

Public Health Bulletin. 6 October 2015

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Please find below a list of news items from the past fortnight that may be of interest to those involved in public health. This Bulletin provides topical news and reports of relevance to public health teams, community health practitioners and anyone with an interest in health promotion. All content and links are provided for information only and we do not sponsor, endorse or otherwise approve of any mentioned website or the contents of the news items. Please refer to the terms and conditions of the relevant website should you wish to reproduce any of the information.

Details of alternative current awareness services which cover more academic/specialist sources of information can be found in the section *Other Bulletins*. Your local NHS library service can assist you in accessing other current awareness services/tailored alerts, locating peer reviewed journal articles and answer any other queries you may have regarding finding information.

The information about each news item only gives a brief overview so we recommend you view the original source by clicking on the title (or Ctrl+Click in the word document).

Please contact your local NHS library service if you no longer wish to receive this Bulletin, or if you know of anyone else who would like to join the mailing list. The Bulletins are also available on the Thames Valley Public Health Network at: www.oxsph.org/bulletins.htm and the Wessex Public Health Network at: <http://www.wessexphnetwork.org.uk/resources/public-health-updates.aspx>

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Alcohol misuse

[Behavioural interventions in the effort of reducing alcohol related harm](#)

Friday 18 September

Source: EuroCare European Alcohol Policy Alliance
<http://www.eurocare.org>

Summary report from a European Commission workshop on reducing harmful use of alcohol with behavioural interventions.

[Alcohol Identification & Brief Advice – LGB&T Briefing](#)

Tuesday 29 September

Source: The National LGB&T Partnership
<http://nationallgbtpartnership.org/>

This briefing discusses early interventions to reduce alcohol related harm for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGB&T) people. It is aimed at anyone working in health and care settings who have contact with LGB&T people; at staff and volunteers working in LGB&T organisations; and at those who commission alcohol prevention services.

Chronic conditions

[Genetic clue to breast cancer relapses](#)

Friday 25 September

Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

Scientists say they have discovered a genetic clue to why some breast cancers relapse, which could lead to better treatment. A research team from the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute in Cambridge found that cancers that return were more likely to contain certain genes or combinations of genes.

[Breast cancer treatment: Drug pertuzumab licensed](#)

Tuesday 29 September

Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

Thousands of women with early but aggressive breast cancer could benefit from a drug that has been approved by UK regulators, say experts. Pertuzumab (Perjeta) fights HER2-positive breast cancer and its new licence means it can be used before surgery to shrink and control tumours.

[Nigeria reaches polio 'milestone'](#)

Friday 25 September

Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

Nigeria has been removed from the list of polio endemic countries in what is being regarded as a "milestone" on the quest to eradicate the disease. The announcement by the World Health Organization (WHO), was made at a meeting of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) in New York.

[Why is the NHS short of some key drugs?](#)

Tuesday 29 September

Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

The NHS is short of key pharmaceuticals, including those for some cancer treatments and pain relief for terminally ill patients.

'Multiple sclerosis drugs should be offered earlier'

Wednesday 30 September

Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

People with the most common form of multiple sclerosis should be offered drug treatment earlier, a charity says. The Multiple Sclerosis Society's report suggests there is a "wait-and-see" approach by doctors which needs to end.

Probiotic friendly bacteria may play role in stopping asthma

Thursday 1 October

Source: NHS Choices <http://www.nhs.uk/news>

"'Good bacteria' key to stopping asthma," says BBC News. Before you go out and buy a year's supply of probiotic yoghurt drinks, it's worth noting a few points that burst the hype bubble.

High blood pressure: does it lead to diabetes?

Thursday 1 October

Source: NHS Choices <http://www.nhs.uk/news>

"Study gives strongest link yet between blood pressure and diabetes," says The Guardian. At first glance these might be considered two unconnected conditions, but research over the years has led to diabetes being classified as a risk factor for cardiovascular disease.

Lack of funding for rare lung disease 'costs lives'

Monday 5 October

Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

An incurable lung disease is claiming lives because of a lack of funding and research, according to a charity. The British Lung Foundation says IPF (idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis) kills about 5,000 people a year, and is on the rise, but there is low awareness of the condition.

Cannabis 'safe to treat pain' but no proof it helps

Monday 5 October

Source: NHS Choices <http://www.nhs.uk/news>

"Smoking cannabis daily 'is safe when treating chronic pain – but only if you're an experienced user', study finds," says a Mail Online headline. It refers to a study done in Canada to see how safe medical cannabis is for treating chronic pain.

