

Public Health Bulletin. 6th February 2018

Produced by NHS libraries in Thames Valley and Wessex

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: <http://www.oxsph.org/bulletins.html> and the Wessex Public Health Network at: <http://www.wessexphnetwork.org.uk/resources/public-health-updates.aspx>

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Alcohol misuse

[Calls for mandatory health information on alcohol labels](#)

26 January 2018

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

The Royal Society for Public Health is calling for change in alcoholic drinks labelling, citing a public "awareness vacuum" on how alcohol affects health.

See also **Diet & nutrition** section.

[Behaviour Change by Design](#)

Children and young people

[Most teenagers exposed to chemical allegedly linked to infertility](#)

5 February 2018

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

The Mail Online reports "chemicals linked to breast and prostate cancer" are found in 86% of teenagers' bodies.

[Wales ban on tongue and intimate piercings for under 18s](#)

1 February 2018

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

Wales has become the first UK nation to ban intimate piercing for under 18s in a bid to prevent potential related health problems.

[Secondhand toys 'may pose toxic threat to children'](#)

30 January 2018

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

"Plastic used in some secondhand toys could pose a health risk for children as they don't meet the most up-to-date safety guidelines, a study has found," BBC News reports.

[State of Child Health: One Year On](#)

23 January 2018

Source: UK Health Forum <http://www.ukhealthforum.org.uk>

Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH), have published their second report looking at the state of child health a year on. The scorecards cover England, Wales and Scotland, to show whether progress has been made on each of the RCPCH recommendations.

[42% of Scottish parents say their children increasingly anxious about world events](#)

23 January 2018

Source: Mental Health Foundation <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk>

New research among Scottish parents with children aged 5 to 18 has revealed that 42% think their children are becoming more anxious about world events like terrorism, global warming or the threat of nuclear war.

Chronic conditions

[Ageing immune system linked to cancer](#)

6 February 2018

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

The key to preventing age-related cancers may lie in the body's own immune system, new research suggests.

Does drinking very hot tea cause oesophageal cancer?

6 February 2018

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

"Hot tea linked to deadly cancer in smokers and drinkers," The Daily Telegraph reports.

Slim evidence vitamin D supplements benefit IBS symptoms

29 January 2018

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

"Daily dose of vitamin D eases agonising IBS and even benefits sufferers' mental health," is the optimistic headline from the Mail Online.

Better communication between primary & secondary care needed for asthma patients, says RCGP

23 January 2018

Source: Royal College of General Practitioners: www.rcgp.org.uk

Responding to an Asthma UK survey on asthma care, Dr Imran Rafi of the Royal College of GPs said: "This report recognises that we need better information sharing between primary and secondary care to improve the outcomes of patients with asthma."

Communicable diseases

NHS to use new type of flu jab next winter

6 February 2018

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

Doctors in England are being asked to order a different type of flu vaccine in time for next winter.

Flu rates overall on the decrease - but not everywhere, latest RCGP figures show

1 February 2018

Source: Royal College of General Practitioners: www.rcgp.org.uk

Flu rates have decreased overall across England for the first time this year, but rates in some areas of the country still continue to increase, according to the latest figures from the Royal College of GPs' Research and Surveillance Centre.

Scientists discover how giardia parasite makes you ill

29 January 2018

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

It is a stomach bug known to afflict some backpackers with bouts of uncomfortable diarrhoea. Now scientists say they have discovered how the parasites that cause giardiasis - one of the world's most common gastric diseases - make people ill.

Paracetamol or ibuprofen best treatment for sore throats, says RCGP

26 January 2018

Source: Royal College of General Practitioners: www.rcgp.org.uk

Responding to new NICE and PHE recommendations on the best treatment for sore throats, Professor Helen Stokes-Lampard, Chair of the Royal College of GPs, said: "Respiratory tract infections or sore throats, can make you feel rotten, and GPs

understand our patients wanting access to something that will make them feel better, but in the majority of cases this won't be – and shouldn't be - antibiotics.

Diet & nutrition

[Public Attitudes Tracker survey results published](#)

1 February 2018

Source: Food Standards Agency <https://www.food.gov.uk>

The FSA's Biannual Public Attitudes Tracker (November 2017) results have been published. This tracking survey is conducted with consumers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, in order to monitor changes in consumer attitudes towards the Agency and food-related issues. Includes 16 new questions on food safety.

