

E-bulletin: Public Health North East

Welcome to issue number 55 of the e-bulletin produced by Public Health North East. It is published on the second Friday of each month and aims to include information from all around the region. We hope you find it interesting and will continue to support it by supplying news from your patch.

Dr Stephen Singleton, Regional Director of Public Health

This bulletin is designed to keep you updated on the latest developments in public health in the North East. Each article provides a web link or contact details for more information. Please send details about any forthcoming public health-related events in the region to simon.p.mills@dh.gsi.gov.uk

What's Your Label?

Two mental health trusts have joined forces to launch a high-profile and hard hitting anti-stigma campaign across the North East.

It features a series of striking posters, backed up with information cards and a website – www.whatsyourlabel.co.uk

Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Trust and Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Trust hope *What's Your Label?* will get the region talking about the stigma often attached to mental health, learning disability and substance misuse problems.

They also hope it will encourage people to become members of the new Foundation Trusts, which the organisations aim to become from April 2008. This is the first time that two prospective NHS Foundation Trusts have worked together in this way.

The posters and cards are on display at a wide range of venues across the region, including schools, colleges, GP surgeries, libraries, museums, festivals and markets as well as trust premises.

Con Egan, Chief Executive of Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Trust, said: "This unique campaign will tackle the problem of stigma which can blight the lives of people with mental health, learning disability and substance misuse problems.

"Our approach is hard hitting but the campaign has already won the support of many service users and carers across the North East.

"Mental health problems are more common than people think as one in four people suffer from mental illness. Depression alone is set to become the world's second biggest health problem within the next three years.

"So it is important that we do something now to challenge the derogatory terms society often uses to label people who need the support of mental health, learning disability and substance misuse services."

Jules Preston, chairman of Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Trust, said "The Boards of both organisations felt it was important to work together to use the opportunity to not only to recruit members for the future, but also to prompt debate about the stigma that so often affects the lives of the people we support across the region."

More from jeanette.duffy@tney.northy.nhs.uk

Training and development conference date

This year's North East Regional Public health Workforce, Training and Development conference will take place on November 14.

The event is being held at the Government Office for the North East head quarters at Citygate in Newcastle.

Topics will include:

- workforce planning
- teaching public health network
- recruitment to public health
- PMETB and quality assurance of training
- continuing professional development
- different routes to registration
- school of public health

Potential delegates are asked to put this date in their diaries. Invitations and a full programme will be sent out at the end of September.

There is still chance to influence the topics covered by contacting a member of the steering group: David Chappel, Ray Lowry, Margaret Kynoch-Macdonald, Balsam Ahmed and Jennifer Taylor.

More from d.b.chappel@durham.ac.uk

Food cooperative launched

Residents on Teesside have teamed up with Middlesbrough Council and the town's primary care trust to launch a new project in a bid to promote healthy eating.

The Easterside Food Cooperative offers affordable, good quality fruit and vegetables from a community-based location.

Each Wednesday residents can place an order at the Easterside District Residents Association Office and collect it the following week.

Food cooperatives rely on volunteers to receive a delivery of fruit and vegetables each week and pack the produce for collection.

This essential work is at the heart of the scheme and reduces the cost for those who use the service.

As much produce as possible is sourced from the North East agricultural community.

This means that seasonal fruit and vegetables and free range eggs are available at reasonable prices.

The scheme offers a bag of fruit or a bag of vegetables priced at only £2.80. Free range eggs cost £1.60 for a dozen or 80p for 6.

More from Gail Parkin on 01642 352545

Smooth introduction of smokefree laws

The introduction of smokefree legislation in the North East went smoothly with 97% of premises complying with the new law.

Enforcement officers also found that 87% were displaying the approved signs, according to Fresh – Smoke Free North East.

Compliance was reported to be even higher in vehicles at 99% for both being smokefree and showing the correct signage.

Fresh Director Ailsa Rutter said: "England going smokefree on July 1 was a great success.

"There was positive media coverage and well co-ordinated activity locally, regionally and nationally.

"In fact, in the first four days of July alone, nearly £500,000 of media coverage was achieved in the North East with many different partners involved.

"Compliance is already comparable to the high levels experienced in Scotland and Ireland following the introduction of legislation.

"Local authorities are continuing to work with businesses to ensure they understand the requirement for no-smoking signs and are fully compliant with all aspects of the law."

More from AilsaRutter@chester-le-street.gov.uk

Regional health and wellbeing strategy

Public Health North East is to launch the region's first ever health and wellbeing strategy at a major event in Newcastle on October 4.

Better Health, Fairer Health will give all local and regional partners an opportunity to shape a plan that will deliver real improvements for the people of the North East.

PHNE has been in discussion with executive directors of public health in the region to identify the key strategic priorities and objectives that will underpin the strategy.

These have been informed by national priorities, local knowledge and partnership working through local strategic partnerships and close involvement with Government Office for the North East in the negotiation and agreement of existing local area agreements.

Specific areas that will be addressed include:

- life expectancy
- infant mortality
- smoking
- alcohol
- obesity
- mental health
- sexual health and teenage conceptions

The draft strategy will be available for wide consultation at the conference and from October - December with a view to producing a final document in January 2008.

The process will be open to the public and PHNE will aim to consult in a more structured way with key partners.

More from keith.aungiers@dh.qsi.gov.uk

Pitstop campaign gearing up for success

Men across North Tyneside are being encouraged to take a pitstop – and have their health checked.

The campaign, run by North Tyneside Primary Care Trust, is aimed at 50 to 70 year-old men as that is the time of life when early signs of certain conditions start to appear.

The checks are being carried out by local community pharmacists and wherever the pitstop sign is displayed.

The project got off to a successful start. Nearly 50 people attended the launch with 24 men undergoing a health check.

The remainder took away information about where and how they could receive their free health check.

In less than a month 34 checks have been delivered resulting in 13 referrals being made to GPs.

Most men said they came forward as it helped them to know their risk of developing heart disease rather than individual checks for blood pressure, blood glucose and cholesterol.

More from caroline.latta@northoftyne.nhs.uk