UK end-of-life care 'best in world'

Tuesday 6 October

Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

End-of-life care in the UK has been ranked as the best in the world with a study praising the quality and availability of services. The study of 80 countries said thanks to the NHS and hospice movement the care provided was "second to none".

Organ donation law changes finalised in Welsh assembly

Tuesday 6 October

Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

A system of presumed consent will take effect on 1 December in Wales, where people will have to opt-out if they do not want their organs used after death.

Communicable diseases

[Reptiles pose a risk of salmonella infection](#)

Tuesday 29 September

Source: Public Health England <https://www.gov.uk>

Public Health England (PHE) is investigating a number of cases of gastroenteritis caused by Salmonella Enteritidis PT8. This is linked to exposure to reptiles, in particular to snakes. There have been 70 cases of this type of salmonella across England, so far in 2015.

[TB rates in England continue to decline](#)

Thursday 1 October

Source: Public Health England <https://www.gov.uk>

A total of 6,520 cases of TB were notified in England in 2014, a decrease on the 7,257 cases reported in 2013. The figures are published today (1 October, 2015) in the Public Health England (PHE) annual TB in England report.

[Dundee firm linked to raw venison E. coli outbreak](#)

Tuesday 6 October

Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

Raw venison products distributed by a company in Dundee have been linked to an outbreak of E. coli which affected nine people across Scotland.

Diet & nutrition

[Brighton and Hove initiative tackles sugar addiction](#)

Monday 5 October

Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

The "devastating harm" caused by having too much sugar is the focus of Brighton and Hove's first city-wide campaign as part of a drive to help reduce obesity. More than 300 children were admitted to hospital for teeth extraction in the city in 2012-13, while treating diet-related diseases costs £80m a year.

Drug Misuse

[Lifesaving legislation for a faster response to opiate overdoses](#)

Tuesday 29 September

Source: Homeless Link <http://www.homeless.org.uk/>

Public Health England has announced legislative changes that will potentially have a significant impact on homeless services and their ability to respond to opiate overdoses. This could not be more timely, in a wider context that has seen heroin and morphine deaths rise in the UK by two-thirds in the past 2 years.

Environmental health

[Concern over hidden diesel pollutant](#)

Friday 25 September

Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

Atmospheric levels of a little known by-product from diesel engines are up 70 times higher than expected according to a study. Researchers found that long-chain hydrocarbons, a key component of two of the worst air pollutants, are significantly under-reported in car manufacturers' data.

[COMEAP: quantification of mortality and hospital admissions associated with ground-level ozone](#)

Thursday 1 October

Source: Public Health England <https://www.gov.uk>

Climate change has the potential to increase ground-level ozone concentrations. We must consider this change when assessing the risks of climate change overall.

Health protection

[Childhood MMR vaccination rates fall](#)

Wednesday 23 September

Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

The proportion of two-year-old children in England having the MMR vaccine has fallen, according to NHS statistics. In 2014-15, 92.3% of children had the jab to protect them from measles, mumps and rubella, down from 92.7% in the previous year - which was the highest level of coverage ever achieved.

[Equality analysis: extension of childhood flu immunisation](#)

Wednesday 23 September

Source: Public Health England <https://www.gov.uk>

This equality analysis is based on the data from the 2013 to 2014 season and action taken in 2014 to 2015. It includes detail on uptake rates in the first year of the programme and sets out the Department of Health's approach to monitoring the impact of the programme over time.

HIV & AIDS

[WHO backs 'treat-all' HIV drug plan](#)

Wednesday 30 September

Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

Everyone who has HIV should be offered antiretroviral drugs as soon as possible after diagnosis, the World Health Organisation says. This latest policy removes previous limits suggesting patients wait until the disease progresses.

Infant & child health

['No significant link' between breastfeeding and higher IQ](#)

Thursday 24 September

Source: NHS Choices <http://www.nhs.uk/news>

Researchers assessed the intelligence of children involved in the Twins Early Development Study between the ages of two to and 16, testing them 9 times over the course of the study.

['No cuts' to infant school meals](#)

Monday 28 September

Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

The Department for Education has indicated that free school meals will be protected in the spending review after some 40 [top health professionals signed a letter](#) warning that scrapping the meals could harm children's health.