[Teenage campaigner challenges 100-calorie snack advert](#)

1 February 2018

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

"The 100-calorie snack benchmark assumes that all children's needs are the same," says Tallulah Self, 18, who has a history of anorexia nervosa.

[Behaviour Change by Design](#)

30 January 2018

Source: UK Health Forum <http://www.ukhealthforum.org.uk>

Behaviour Change by Design is a Wellcome-funded collaboration aiming to run a series of field and laboratory studies to test the promise of a type of intervention altering cues in our immediate physical environments to promote healthier behaviour. These are sometimes known as choice architecture or nudging. Interventions include reducing food, alcohol and tobacco consumption.

[What can we learn from collaborations between public health and the food and drinks industry?](#)

January 2018

Source: UK Health Forum <http://www.ukhealthforum.org.uk>

Our new Casebook looks at 12 experiences of public-private interactions to tackle diet-related diseases, including examples from diverse countries such as Fiji, Brazil and Spain. Each case examines interactions between corporate actors which manufacture unhealthy and ultra-processed food and drinks, and public health actors working in research, policy and practice. They highlight examples of the ethical and governance challenges of different types of interactions with corporate actors; and complement a new WHO tool to support countries to engage with the corporate sector on nutrition programmes. Key lessons are identified for public health actors.

Disability

[LGA responds to Sense report on care for people with disabilities](#)

2 Feb 2018

Source: LGA <https://www.local.gov.uk>

Councils are working hard to ensure all people, including those with disabilities and their carers, receive high quality, reliable care and support, as well as information and advice, to help them lead independent and fulfilling lives.

See also **Social & economic issues** section.

[Housing funding boost to make more homes accessible for elderly and disabled people across England](#)

Drug Misuse

[Prescribed medicines that may cause dependence or withdrawal](#)

1 February 2018 *Source:* Department of Health and Social Care <https://www.gov.uk>

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Public Health and Primary Care has commissioned Public Health England (PHE) to review the evidence for dependence on, and withdrawal from, prescribed medicines. Withdrawal is more accurately defined as discontinuation syndrome in relation to anti-depressants.

The review was launched on 24 January 2018 and is due to report in early 2019.

[New review into prescription drug medication welcomed by RCGP](#)

24 January 2018 *Source:* Royal College of General Practitioners <http://www.rcgp.org.uk>

Comment by Professor Helen Stokes-Lampard, Chair of the Royal College of GPs:
“Addiction to any substance can have a devastating impact on a patient’s health and wellbeing – and that of their family and friends. We welcome this independent review as a means of better understanding the complex reasons behind addiction to prescription medication, and to shape our approach to tackling it...”

Environmental health

[Call for evidence to help improve air quality launched](#)

30 January 2018 *Source:* Dept for Env, Food & Rural Affairs <https://www.gov.uk>

Householders and businesses are being asked for their views on proposals to cut harmful emissions caused by the burning of dirtier fuels.

[London Underground noise could damage hearing, says academic](#)

27 January 2018 *Source:* BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

Parts of London Underground are "loud enough to damage people's hearing", the BBC has been told.

[Warrington’s £34 million flood defence scheme officially complete](#)

26 January 2018 *Source:* Dept for Env, Food and Rural Affairs
<https://www.gov.uk>

More than 2,000 Warrington homes and businesses will benefit from the town’s multi-million pound flood defence scheme, officially opened today (26 January) by Environment Agency Chief Executive, Sir James Bevan and the town’s Mayor, Councillor Les Morgan.

[New emission controls will help improve air quality](#)

25 January 2018 *Source:* Dept for Env, Food and Rural Affairs
<https://www.gov.uk>

Restrictions on air pollution from combustion plants and generators were passed by parliament this week, as the government continues to take action against poor air quality.

Event

[Balancing road safety with air quality – a RoSPA conference](#)

29 January 2018

Source: RoSPA <https://www.rospace.com>

Road and environment professionals from across the private, public and third sectors will meet to discuss how road safety, public health and air quality priorities can support each other. The RoSPA Road Safety Conference 2018 will feature talks and discussions on how to increase walking and cycling, reducing air pollution, speed humps, 20mph limits and zones, policy making and changing road behaviours.

