



Health E-News Bulletin

ISSUE 08 - AUGUST 2009

Health Improvement - Keeping you informed

Welcome to the monthly issue of the Health E-News Bulletin. We aim to keep you updated with national, regional and local news, events and other relevant information which relates to the six key areas of the Department of Health's White Paper "Choosing Health: Making Healthier Choices Easier". We will also include more broader public health information. This is being produced collaboratively by the Halton & St Helens Health Improvement Library Service and the Health Improvement Network.

ALCOHOL

Heavy drinking linked to increased cancer risk

Canadian scientists have provided more evidence of a link between alcohol consumption and an increased risk of cancer. A team of researchers at McGill University and the University of Montreal studied data which had originally been collected in Montreal in the 1980s for a large occupational cancer study. The information contained details of participants' drinking habits, as well as their job histories, smoking status, dietary habits and socioeconomic status.

<http://info.cancerresearchuk.org/news/archive/newsarchive/2009/august/19296795>

Children's Minister: Government consultation on young people and alcohol receives wide-ranging support

Children's Minister, Dawn Primarolo, has published the responses to a consultation on children, young people and alcohol. The responses show that there is a broad base of support for guidelines from the Chief Medical Office on safe levels of drinking. There is also a clear need for government advice and information for parents. Respondents were very clear that Government had a role to play on the issue and parents were keen for more support and information. The consultation, which included guidance drawn up by Sir Liam Donaldson, the Chief Medical Officer (CMO), asked how best to help young people make informed choices about alcohol consumption. The responses were issued on the same day as new statistics show a decline in the number of 11-15 year olds drinking alcohol.

http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2009_0139

Government action needed to reduce harmful drinking say public sector professionals

A survey of over 1,000 teachers, nurses, doctors, police and public health consultants shows the overwhelming majority wants tougher rules on alcohol. Leading professional health bodies Alcohol Concern, the UK Faculty of Public Health, the Royal College of Nursing and the Royal College of Physicians have released today the results of a joint survey on the Government's proposed code of practice for alcohol sales.

http://www.fph.org.uk/advocacy/press/archive/2009/August/050809_alcohol_concern.asp

School pupils more than three times as likely to drink alcohol if they live with other drinkers, survey suggests

School pupils aged 11 to 15 in England are estimated to be more than three times as likely to drink alcohol if they live with other drinkers, a survey from The NHS Information Centre suggests. And the likelihood of a pupil drinking alcohol increases with the number of drinkers per household, according to; Smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in England, 2008.

<http://www.ic.nhs.uk/news-and-events/press-office/press-releases/july-2009/school-pupils-more-than-three-times-as-likely-to-drink-alcohol-if-they-live-with-other-drinkers-survey-suggests>

Young people and alcohol: meanings, practices and contexts

The use of alcohol among young people – particularly those aged under 18 years, and those aged 18-24 who drink in excess – is an ongoing concern for policy-makers, health professionals and the public. The report is accompanied by three literature reviews - risk and protective factors; alcohol reduction programmes; and the effectiveness of national policies.

<http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-TCRU-09-01&>

Report:

<http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-TCRU-09-01&>

Heavy drinking culture blamed for surge in oral cancers

Cancer Research UK has published new statistics which show that oral cancer rates in the UK for men in their 40s have gone up by 28 per cent since the mid 1990s, and rates for women in their 40s have increased by 24 per cent in the same period. For both men and women of all ages, oral cancer rates have increased by more than 45 per cent since records began in 1975. The charity's experts believe the increase in oral cancer rates could mainly be down to drinking

<http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk/servlets/doc/1494>

Don't lose your snooze - cut back on the booze

Drinkers across England are losing valuable sleep and disrupting vital brain functions without knowing that their boozing is the cause, new research for the Government's Know Your Limits campaign has today revealed.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/News/Recentstories/DH_104436

CANCER

Alarming rise in oral cancer rates among forty-somethings

Rates of oral cancers, such as cancers of the mouth, tongue and lip, have increased by around a quarter in the past decade among people in their 40s, according to figures from Cancer Research UK today. Oral cancer is largely a preventable disease with tobacco and alcohol use being the main risk factors. Cancers caused by smoking often take up to 30 years to develop, so tobacco is less likely to be the main reason behind the increase in oral cancer in people in their 40s compared with older people.