Mums and dads to see massive benefits for young children as health responsibilities transfer to councils

Monday 28 September

Source: Local Government Association
<http://www.local.gov.uk>

From October 1st the commissioning of 0-5 public health services, including health visiting and Family Nurse Partnership, will transfer to local authorities from the NHS. The Local Government Association (LGA) says the move will not just be about clinical care but will provide better access to a range of services, including housing, benefits, employment and leisure, which are inherently linked to healthy living.

See also LGA publications [Must knows: Children's public health transfer](#) and [A new home for public health services for children aged 0-5: A resource for local authorities](#)

Helping children to be safer, healthier and free of crime

Friday 2 October

Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

This pathway provides guidance to school nurses and youth justice professionals working with young people who are in the youth justice system or at risk of being involved. It sets out the rationale for effective partnership working and pulls together the core principles to help local areas develop their own local frameworks to support effective working.

Mental health

You are not alone: Help is at Hand for anyone bereaved by suicide

Thursday 24 September

Source: Public Health England <https://www.gov.uk>

People who have been bereaved by suicide have used their experiences to lead the revision of a support guide to help others affected by someone taking their own life. The guide is designed to be given out by bereavement support organisations and by those who are likely to be first on the scene after a suspected suicide, including police and ambulance staff.

Rising numbers of stressed students seek help

Wednesday 30 September

Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

There are warnings of rising numbers of students struggling to cope with life on campus, with sharp rises in the demand for counselling. And there are questions about whether universities are providing enough support for emotional and mental health problems.

Clear opportunities for local organisations to improve children's mental wellbeing

Friday 2 October

Source: Public Health England <https://www.gov.uk>

A new resource from Public Health England's (PHE) Mental Health Intelligence Network highlights the importance of local organisations measuring and acting to improve the mental wellbeing of children and young people.

Children seeking mental health advice on internet

Friday 2 October 2015

Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

Children in England are turning to the internet for advice on mental health instead of talking to their school nurse or GP, it is claimed. Children's Commissioner for England Anne Longfield says children do not have the confidence to go to the doctor with mental health issues.

[Dementia: prevalence in groups by protected characteristics](#)

Friday 2 October

Source: Public Health England <https://www.gov.uk>

This review builds on previous work by the Department of Health (DH), in 2010 to 2011, as part of the development of the Dementia Equalities Action Plan (DH, 2011). It examines evidence on how the prevalence of dementia varies with the following characteristics:

- socio-economic position
- race or ethnic group
- religion or belief
- gender
- sexual orientation
- disability

Obesity

[WHO says most people in Europe too fat](#)

Wednesday 23 September

Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

A report by the World Health Organization (WHO) has said that 59% of the population are either overweight or obese. Its European Health Report also said the WHO Europe region, which includes parts of Asia, had the highest levels of alcohol and tobacco use in the world.

Older people

[Home care visits 'must last at least 30 minutes'](#)

Wednesday 23 September

Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

Carers should spend at least 30 minutes on home visits to older people in England as part of a new gold standard for services, new guidance says. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidance follows reports of carers making visits of 15 minutes and less.

[Families may be paying too much for social care, Ombudsman reports](#)

Thursday 24 September

Source: Local Government Ombudsman
<http://www.lgo.org.uk>

A Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) report asks if families across England are paying more than they need to because they have not been given comprehensive information about the costs of care available in their area.

[Fire as a Health Asset: A new partnership](#)

Thursday 1 October

Source: NHS England <http://www.england.nhs.uk/>

A new Consensus Statement, launched on 1st October, has been produced by five organisations – NHS England, Public Health England, the Chief Fire Officers Association, Age UK and the Local Government Association. Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) will use their resources to support older people and those with long-term conditions as the statement encourages local commissioners and FRSs to carry out more 'Safe and Well' checks in people's homes when they visit.

Oral health

[New oral health survey of children in special schools](#)

Thursday 24 September

Source: Public Health England <https://www.gov.uk>

Children in special support schools have slightly lower levels of tooth decay than children in mainstream schools but are more likely to have their teeth extracted, according to a new survey published by Public Health England (PHE).

Physical activity

[European ministers of health adopt strategy to tackle physical inactivity in 53 WHO Member States](#)

Wednesday 16 September

Source: World Health Organisation

<http://www.euro.who.int>

WHO estimates indicate that, in Europe, more than one third of adults and two thirds of adolescents are insufficiently active. Worldwide, physical inactivity causes 6–10% of cases of coronary heart disease, diabetes and breast and colon cancer and 9% of premature mortality.