Health promotion

[How to measure your impact on wellbeing](#)

30 January 2018

Source: UK Health Forum <http://www.ukhealthforum.org.uk>

What Works Wellbeing, have produced this practical [guide](#) for charities and social enterprises. Whether you want to improve health, education or employment, measuring wellbeing can show you the wider impact you have on the people and communities you support.

Health protection

[College welcomes definitive NHSE flu vaccination guidance ahead of next winter](#)

6 February 2018 Source: Royal College of General Practitioners <http://www.rcgp.org.uk>

Professor Helen Stokes-Lampard, Chair of the Royal College of GPs, has responded to new guidance from NHS England about next year's flu vaccination programme.

[Vaccine update: January 2018](#)

29 January 2018

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

This issue features a 2018 survey of parental attitudes to immunisation, update on vaccine coverage for pertussis vaccination programme for pregnant women and further flu vaccine related information.

['Painkillers best option for sore throats' say new NHS guidelines](#)

26 January 2018

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

"Doctors should not prescribe 'precious' antibiotics for most people with sore throats and should recommend drugs like paracetamol, new guidelines say," BBC News reports.

Health services administration

[GP workforce in 'precarious state' and needs urgent increase in GP numbers, says RCGP](#)

3 February 2018 Source: Royal College of General Practitioners <http://www.rcgp.org.uk>

Responding to [research](#) from the University of Exeter on reasons GPs leave the workforce, Professor Helen Stokes-Lampard, Chair of the Royal College of GPs, said: "This research provides important understanding into why GPs are leaving the profession

– and hammers home why the College's calls for thousands more GPs must be heard and acted upon.

'Substantial efforts' needed to retain more GPs, says RCGP

1 February 2018 Source: Royal College of General Practitioners: www.rcgp.org.uk

Professor Kamila Hawthorne, Vice Chair of the Royal College of GPs, has responded to analysis of workforce data by Pulse magazine.

Supplies of medicines could be disrupted when UK leaves EU

30 January 2018 Source: NHS Confederation <http://www.nhsconfed.org>

Patients could find that supplies of their medicines will be disrupted when the UK leaves the EU, according to the Brexit Health Alliance in a briefing paper published yesterday, which is calling on both sides to put patients first.

Men's health

Prostate cancer deaths overtake those from breast cancer

2 February 2018 Source: BBC: <http://bbc.co.uk>

The number of men dying from prostate cancer has overtaken female deaths from breast cancer for the first time in the UK, figures show.

Mental health

Airlines get tough on 'support pets'

6 February 2018 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

If you were planning to bring a hedgehog on to a flight as a form of emotional support, you might have to think again. Hedgehogs have been included on a banned list - as airlines get tougher over soaring demands from anxious passengers to travel with "emotional support animals".

Blood test finds toxic Alzheimer's proteins

31 January 2018 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

Scientists in Japan and Australia have developed a blood test that can detect the build-up of toxic proteins linked to Alzheimer's disease.

Can 'light nutrition' help us beat the January blues?

26 January 2018 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

During winter when the nights are long and days short, getting up for work in the dark and coming home in the dark can be grim. But can clever lighting improve our sleep patterns and lift our moods?

Obesity

Why stress makes you fat

24 January 2018 Source: BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

We all know what makes us fat: eating more in calories than we burn off in energy. But though this is true, it doesn't answer the more interesting question - why do we overeat in the first place?

Older people

See also **Social & economic issues** section.

[Housing funding boost to make more homes accessible for elderly and disabled people across England](#)

Oral health

[Illegal teeth whitening caused 'excruciating pain'](#)

1 February 2018

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

A number of beauticians in London are performing illegal teeth-whitening procedures, which can leave patients in crippling pain if they go wrong.

Physical activity

[Bike life - Summary report 2017. The UK's biggest assessment of cycling in seven major cities](#)

30 January 2018

Source: UK Health Forum <http://www.ukhealthforum.org.uk>

[Bike Life](#) is the UK's biggest assessment of cycling in cities delivered by Sustrans in collaboration with seven major cities. Inspired by the Copenhagen Bicycle Account, Bike Life is an assessment of city cycling development including infrastructure, travel behaviour, satisfaction, the impact of cycling, and new initiatives.

