

21 October 2008

CMO to chair regional health board

Professor Sir Liam Donaldson, the Chief Medical Officer, is to chair the North East Public Health Board.

The group – meeting for the first time later this week (Oct 23) – has been given the responsibility of taking forward the region's ambitious health strategy.

Better Health, Fairer Health aims to transform the health of people living in the North East from the worst in the country to the best within a generation.

Led by regional director of public health Professor Stephen Singleton, it was launched by North East Minister Nick Brown earlier this year.

Prof Singleton said: "I am extremely grateful to Sir Liam, a great friend of the North East, for helping us out in this way.

"As a former regional director of public health here himself, he is only too aware of the enormous challenges ahead.

"We have set ourselves what, on the face of it, is an incredibly difficult task. But with dynamic partnerships, innovative thinking, lots of hard work and the spirit and goodwill which we thrive on in the North East, we genuinely believe we can do it. Sir Liam's job is to harness all this – and if anyone can do it, he can."

The strategy – launched in February - highlights ten key themes:

- economy, culture and environment
- mental health, happiness and well-being
- tobacco
- obesity, diet and physical activity
- alcohol
- prevention, fair and early treatment
- early life
- mature and working life
- later life
- a good death

Advisory groups for each of them have already been established and started work. A regional alcohol office designed to reduce the harm caused by excessive drinking has also been set up and will start operating soon.

ends