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Game on for ambitious health plan

Ambitious plans to transform the health of the North East are off to a flyer after the first year, according to the man leading them.

A regional alcohol office was launched earlier this week, smoking rates have dropped significantly and the fight against obesity is well and truly joined.

Regional director of public health Professor Stephen Singleton welcomed the positive developments – but warned that everyone involved needed to keep the momentum going.

He said: “I have been hugely encouraged by the early signs in our attempt to change the North East from the unhealthiest to the healthiest place in the country.

“When we launched the region’s first ever health and well-being strategy in February last year we didn’t kid ourselves it would be easy to turn the health league table upside down.

“We built on the good work of the last few years and restated the top priorities for change based on the evidence of what would work best.

“We always knew it would require a huge amount of effort from a huge number of people working together in innovative and different ways to realise this 25-year dream. But I believe we can already say we are on course.”

A One Year On event to recognise celebrate the early successes of *Better Health, Fairer Health* will be held at Hardwick Hall Hotel at Sedgefield in County Durham on Friday (Feb 13).

The all day conference is aimed at NHS and local authority chief executives, council leaders and members of the North East Public Health Board, which is chaired by the Government’s Chief Medical Officer Sir Liam Donaldson.

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Members of the advisory groups set up to take the strategy forward and other key regional partners will also be attending.

Prof Singleton added: “The morning session will reiterate the challenge and celebrate achievement to date as well as provide senior leaders across the region with an update on the current and future work of advisory groups and key deliverables planned.

“The afternoon session will include planning workshops for further detailed implementation of the strategy.

“We are already ridding ourselves of the sick man of England tag and no-one is under any illusions about the size of task. But it is well and truly game on.”

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Note to editors: Reporters/photographers are welcome to attend the One Year On event, which starts at 8.45am on Friday (Feb 13) at Hardwick Hall Hotel in Sedgfield, County Durham. Please contact Simon Mills (details below) if you want to come.

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