Safety

['Dogs really can sense fear,' media reports](#)

2 February 2018

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

"Adopting an unflappable self-confident swagger could be the best way to avoid a nasty nip," states The Daily Telegraph.

[Scotland's first Drowning Prevention Strategy aims to cut deaths by half](#)

31 January 2018

Source: RoSPA <https://www.rospa.com>

A new strategy aimed at drastically reducing the number of drowning deaths in Scotland is being launched by [Water Safety Scotland](#), an alliance of organisations committed to drowning prevention.

[LGA responds to Suzy Lamplugh Trust report on taxi licensing](#)

30 January 2018

Source: LGA <https://www.local.gov.uk>

"Councils take their responsibilities to keep their residents safe extremely seriously, and that includes making sure that people using taxis to travel around our local areas are safe and secure."

[Suzy Lamplugh Trust report](#)

[Review highlights the danger of mixing herbal remedies with prescription drugs](#)

26 January 2018

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

"Millions of people could be risking their health by taking herbal remedies and prescription drugs at the same time, scientists warn," is the front-page headline in the Daily Mail.

See also **Environmental Health** section.

[Balancing road safety with air quality – a RoSPA conference](#)

See also **Social & economic issues** section.

[Housing funding boost to make more homes accessible for elderly and disabled people across England](#)

Screening

[NHS population screening explained](#)

5 Feb 2018

Source: PHE <https://www.gov.uk>

Public Health England (PHE) have published this guide, which sets out what NHS population screening is, how it works and its limitations. Screening is the process of identifying healthy people who may have an increased chance of a disease or condition.

Sexual health

[HPV vaccine offered to men who have sex with men in England](#)

5 February 2018

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

Men who have sex with men are to be offered the (human papilloma virus) HPV vaccination in England.

[Theresa May urged to extend smear tests to under 25s](#)

24 January 2018

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

Theresa May has said the government will look at calls to make smear tests available on the NHS to women under 25.

['I felt vulnerable and violated': Why rape victims fear smear tests](#)

24 January 2018

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

Attempts to encourage women to go for a potentially life-saving smear test don't always fall on deaf ears, but if you're a victim of sexual assault then an insensitive remark urging you to "get over it" or "just get it done" could be enough to put you off for years.

Smoking

[E-cigarettes 'should be on prescription'](#)

6 February 2018

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

E-cigarettes should be available on prescription, according to Public Health England (PHE).

[E-cigarettes: a guide for healthcare professionals](#)

6 February 2018

Source: UK Health Forum <http://www.ukhealthforum.org.uk>

The National Centre for Smoking Cessation and Training (NCSCT), have developed this online training, to assist health and social care professionals support people who want to use electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) to help them quit smoking.

[e-cigarette campaign Greater Manchester](#)

31 January 2018

Source: UK Health Forum

<http://www.ukhealthforum.org.uk>

Cancer Research UK has launched a pilot campaign across Greater Manchester in January 2018, aimed at raising awareness of the relative safety of e-cigarettes compared to smoking tobacco.

[Just one cigarette a day increases heart disease and stroke risk](#)

25 January 2018

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

"Just one cigarette a day is 'almost as dangerous as 20 – hiking your heart attack and stroke risk by 40%'," The Sun reports. A new review of 141 studies covering more than 12 million people showed that people who think "light" smoking is relatively harmless are wrong.

[LGA responds to BMJ report on smoking](#)

24 January 2018

Source: LGA <https://www.local.gov.uk>

"We urge government to reverse reductions in councils' public health budgets so stop smoking services can be offered to all those who need them, and to avoid greater pressure from being placed on already overstretched local services."

[BMJ Report](#)

Social & economic issues

[New government backed advisory panel commits to help eradicate rough sleeping](#)

1 February 2018

Source: Min of Housing, Communities & Local Government

<https://www.gov.uk>

Leading experts from homelessness charities and local government meet for the first time as part of the government's new rough sleeping advisory panel.

[LGA responds to BMJ report on homelessness](#)

29 January 2018

Source: LGA <https://www.local.gov.uk>

"If we want to end homelessness then councils need to be given the powers and funding to adapt welfare reforms and begin building affordable homes again."

