement in this field we should also exercise caution before heralding this as a miracle cure."

<http://www.mind.org.uk/News+policy+and+campaigns/Press/2009-02-16-mem.htm>

Full text: <http://www.nature.com/neuro/journal/vaop/ncurrent/pdf/nn.2271.pdf>

See also:

Fearful memories 'erased by blood pressure drug'

Fearful memories can be erased using a drug commonly prescribed for high blood pressure, research has shown. The discovery could lead to new ways of treating people suffering from the emotional after effects of traumatic experiences such as terrorist attacks or natural disasters. But one British expert questioned the ethics of meddling with a person's mind in this way.

<http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/information/news/?EntryId17=67677>

Can drug erase memory?

<http://www.nhs.uk/news/2009/02February/Pages/Candrugerasesmemory.aspx>

NUTRITION/OBESITY

FSA launches saturated fat campaign to help prevent heart disease, the UK's biggest killer

People in the UK eat an average 20 percent more saturated fat than the recommended maximum amount, according to the Food Standards Agency (FSA). To raise awareness, the FSA has launched a campaign promoting simple steps that can improve people's health and reduce their risk of developing heart disease, caused by too much saturated fat increasing cholesterol in the blood.

<http://www.foodstandards.gov.uk/news/pressreleases/2009/feb/launchsatfatcampaign>

Learning Recipes for Life vital to beating obesity

Ed Balls today announced the next steps in getting the nation's children cooking – with measures to get them preparing meals at home and pave the way for compulsory practical classes in secondary schools from 2011. Mr Balls said it was not just down to schools to teach young people to cook - but that parents needed to be helped and encouraged to teach their children how to prepare meals from scratch. New £3.3m package to recruit specialist teaching assistants and train staff to run practical cooking lessons; £53m given to secondary schools for new cooking facilities; Minister calls on supermarkets to help get families cooking.

http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2009_0024

Pubs sign up to healthy eating

Six of the UK's leading pub restaurant companies have today announced a commitment to join a growing number of catering companies who are working with the Agency to help people eat more healthily outside the home. These commitments cover some of the country's best known pub chains - JD Wetherspoon PLC, Greene King and Marston's Inns & Taverns - and pubs run by Mitchells & Butlers, the Spirit Group and Whitbread. These include famous names such as

Harvester, Chef & Brewer and Beefeater. The companies involved serve more than a million meals a day between them. The pub companies have made an ongoing commitment to support the Agency's efforts to reduce salt and saturated fat intakes, and wider Government work to tackle obesity by helping people to eat a balanced diet.

<http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2009/feb/pubssignuphealthyeating>

Change4Life launches largest ever children's health survey

See Section: CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Promoting physical activity for children and young people – NICE Guidance

This guidance is for all those who have a direct or indirect role in - and responsibility for - promoting physical activity for children and young people. This includes those working in the NHS, education, local authorities and the wider public, private, voluntary and community sectors. It will also be of interest to parents, grandparents and other carers (including professional carers), children and young people and other members of the public. It includes recommendations for schools, but does not make recommendations for the national curriculum. The recommendations relate to all children and young people up to the age of 18, including those with a medical condition or disability (except where clinical assessment or monitoring is required prior to and/or during physical activity).

<http://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/PH17>

Be active, be healthy: a plan for getting the nation moving

New physical activity plan to curb our couch potato culture.

Dancing, swimming and walking are just some of the activities proposed in 'Be Active, Be Healthy' - a new strategy that aims to get the country's couch potatoes off their sofas. More than 27 million adults in England are not getting enough exercise and 14 million don't complete 30 minutes a week. The new plan puts physical activity at the heart of communities and at the centre of local authorities' efforts to tackle obesity, which is responsible for 9,000 premature deaths each year in England.

<http://nds.coi.gov.uk/Content/Detail.asp?ReleaseID=392357&NewsAreaID=2n>

Report:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_094358

Department of Health Physical Activity Plan highlights importance of Natural England's Walking the way to Health Initiative (WHI).

WHI has been recognised by the Department of Health for its important contribution to improving the health of the nation. In its Physical Activity Plan announced this morning the Department of Health (DoH) has shown a major commitment to the expansion of WHI - and getting people active in the natural environment has been recognised as having a major role to play in promoting physical and mental health.

<http://www.whi.org.uk/details.asp?back=true&key=AX909|0|12186714065|R|18|3105141122009309680229&parentkey=AX909|0|12186714065|p|18|0>

SEXUAL HEALTH/HIV/AIDS

Progress and priorities - working together for high quality sexual health

The Independent Advisory Group on Sexual Health and HIV commissioned MedFASH to undertake a review of the National Strategy for Sexual Health and HIV.

<http://www.medfash.org.uk/>

Full report:

http://www.medfash.org.uk/publications/documents/Progress_and_priorities_working_together_for_high%20quality_sexual_health_FULL_REPORT.pdf

SOCIAL INCLUSION/HEALTH INEQUALITIES

Ending Child Poverty: Giving every child the best start in life

The Government today set out plans to make sure every child gets the best start in life by tackling child poverty which can unfairly hold children back and prevent them from reaching their full potential. And today the Government is launching a consultation ahead of a Child Poverty Bill which will enshrine in legislation the Government's promise to eradicate child poverty by 2020 and mean the Government will be held to account on the success of ending child poverty. Yvette Cooper, James Purnell and Ed Balls launched the consultation, 'Ending Child Poverty: Making it Happen' alongside a guarantee to fund childcare to help parents back to work.