<http://info.cancerresearchuk.org/news/archive/pressreleases/2009/august/rise-oral-cancer>

Stomach cancer cases almost halve over the last 30 years

NEW Cancer Research UK figures out today reveal that stomach cancer cases in Great Britain have dropped by nearly half from around 14,000 in 1975 to 7,485 in 2006. Cases in women have dropped by more than half from around 5900 in 1975 to around 2650 in 2006. And cases in men have nearly halved, dropping from their peak of nearly 8300 cases in 1980 down to around 4800 cases in 2006.

<http://info.cancerresearchuk.org/news/archive/pressreleases/2009/august/stomach-cancer-halve-30-years>

Study suggests cervical screening has little benefit for under-25s

A new study by Cancer Research UK-funded scientists at the Wolfson Institute of Preventive Medicine in London provides support for the government's decision not to lower the age of cervical screening below 25. The researchers studied 4,012 women aged 20 to 69, who had been diagnosed with cervical cancer between 1990 and 2008. They also looked at data on a further 7,889 women of a similar age, none of whom had ever been diagnosed with the disease.

<http://info.cancerresearchuk.org/news/archive/newsarchive/2009/july/19289068>

Sunbeds moved up to highest cancer risk category

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), part of the World Health Organisation, has decided to place sunbeds in the highest cancer risk category. Sunbeds were previously in the lower 'group 2A' category, which contains threats that are 'probably carcinogenic to humans', but their new status as 'group 1' carcinogens - the highest category - removes any element of doubt.

<http://info.cancerresearchuk.org/news/archive/newsarchive/2009/july/19286322>

GPs receive new guidelines for prostate cancer risk

A new edition of the Prostate Cancer Risk Management Programme (PCRMP) has been produced to help GPs give men clear and balanced information about testing for prostate cancer. The second edition of the information pack is designed to assist GPs when responding to patient queries about prostate specific antigen (PSA) testing. GPs will receive a reference booklet and summary sheet, as well as information sheets for patients and copies of Cancer Research UK's 2008 Prostate CancerStats report.

<http://info.cancerresearchuk.org/news/archive/newsarchive/2009/july/19276404>

Heavy drinking linked to increased cancer risk

See Section: ALCOHOL

CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE

Awareness campaign launched as measles rises

Measles vaccination rates are still far lower than levels needed to protect the population. This is despite the finding of a new Department of Health survey that over 90 per cent of parents are aware it is the best way to protect their child. The findings follow recent estimates that suggest over two million children in England are at risk from the disease because they have missed either their first or second MMR vaccination.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/News/Recentstories/DH_103555

NICE issues guidance to help spot child abuse

Doctors and nurses will be given guidance to help them recognise children who are at risk of physical or sexual abuse, it has been announced. The guidance will also help GPs and health workers identify children who are suffering from emotional abuse or neglect.

<http://guidance.nice.org.uk/CG89>

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See Section: ALCOHOL

Free online service helps first-time parents
Safe At Home - The National Home Safety Equipment Scheme
See Section: NEW RESOURCES

DRUGS

Latest volatile substance abuse death figures released

There were 58 deaths from volatile substance Abuse in 2007, according to the latest figures released by St George's University London. VSA Report 22: Trends in deaths associates with abuse of volatile substances 1971-2007, which was compiled for the Department of Health, monitors trends in deaths associated with the misuse of gas fuels, aerosols, glues, anaesthetic agents and other solvent based products.

http://www.drugscope.org.uk/newsandevents/currentnewspages/VSA_report_22.htm

'Synthetic cannabinoids' should be made illegal

'Synthetic cannabinoids', often known on the street as 'Spice', are as harmful as cannabis and should be made illegal, according to advice given to the government by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD). The harmful so-called 'legal high' is sold as herbal material, but scientists have found that the plant-based mix, which contains neither tobacco nor cannabis, is coated with synthetic cannabinoids that imitate the effects of the active ingredient in cannabis called tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).

<http://drugs.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-events/latest-news/synthetic-cannabinoids-illegal>

Drug misuse declared

By looking at a sample of 16 to 59 year-olds, this annual statistical bulletin examines the use and trends of illicit drugs.

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs09/hosb1209.pdf>

Major new campaign to crack down on drug driving

The first national TV advertising campaign to tackle drug driving was launched by Transport Secretary Andrew Adonis today after new research showed that one in 10 young male drivers admit to driving after taking illegal drugs. The new £2.3 million campaign highlights that the police can and will detect drug drivers - and that anyone convicted will face the same tough penalties as a drink driver.