[LGA responds to Shelter social housing commission](#)

24 January 2018

Source: LGA <https://www.local.gov.uk>

Responding to the launch of a [social housing commission](#) by Shelter, Cllr Martin Tett, the LGA's Housing spokesman, said: "Councils are supportive of any initiative that seeks to genuinely improve social housing for families and would be keen to see a greater local government representation play a part in the commission."

[Housing funding boost to make more homes accessible for elderly and disabled people across England](#)

24 January 2018 *Source:* Min of Housing, Communities & Local Government <https://www.gov.uk>

More elderly and disabled residents will be able to make adaptations to their homes so they can live independently and safely.

[Policies for healthy lives: a look beyond Brexit](#)

30 January 2018 *Source:* UK Health Forum <http://www.ukhealthforum.org.uk>

A collection of essays from The Health Foundation giving insights on the potential risks and challenges ahead in public health, employment standards, local government, consumer rights and food policy after the UK's departure from the EU. Significant and wide-ranging implications for national laws and regulations and shifts in the policy landscape ...provide potential opportunities ...through the adoption of a health-in-all-policies approach.

See also **Statistics** section.

[LGA responds to new rough sleeping statistics](#)

Statistics

[New figures show larger proportion of strokes in the middle aged](#)

2 February 2018 *Source:* Dept of Health and Social Care <https://www.gov.uk>

The Act FAST campaign has re-launched urging people to call 999 if they notice even one of the signs of a stroke in themselves, or in others.

[Average age of first stroke in England falls, figures show](#)

1 February 2018 *Source:* BBC <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>

The average age of people in England who have a stroke for the first time has fallen over the past decade, new figures show.

[Uptake for routine breast screening falls](#)

1 February 2018 *Source:* NHS Digital <https://digital.nhs.uk>

The proportion of women aged 50-70 taking up routine breast screening invitations fell to 71.1 per cent in 2016-17 down from 72.1 per cent in 2015-16 and 73.6 per cent in 2006-07. It is at the lowest rate over the 10 year period.

[LGA responds to new rough sleeping statistics](#)

25 January 2018 *Source:* LGA <https://www.local.gov.uk>

"If we want to end homelessness then councils need to be given the powers and funding to adapt welfare reforms and begin building affordable homes again.

[Rough sleeping statistics in England Autumn 2017](#)

[Winter flu outbreak is peaking, say health experts](#)

25 January 2018

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

The winter flu outbreak appears to be peaking, health officials say.

Women's health

[Undetected high blood pressure found in new mums](#)

5 February 2018

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

Women with severe pre-eclampsia should have their blood pressure closely monitored for a year after giving birth because high blood pressure can remain undetected, a new study suggests.

[Doctors given approval for UK's first 'three-person babies'](#)

2 February 2018

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

Doctors have received permission to create the UK's first "three-person" babies for two women at risk of passing inheritable diseases to their children.

[The campaign to break the taboo around periods at school](#)

31 January 2018

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

A 22-year-old who has a menstrual condition wants better education about periods in schools.

['Baby brain': Myth or reality?](#)

31 January 2018

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

"Four in five" women experience changes in memory and concentration during pregnancy, according to research by Deakin University, Australia.

[Case for folic acid to be added to flour is 'overwhelming' argues review](#)

31 January 2018

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

BBC News today reports: "'overwhelming' evidence for adding folic acid to flour".

[Most women report better experiences of maternity care](#)

30 January 2018

Source: CQC <http://www.cqc.org.uk>

The results of the 2017 maternity survey published today show that women are reporting a more positive experience of maternity care and treatment.

Local news: []

Other Bulletins
<p>Super Six Bulletin This is a weekly Bulletin that details original articles in the BMJ, JAMA, New England Journal of Medicine and The Lancet, Annals of Internal Medicine and Annals of Emergency Medicine http://cash.libraryservices.nhs.uk/subject-a-z/m/medicine/major-research/</p>
<p>Daily Health News The Daily Health Bulletin is produced by the Knowledge Service from the EMBED Health Consortium http://cash.libraryservices.nhs.uk/subject-a-z/d/daily-health-news/</p>
<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>
<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.kpho.org.uk/library-services/keeping-up-to-date/e-bulletin-archive</p>



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