

E-bulletin: Public Health North East

Welcome to issue number 61 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

Raising the Bar – tackling alcohol abuse together

Next steps in the regional approach to combating excessive drinking were discussed at a major conference this week.

Raising the Bar - Tackling Alcohol Misuse in the North East took place at Hardwick Hall Hotel, Sedgfield, County Durham.

It was organised by the Public Health and Community Safety teams at Government Office for the North East.

Speakers included Northumbria Police chief constable Michael Craik and Dr Stephen Singleton, regional director of public health.

Dr Singleton said: "Alcohol misuse has far reaching effects, not only for the individual concerned but also that person's family, the NHS and the community as a whole.

"We know we have a problem in the North East - but there are no easy answers.

"We strongly believe that a coordinated approach from all interested parties is needed, something we highlighted in our *Better Health, Fairer Health* strategy launched last month.

"Events such as *Raising the Bar* are important because it means we can get together, share experiences, plan a way forward - and galvanise each other into action. We know there is a real desire to improve the situation."

Government Office for the North East deputy regional director Judith Million added: "The Government has set out a clear message on the harm caused by alcohol to personal health and community safety in particular.

"We know the role that drink-fuelled behaviour plays in crime and anti-social behaviour. In 46% of all violent assaults, the victim believed the offender to be under the influence.

"Just over a quarter of people think that drunk and rowdy behaviour is a problem in their area. Communities do not want to have to put up with it.

"So we have made it our priority to deliver real and tangible reductions in the harm that alcohol causes. To be truly effective, we need to work in partnership, with a renewed sense of purpose."

More than 200 delegates from local authorities, the police, voluntary organisations, the NHS, the prison service and the probation service attended.

More from margaret.kynoch-macdonald@dh.gsi.gov.uk

Healthy eating hints on CD rom

Valuable lessons about encouraging people to eat more fruit and vegetables have been brought together on a CD rom produced in the North East.

The new resource was compiled following the completion of eight regional 5 A DAY schemes.

Roselle Oberholzer, Children and Obesity Manager at Public Health North East, appears in a video clip on the CD rom.

The former 5 A DAY regional coordinator said: "When the projects came to an end we asked the people running them what they would like to do.

"We thought about funding a conference or writing a report – but we felt it would be more useful if we put the knowledge gained into a format people could use.

"It would have been a shame if the end of the initiatives had marked the end of the learning."

These included:

- school children and older people teaming up to grow fruit and vegetables on allotments in Gateshead and South Tyneside
- developing kids' cafes and healthy tuck shops in Newcastle and North Tyneside
- Get Cooking sessions, community cafes, breakfast clubs, food growing projects and food co-ops in Northumberland
- working with local retailers, caterers and markets on Teesside
- encouraging postal delivery workers in Sunderland to choose a healthier food option for their breakfast

Regional director of public health Dr Stephen Singleton appears in a video foreword to the CD rom, 1000 copies of which have been made.

They are being sent to NHS primary care trusts, local councils and anyone else involved in promoting food and health throughout the North East.

More from roselle.oberholzer@dh.gsi.gov.uk

Red socks at the ready

Staff from local businesses put their best red sock forward when they took part in a fundraising event this week.

The red sock walk was held at Longhirst Hall, Morpeth, to raise money for Sport Relief.

The firms who were represented are also participating in the Northumberland Healthy People Healthy Business Award scheme.

This has been developed by Northumberland Care Trust and local employers to give recognition to organisations which promote health in the workplace.

It is also designed to motivate all levels of staff to develop a healthy workplace culture.

Maureen Shepherd, healthy workplace specialist at the care trust, said: "The walk is just one of the events the care trust is running to encourage fitness and healthy eating in the workplace.

"Everyone who participates in the award was wearing a red sock decorated with either their company logo or health promotion messages.

"The walk is also a good way of working in partnership with the local business community whilst raising money for a good cause."

More from maureen.shepherd@northumberlandcaretrust.nhs.uk

Mapping migrant health

Almost 70 people from the NHS and other agencies attended a meeting organised by the North East Public Health Observatory about migrant health earlier this week.