<http://nds.coi.gov.uk/Content/Detail.aspx?NewsAreaId=2&ReleaseID=405867&SubjectId=2>

RoSPA welcomes first myth-busting drug-driving campaign

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents has welcomed today's launch of Britain's first national campaign on drug driving. Having long-advocated greater education of the dangers of driving under the influence of drugs, the safety charity is delighted to back the THINK! Drug Drive campaign. While the number of drink-drive accidents has reduced in recent years, drug driving is a growing problem, despite surveys showing it is also considered socially-unacceptable.

http://www.rospa.co.uk/news/releases/2009/pr707_17_08_09_road.htm

MENTAL HEALTH

New Horizons - Government consults on mental health and well-being

New vision to make mental health everyone's business

Urban allotments, reading groups and computer training for the over 50s are just some of the good practice initiatives featured as part of a new approach to public mental health and well-being, announced by Care Services Minister Phil Hope. 'New Horizons' marks a new era in mental health. It sets out a dynamic new approach to improving well-being for the whole

population, aiming for the first time to create a powerful alliance that can target the root causes of poor mental health.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/News/Recentstories/DH_103186

Suicide Rates Lowest on Record

The number of suicides in England are at an all-time low, Care Services Minister Phil Hope announced today (10.07.09) as he published the latest annual report on suicide prevention.

<http://nds.coi.gov.uk/clientmicrosite/Content/Detail.aspx?ClientId=46&NewsAreald=2&ReleaseID=404555&SubjectId=36>

Proposals to change law on assisted suicide

An amendment to the Coroners and Justice Bill was defeated in Parliament this month (July 2009), designed to protect from criminal prosecution those who assist their loved ones in travelling abroad to end their lives.

http://www.samaritans.org/media_centre/emotional_health_news/proposals-law-suicide-037.aspx

Worth the effort? Not if you're depressed

New research indicates that decreased cravings for pleasure may be at the root of a core symptom of major depressive disorder. The research is in contrast to the long-held notion that those suffering from depression lack the ability to enjoy rewards, rather than the desire to seek them.

<http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/information/news/?EntryId17=74520>

Justice system failing victims with mental health problems

A report issued by the House of Commons Justice Committee highlights deep concerns about the treatment of people with mental health problems in the criminal justice system. According to the report, the Crown Prosecution Service is failing victims and witnesses with any history of mental distress by dropping cases before they even get to court, and where their mental health is in question, failing to support them to give good evidence even though the support systems are in place.

http://www.mind.org.uk/news/1339_justice_system_failing_victims_with_mental_health_problems

New strategy to bolster mental health care

A dramatic shake-up which bases policy on the need for prevention could save the economy billions of pounds every year. Radical plans to prioritise mental health – putting it on a par with the fight against obesity – will be launched this week by the Government.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/health-news/new-strategy-to-bolster-mental-health-care-1752308.html>

NUTRITION/OBESITY

Change4Life corner shops to open across the country

Corner shops nationwide will get help from Change4Life to sell fruit and veg – this will mean more people will get their 5 A day and shops will see an increase in profits, Secretary of State for Health Andy Burnham said today. Following a successful pilot in the North East, corner shops across the country can now join Change4Life and work with the local NHS to promote healthier eating in their communities.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/News/Recentstories/DH_103380

Agency launches consultation on reducing saturated fat and added sugar in key foods

The Food Standards Agency is today (28.07.09) launching a consultation on its proposals to introduce voluntary recommendations for food manufacturers for reductions in saturated fat

and added sugar and increased availability of smaller single-portion sizes in a number of key foods – biscuits, cakes, pastries, buns, chocolate confectionery and soft drinks.

<http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2009/jul/satfatconsult>

Food route – a new lesson on food

See Section: NEW RESOURCES

OLDER PEOPLE

Keeping older people fit and healthy

Simple measures such as good footcare, sight tests and light exercise can help older people live better, Care Service Minister Phil Hope said today as he launched the Older People's Prevention Package. The package sets out how preventing health problems before they occur can help older people live better and healthier lives. It is part of the government's ageing strategy Building a Society for All Ages.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/News/Recentstories/DH_103157

New Horizons - Government consults on mental health and well-being

New vision to make mental health everyone's business

See Section: MENTAL HEALTH

ORAL HEALTH

Reliance on medicine at root of dental decay issue in older patients, says charity

Dentists have identified multiple medications as a cause for the growing problem of dry mouth syndrome. The UK's leading dental health charity has warned that increased medication on offer • some 400 of which are linked to dry mouth (or xerostomia) • could have a serious impact on our oral health. The British Dental Health Foundation – speaking after the US publication of an Academy of Dentistry survey which found 91 per cent of dentists linking multiple medications with dry mouth – has urged greater preventive action against the problems dry mouth can cause.