http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2009_0018

Health strategy will be more successful if child poverty targets are met

See Section: CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE

TOBACCO

New smokefree campaign aimed at pregnant women

A powerful campaign has launched to raise awareness of the dangers of women smoking during pregnancy. Supported by women's health specialist Dr Miriam Stoppard, the campaign seeks to encourage public support for pregnant women in their quit attempts and to drive take-up of the specialist pregnancy NHS Stop Smoking Services available to help them. The new campaign will target the 100,000 (17 percent) of pregnant women in England who smoke during their pregnancy by communicating why smoking is harmful to them and their baby.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/News/Recentstories/DH_094115

Smoking in pregnancy campaign backed with North West-funded ads

A hard-hitting new TV ad campaign is being broadcast across the region this month to further highlight the dangers of smoking during pregnancy. Due to North West's higher than average rates of smoking at delivery, Smokefree North West has commissioned a regional TV ad to run alongside and complement the Department of Health's new campaign.

<http://www.smokefreenorthwest.org.uk/index.php?page=smokefree-pregnancy>

OTHER PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

New Voluntary Register for Complementary Healthcare

A new register for complementary health practitioners will act as a 'kitemark' to show they have signed up to a code of conduct. The Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council today (Monday 19th January) opens its new register which means for the first time in the UK, members of the public who use a range of complementary healthcare services will be able to check that their practitioner is registered with an independent, and robust voluntary registration body. With more than 150,000 complementary healthcare practitioners in the UK and an estimated 1 in 5 people using complementary disciplines, the CNHC has been formed to enhance public protection by setting standards for registration.

http://www.cnhc.org.uk/pages/index.cfm?page_id=1

Chief medical officer launches public health awards

Chief medical officer Sir Liam Donaldson has established an annual awards event for those working in public health. He said people working in the field should be given more recognition. "Public health in England has a long and proud history, and our current system is the envy of many other countries in the world," he said. "Yet those working to improve the health of our citizens do not always get the recognition they deserve. In establishing these awards I hope to shine a spotlight on public health and increase awareness of the exciting and innovative work taking place that will truly make a difference to the health of the nation." The awards are open to anyone working in public health in England, regardless of job title or role. The closing date

for entries is Wednesday 22 April 2009.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/News/Recentstories/DH_093765

Health Profile of England 2008

The 2008 report updates tables showing regional comparisons and national trends for indicators presented in Local Health Profiles, as well as a wide ranging snapshot of public health and well-being in England and a section on international comparisons.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsStatistics/DH_093465

100,000 unaware they have hepatitis C

Around a third of people don't know how hepatitis C can be passed from person to person, according to new research commissioned by DH. The findings come as a major hepatitis C awareness campaign is launched to reach out to the estimated 100,000 people in England who are unaware they have the infection and stop others getting it. Hepatitis C is a blood-borne virus that can cause chronic infection and lead to serious liver damage and even premature death.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/News/Recentstories/DH_093769

Get well soon - without antibiotics

The Government launches a campaign to fight against infections.

The latest phase in a campaign to remind the public that antibiotics do not help to treat viral infections such as cough's, colds and a sore throat was launched today by the Chief Medical Officer for England.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/News/Recentstories/DH_094784

NEW RESOURCES

New domestic violence leaflet offers support and advice

The Home Secretary has launched a new leaflet with information on how to support a friend or relative who is in a violent relationship. The purse-sized guide explains how you can recognise if someone you know is suffering from domestic violence, and what practical support is available in order to help them.

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/about-us/news/domestic-violence-leaflet>

LOCAL & NATIONAL EVENTS/COURSES

Cancer Research UK's Race for Life 2009 - every woman is invited

Cancer Research UK's [Race for Life 2009](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/news/archive/pressreleases/2009/february/race-for-life-2009) event series is now open for entries and the charity is inviting every woman to enter, take part and experience the true spirit of Race for Life! This year Cancer Research UK is hoping hundreds of thousands of women of all ages come together and walk, jog, run and have fun at the 5k events across the UK, to help raise as much money as possible to beat cancer.

<http://info.cancerresearchuk.org/news/archive/pressreleases/2009/february/race-for-life-2009>

NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL HEALTH EVENTS 2009 – March

For a full list of Health Events and links please visit:

<http://www.equip.nhs.uk/Events/EventList.aspx>

OTHER LOCAL E-BULLETINS

ChaMPS Public Health Network Bulletin

ChaMPS is your public health network for Cheshire and Merseyside PCTs, NHS Acute Trusts, local authorities and wider health organisations. If you would like to know more about joining ChaMPS and receiving this bulletin contact Viv Martindale, ChaMPS Network Administrator on 0151 643 5369 or email vivienne.martindale@bwwpct.nhs.uk

Cheshire & Merseyside New Documents Bulletin

A weekly review of new documents produced collaboratively by primary care librarians across Cheshire & Merseyside. Contact the Library & Knowledge Service on 0151 676 5650 or email library.pct@sthk.nhs.uk if you would like to receive this bulletin.

Your Comments

The content of this bulletin highlights recent articles and/or documents appearing on a selection of websites, which we feel may be of interest to the wider health improvement area. All links are correct at the time of publishing. If you have any comments or suggestions about the Bulletin or would like to forward an item or news of an event, we would love to hear from you. Please forward this bulletin on to people who might otherwise not receive it. Contact lynda.moss@hsthpct.nhs.uk.

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Halton & St Helens Health Improvement Network

If you would like to become a member of the Health Improvement Network or find out more information about the Network, please contact Linda Gittens on 01744 697433 or email lindagittens@sthelens.gov.uk.