Jon Carling, of the North East Regional Information Partnership, said that since 2002 inward migration had reversed the region's population decline of the previous two decades.

The region receives asylum seekers and refugees, EU and international migrant workers and students at the region's universities and colleges. Migrants are typically young, in good health and of benefit to the region's economy - but there are some particular health and social issues such as ensuring GP registration.

A mapping study carried out by consultant Elaine Rodger and the Observatory's David Chappel has been published as NEPHO Occasional Paper 29.

It covers what is known about migrants in the region, the current NHS provision and also makes recommendations.

More at <http://www.nepho.org.uk/index.php?c=2678>

Unique workshop on childhood obesity

A unique two-day workshop on childhood obesity will be held in the North East next week.

The aim is to establish a regional approach to care pathways and referral routes for current and future risk children.

The event is designed to accelerate the work of the North East in meeting the vision detailed in the recently published *Better Health, Fairer Health* strategy.

In a letter to key stakeholders regional director of public health Dr Stephen Singleton said: "Your participation in the event is crucial.

"Many of our current challenges are well known and yet we have often failed to effectively address them.

"However, with your help we will have the opportunity to take stock, rethink and refocus our efforts to bring about real change.

"This event is dramatically unlike others you have participated in because it:

- provides a proven methodology to accelerate joint decision-making
- will result in our coherent local response to external change
- is inclusive of all stakeholders involved in the childhood obesity agenda and will include children themselves
- addresses our culture as well as our own accomplishments."

The event will take place at Newcastle Civic Centre on March 18 and 19.

More from laura.haggin@dh.gsi.gov.uk

'Outstanding' progress in managing heart disease

Millions of pounds invested in the North East have contributed to outstanding progress in managing cardiovascular disease, according to two new reports.

As part of a major capital programme to provide world-class facilities for treating patients, £32.8 million has come to the region.

At the Freeman Hospital in Newcastle, for example, £5.4 million has been invested in the cardiothoracic centre.

As a direct result the revascularisation service has been reconfigured, leading to a more efficient service for both patients and staff. A dedicated recovery area has improved patient flow and reduced delays between procedures.

In addition the Northern Cardiac Network has deployed £2 million capital funding to support local priorities for a variety of equipment and the electronic transfer of images.

Consultant Cardiologist Azfar Zaman said: "Freeman Hospital is one of the leading providers of invasive cardiac procedures in the country.

"Expansion of the cardiac catheter laboratories has resulted in a more streamlined and efficient service delivery.

"Consequently, it has allowed us to improve the quality and expand the range of services we can offer our patients."

The outstanding progress made by the NHS in managing cardiovascular disease has been acknowledged by the Coronary Heart Disease National Service Framework Progress Report.

This says that the target of reducing deaths from cardiovascular disease for people under 75 by 40 per cent has been met by the Department of Health five years early.

The interim results of the National Infarct Angioplasty Project further demonstrate the Government's commitment to tackling CVD and improving the treatment offered to patients.

More from ayeeshah.tahir@northeast.nhs.uk

Young people shape teenage pregnancy plan

Young people are helping to shape plans to reduce the number of unplanned and unwanted teenage pregnancies in County Durham.

A conference was held earlier this week to re-launch and re-direct the county's Tackling Teenage Pregnancy Strategy.

More than 100 delegates - including young people – looked at the best ways to provide appropriate advice and support on sex and relationships and schemes that have been successful elsewhere in the country.

Gail Hopper chairs the County Durham Tackling Teenage Pregnancy Partnership, which involves the county council and local primary care trust.

She said: "Reducing the number of teenage pregnancies is a key priority both locally and nationally.

"Between 1998 and 2006 the rate of teenage pregnancies in County Durham fell from 54.4 to 46.1 per 1,000 girls aged 15 to 17.

"But there is still a lot of work to be done to further reduce the number of unwanted teenage pregnancies."

More from helen.greenwood@durham.gov.uk

Rights to Warmth social marketing pilot

A social marketing pilot designed to keep older and vulnerable people warm in winter is underway in County Durham.

It will include information to raise awareness of how they can be affected by the cold and details of home insulation measures and benefits available to enable them to stay warm and well.