<http://www.dentalhealth.org.uk/pressreleases/releasedetail.php?id=385&offset=0&limit=10&type=&keyword=>

Oral health the key to alzheimer's cure?

A major research grant will help scientists study the links between memory and oral health in a bid to establish control over Alzheimer's disease. The news of a \$1.3 million study to be carried out on thousands of participants has been welcomed by the UK's leading oral health charity • the British Dental Health Foundation. Research has long associated oral health with overall health problems, including dementia • though no studies have made clear how the state of the teeth and mouth affect mental function. Last year researchers found a link between mild memory loss and gum disease and the seven-figure grant will enable examination of medical records of thousands of Americans to further pursue the link.

<http://www.dentalhealth.org.uk/pressreleases/releasedetail.php?id=386&offset=0&limit=10&type=&keyword=>

Alarming rise in oral cancer rates among forty-somethings

See Section: CANCER

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Call for physical activity to be cornerstone of 21st century health

The UK must move from 'relegation candidates to play-off contenders' in the international physical activity league tables to improve health and cut costs – that's the message from Health Secretary Andy Burnham today as he set out his vision for a fitter England. In his speech, the Health Secretary called on the NHS to make the promotion of active lifestyles

“core business and not a peripheral concern”. Health professionals should see improving activity rates and getting their patients moving as central to their work.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/News/Recentstories/DH_104254

Swim4Life - search for new swimming stroke

Are your kids bored of breaststroke? Fed-up of front crawl? Think they can do better than backstroke and butterfly? Secretary of State for Health, Andy Burnham is calling on kids up and down the country to help Swim4Life create a brand new swimming stroke. The national competition to kick off Swim4Life, part of Change4Life, asks youngsters to send their ideas, including a description of how they came up with their new stroke, a picture that inspired it and a suggested name.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/News/Recentstories/DH_103295

SEXUAL HEALTH

Statistics on Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)

The Health Protection Agency has reported an 11% decrease in the total number of new gonorrhoea infections diagnosed in the UK last year from 18,649 infections in 2007 to 16,629 in 2008 - the lowest number of new infections recorded since 1999.

http://www.hpa.org.uk/webw/HPAweb&HPAwebStandard/HPAweb_C/1247816582708?p=1231252394302

fpa statement on STI figures from Health Protection Agency

Reacting to the Health Protection Agency data on sexually transmitted infections (STIs) for 2008 released today, showing that gonorrhoea and syphilis are decreasing, but rates of genital herpes and warts are increasing, Julie Bentley Chief Executive, fpa said:

“There are some welcome drops in certain STI numbers, but using condoms, regular STI testing and check ups are still absolutely essential if people want to look after their sexual health...”

<http://www.fpa.org.uk/News/Press/Pressreleases2009/24July2009>

Sexually transmitted infections statistics

Responding to the publication today (Friday 24 July 2009) of the sexually transmitted infection statistics by the Health Protection Agency, Simon Blake, Brook's National Director, said: “It is excellent news that the increase in diagnoses of STIs is slowing down. The HPA's findings show that we must continue to support young people to make good decisions that protect their physical and emotional health.

http://www.brook.org.uk/content/M7_2009_STISTATS_JULY.asp

Brook launches new sexual health leaflet for health professionals working with BME groups

Brook, the young people's sexual health charity, has today launched a new leaflet for health professionals on engaging young people, particularly those from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities, with sexual health services

http://www.brook.org.uk/content/M7_2009_BMEproject_JULY2009.asp

http://www.brook.org.uk/uploads/Health_pro_BME.pdf

TOBACCO

Two years on - fewer people intend to quit smoking following smoking ban peak

There has been a slight fall in the proportion of smokers who would like to try and quit, with 67 per cent of respondents to a recent survey claiming that they would be willing to give up. This compares with 74 per cent who wanted to kick the habit in 2007, a figure that was almost certainly boosted by the introduction of smoke-free legislation in England.

<http://info.cancerresearchuk.org/news/archive/newsarchive/2009/july/19289378>

Smoking-related Behaviour and Attitudes, 2008-09:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_health/smoking2008-9.pdf

New research reveals what motivates people to smoke

A new study - designed to understand why people smoke and help develop more effective quitting programmes for smokers - has revealed that only half of smokers say enjoyment and coping with stress were reasons why they smoke. The new Cancer Research UK study is published in Nicotine and Tobacco Research today (Wednesday).