Prison health

[Prison smoking ban to begin in 2016](#)

Tuesday 29 September

Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

Smoking will be banned in all prisons in Wales and four in south-west England from next year, the government says. This will begin a phased roll-out that will eventually see all jails in England and Wales go smoke-free. From next month, smoking will be barred inside buildings at all "open" prisons in England and Wales.

Sexual health

[DIY contraceptive jab to be offered by the NHS for the first time](#)

Thursday 24 September

Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

A DIY contraceptive jab is being offered to women by the NHS for the first time. It will be available from GPs and family planning clinics as an alternative to the pill.

Smoking

[Rare 'healthy' smokers' lungs explained](#)

Monday 28 September

Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

The mystery of why some people appear to have healthy lungs despite a lifetime of smoking has been explained by UK scientists. The analysis of more than 50,000 people showed favourable mutations in people's DNA enhanced lung function and masked the deadly impact of smoking.

[Smoking in cars with children banned from today](#)

Thursday 1 October

Source: Public Health England <https://www.gov.uk>

New legislation in England and Wales makes it illegal to smoke in a vehicle carrying someone who is under 18. It is now also against the law for a driver not to stop someone smoking in these circumstances. The fine for both offences is £50. The change in the law is to protect children and young people from the damaging effects of secondhand smoke, which can put them at risk of serious conditions such as meningitis, cancer, bronchitis and pneumonia, and make asthma worse.

Social & economic issues

[Health Expectancies at Birth for Middle Layer Super Output Areas \(MSOAs\), England, 2009 to 2013](#)

Friday 25 September

Source: Office for National Statistics <http://www.ons.gov.uk>

Estimates of health expectancy for small area populations based on self-assessed health and self-assessed activity limitation. Differences between small areas allows the scale of inequality to be determined and which areas are statistically significantly higher or lower than the national and local authority specific average.

[Guidance: Health equity in all policies](#)

Tuesday 29 September

Source: Public Health England <https://www.gov.uk>

Public Health England (PHE) worked with the Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) and the Local Government Association (LGA) to develop a masterclass to understand what PHE could do to support directors and consultants of public health to embed health and health equity in all policies at a local level.

Statistics

[Cover of vaccination evaluated rapidly \(COVER\) programme 2015 to 2016: quarterly data](#)

Friday 25 September

Source: Public Health England <https://www.gov.uk>

UK quarterly data and commentary on coverage achieved by the UK childhood immunisation programme. The Cover of Vaccination Evaluated Rapidly programme (COVER) evaluates childhood immunisation in England, collating data for children aged 1, 2 and 5.

Women's health

[NHS uncovers 1,000 FGM cases in England](#)

Wednesday 23 September

Source: BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

There were more than 1,000 newly recorded cases of female genital mutilation (FGM) in England between April and June, NHS data reveals. For the first time the official figures were expanded to include information from general practices and mental health trusts.

[UK women's life expectancy 'second worst' in Western Europe](#)

Wednesday 23 September

Source: NHS Choices <http://www.nhs.uk/news>

"British women have second worst life expectancy in Europe," The Guardian reports. This is one of the findings of a Europe-wide health report carried out by the World Health Organization (WHO).

[Doctors should 'wait longer' before diagnosing miscarriage](#)

Friday 25 September

Source: NHS Choices <http://www.nhs.uk/news>

"Doctors are being advised to wait longer before they diagnose a miscarriage," The Guardian reports. A new study has found evidence to suggest that women should be given a second ultrasound scan, two weeks after the first, to confirm the diagnosis.

Local news: []

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Other Bulletins
<p>Big Four Bulletin This is a weekly Bulletin that details original articles in the BMJ, JAMA, New England Journal of Medicine and The Lancet. http://cash.libraryservices.nhs.uk/cash-service/rss-newsfeed-menu/medicine/big-four-bulletin/</p>
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<p>Healthcare Public Health Monthly bulletin containing news and information about key public health issues including health service commissioning, updates from Public Health England, local authorities, Faculty of Public Health and others agencies, resources and good practice. http://www.healthcarepublichealth.net/newsletters.php</p>
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<p>PHE Bulletin (Public Health England) The PHE Bulletin is issued monthly and contains public health news and information. https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/phe-bulletin</p>
<p>Public Health and Social Care Bulletin This is published weekly and created by Kent & Medway Public Health Observatory. It provides an update on what is new in public health and social care, both nationally and locally. http://www.kmpho.nhs.uk/events-and-updates/bulletins/bulletins-archive/</p>



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