Focus group meetings have been held to identify the most appropriate messages, formats and channels for the distribution of information.

The headline from these sessions is that people do not realise that as they get older it takes them longer to register they are cold.

Consequently, older and vulnerable people may be undermining their health by leaving windows open or taking on the environmental message to turn down the thermostat, when they need to be keeping properly warm to maintain their health and independence.

The campaign is looking for older people who will spread this message to their peers.

The Rights to Warmth pilot is operating in Sedgefield and Wear Valley with a view to roll out across County Durham later this year.

More from gordon.watson@cdpct.nhs.uk

Awards for breakfast clubs

Two children's breakfast clubs in the North East won accolades in a national awards scheme funded by Kellogg's.

Broadway Primary School in Sunderland was runner up in the community involvement section and received £650.

And The Base Young People Centre in Whitley Bay was highly commended in the added value activities section.

Charity ContinYou - one of the UK's leading community learning organisations - has run the national Breakfast Club Plus Award scheme since 1999. It is recognised and supported by *Education Guardian*.

More from tony.apicella@continyou.org.uk

Trust is national leader in hepatitis C services

County Durham Primary Care Trust has been ranked the best in the country for hepatitis C services.

The trust won the inaugural Anita Roddick Award to reward and promote best practice in the diagnosis and treatment of the disease.

Durham MP Roberta Blackman-Woods presented it to Lady Ann Calman, chair of the PCT, at a ceremony last month.

She said: "I am absolutely delighted to be able to present the Anita Roddick Award to County Durham Durham PCT.

"Not only did County Durham do better than other PCTs in the North East, they actually got 10/10 in the whole country. This is a fantastic achievement and the staff of the local NHS should be very proud of their work.

"But behind this award is the excellent work on the ground that is needed to get results like these.

"It is making sure that people who might be at risk are tested - and if necessary treated - as well as increasing awareness of this silent killer."

Dr Tricia Cresswell, executive director of public health for County Durham and Darlington PCTs, said a lot of progress had been made since an all-party parliamentary hepatology group reported two years ago.

She added: "I am delighted that the joint work between the Health Protection Agency, County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust and the PCT has resulted in such a significant improvement.

"We have been able to develop an appropriate testing and treatment pathway for people with Hepatitis C both in our community and in the prisons within Durham.

“The service is still developing and we are aware of the need to continually improve”.

Dame Anita Roddick, founder of The Body Shop and green campaigner, died last September after being infected with hepatitis C through a blood transfusion in 1971 when giving birth to her youngest daughter.

More from tricia.cresswell@cdpct.nhs.uk

Public health intelligence function on track

North East Public Health Observatory is making good progress in developing a regional public health intelligence function.

Business manager Susan Panrucker said: “We are well on track with our original work plan and the products are now beginning to emerge.

“In the coming year we will be turning our attention to how it can support the recently published regional health strategy and commissioning.”

A new website - 'Cancer E-Atlas' - has been developed by a number of partners including NEPHO.

The interactive resource improves access to cancer statistics across the North East of England, Yorkshire & Humber and East Midlands regions.

It aims to provide the public, health care professionals, commissioners and health service managers with basic information on incidence and mortality for the main types of cancers in men and women.

Public health observatories and cancer registries in all three regions got together to develop the site at <http://www.nepho.org.uk/index.php?c=2663>

More from susan.panrucker@durham.ac.uk

Turning the tide

An event looking at how to improve health and well-being in coastal areas is being held later this year.

Turning the tide? is being organised by the Improvement and Development Agency.

Consultant Julia Sherfield said: “England's coastal towns share many similar economic and social problems.

“*Turning the tide?* will explore the particular needs of coastal authorities and how the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment process can be used to engage a wide variety of stakeholders in improving health and well-being locally.”

The event – at Southend on Sea, Essex, on May 20 - aims to bring together representatives from different coastal towns to share successes and strategies and discuss ways of tackling health inequalities.

Topics covered on the day will include:

- the unique nature of coastal areas
- progress so far on JSNAs
- how to integrate health and planning

More at <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=8016951>