<http://info.cancerresearchuk.org/news/archive/pressreleases/2009/july/motivation-to-smoke>

Abstract: <http://ntr.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/ntp120v1>

Smoking ban triggered the biggest fall in smoking ever seen in England

Smokefree law in England has helped more smokers to quit than ever before and will help prevent an estimated 40,000 deaths over the next 10 years – according to new research being presented

<http://info.cancerresearchuk.org/news/archive/pressreleases/2008/june/444256>

OTHER PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS

Swine Flu update

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/News/Recentstories/DH_104306

Pandemic vaccine priority for most at risk

More than 11 million people in England will be targeted first. The priority groups who will be first in line for vaccination against swine flu will include pregnant women, frontline health and social care workers, and everyone in at-risk groups aged over six months, Health Secretary Andy Burnham announced. This follows advice from independent experts on who should be first in line for vaccination.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/News/Recentstories/DH_104295

Services for people with rheumatoid arthritis

This report examines the efficiency and effectiveness of services for people with rheumatoid arthritis in England. It also acts as a marker for the wider challenges faced in providing services for people with musculoskeletal diseases and long-term conditions.

http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/0809/rheumatoid_arthritis.aspx

End of life care strategy: First annual report

In July 2008 the Department of Health published the End of life care strategy - promoting high quality care for all adults at the end of life. This report sets out progress over the first year.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/DH_102433

NEW RESOURCES

Free online service helps first-time parents

A new interactive website to help parents and carers keep their babies healthy, happy and safe is being rolled out nationally today by the Department of Health. NHS Baby LifeCheck is designed to provide information and advice to mums, dads and carers of babies aged five to eight months. Baby LifeCheck guides parents and carers through a set of simple multiple choice questions, then offers advice and reassurance on making the best decisions for their child.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/News/Recentstories/DH_103926

<http://www.babylifecheck.co.uk/Default.aspx?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>

Food route – a new lesson on food

The Food Standards Agency has published a new range of resources to enable young people to gain essential food-related skills and knowledge. 'Food route: a journey through food' is a range of colourful age-appropriate workbooks designed and developed to bring the Agency's food competences to life. The materials are supported by teachers' user guides and downloadable certificates, which can be awarded on completion of the various activities.

<http://www.food.gov.uk/news/newsarchive/2009/aug/foodroute>

<http://www.food.gov.uk/healthiereating/nutritionschools/teachingtools/foodroute/>

Safe At Home - The National Home Safety Equipment Scheme

The Safe At Home National Home Safety Equipment Scheme is a major initiative to help families keep their children safe from home accidents.

<http://www.safeathome.rospa.com/>

HELP (Health Equality Library Portal)

The Health Equality Library Portal is NHS North West's central repository for up-to-date equality and diversity information.

<http://help.northwest.nhs.uk/>

Brook launches new sexual health leaflet for health professionals working with BME groups

See section: **SEXUAL HEALTH**

NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL HEALTH EVENTS 2009 – September

For a full list of Health Events and links please visit:

<http://www.equip.nhs.uk/Events/EventList.aspx>

OTHER LOCAL E-BULLETINS

ChaMPS Public Health Network Bulletin

ChaMPS is your public health network for Cheshire and Merseyside PCTs, NHS Acute Trusts, local authorities and wider health organisations. If you would like to know more about joining ChaMPS and receiving this bulletin contact Viv Martindale, ChaMPS Network Administrator on 0151 643 5369 or email vivienne.martindale@bwwpct.nhs.uk

Cheshire & Merseyside New Documents Bulletin

A weekly review of new documents produced collaboratively by primary care librarians across Cheshire & Merseyside. Contact the Primary Care Library on 0151 676 5650 or email library.pct@sthk.nhs.uk if you would like to receive this bulletin.

National Library for Public Health e-Newsletter

The library has been developed to provide high quality evidence e-based information on all aspects of public health. It is designed for those working in the field of public health by providing a single source of access to web based evidence on public health.

<http://www.library.nhs.uk/publichealth/page.aspx?pagename=NEWSLETTER>

Your Comments

The content of this bulletin highlights recent articles and/or documents appearing on a selection of websites, which we feel may be of interest to the wider health improvement area. All links are correct at the time of publishing. If you have any comments or suggestions about the Bulletin or would like to forward an item or news of an event, we would love to hear from you. Please forward this bulletin on to people who might otherwise not receive it.

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Health Improvement Network

If you would like to become a member of the Health Improvement Network or find out more information about the Network, please contact Linda Gittens on 01744 697433 or email lindagittens@sthelens.gov.uk.