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Welcome

Hi, I'm Angela Hardman and I recently came into post as Deputy Director Health Protection at Public Health England (PHE) in the North West. I am delighted to be working for PHE and am enjoying learning about the organisation and shaping how I will not only bring leadership to my new role and team, but also play my part in working alongside colleagues and stakeholders to drive forward our ambition to improve and protect the public's health and reduce health inequalities.



My public health career spans the last 25 years, over which time I have developed wide ranging strategic experience and collaborative cross sector working in the NHS and local government. For the past five years I was Director of Public Health in Tameside, Greater Manchester (GM) and during this time I chaired the GM Directors of Public Health and also played a key leadership role in shaping the vision and ambition for a unified population health system for GM.

As I settle into my new role, my focus is to build on and strengthen efforts in support of PHE's ambitions towards tackling the growth and reducing the threat of AMR (antimicrobial resistance), tackling healthcare associated Gram negative bloodstream

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infections, achieving a year-on-year decrease in TB, tackling air quality, reducing variation in the provision of health protection functions across the North West, and building stronger more resilient communities.

When I am not in work I do occasionally enjoy simply doing nothing, this doesn't happen often as most of the time you will find me juggling a busy family life with my husband and our two daughters, volunteering in my local church community and, where I can, squeezing time in to stay fit and healthy. My move to PHE has really made a difference in the amount of walking I am doing, building physical activity into the way I go about my daily business right from when I step out of the front door in the morning. I have found the [PHE Active10 app](#) really good, take a look if you haven't already, light evenings are here!

Salford pupils explore careers in science with Public Health England scientists

Salford pupils grabbed a lab coat and swabbing kit as they explored possible careers in science with Public Health England scientists.

Pupils from Walkden High School and All Hallows High School gained hands-on experience through a series of interactive workshops for British Science Week (9 – 29 March) as PHE aims to inspire young people and showcase the variety of science careers they could pursue.



Students from Walkden High School explore the world of vaccines using table tennis balls

Students explored the invisible world of bugs and antibiotic testing using custard and food colouring, discovered how vaccines work and what immunity means using table tennis balls and discovered how scientists are attempting to eradicate polio across the world.

British Science Week is a ten-day celebration of science, technology, engineering and maths, which encourages organisations, professionals in the science sector, science communicators and the general public to hold events that get people involved in scientific activities.

Budding scientist Oluwanifemi, 14, enjoyed exploring possible careers in science. She said: "I had a lot of fun today learning about things I could possibly do in the future that relate to science.

"I thought science was just about chemicals so it has been really interesting to see that there's so much more to it and how much it helps people."

Phillipa Burns, Lead Biomedical Scientist at Manchester University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and Public Health England North West, said: "It was fantastic to be able to visit schools and hopefully inspire young people to think about their future and consider pursuing a career in science.

"The students were all really interested and were able to learn new things and build on what they already knew. We wanted to lift science from the textbooks and give the pupils a hands-on experience that will peak their curiosity and give them a greater understanding of the world they live in."

See what the students from Walkden High School thought of the day by watching the short videos below:



Latest technology supports new mums in the North West to breastfeed

PHE's Start4Life programme has created a 24/7 Breastfeeding Friend to encourage parents to ask for breastfeeding help if they need it.

The digital support, which is available for free on a range of platforms including Facebook Messenger and Amazon Alexa's voice service, allows mothers to ask a

wide range of questions about breastfeeding and the answers will be provided tailored to the age of the baby.

A new PHE survey of 1,000 mothers of young children revealed that in hindsight, mothers wished they had been better prepared for breastfeeding.



PHE research found that 31% of mothers felt embarrassed about asking for help with breastfeeding

Post birth, 21% wished they had read about and were more prepared for breastfeeding and 24% of those who had given breastmilk to their first child wished they had known that asking for help can make a real difference.

The survey also highlighted that 31% of mothers also felt embarrassed about asking for help with breastfeeding from healthcare professionals.

Mothers can ask Alexa a variety of questions about breastfeeding and the answers will be provided tailored to the age of the baby. This means that they can get helpful advice even when their hands are full.

Lyndsay, 34, from Bolton, said: “When my son was first born, I was constantly worried about whether I was breastfeeding him properly and whether I had enough milk. I doubted myself regularly there’s lots of advice available from Start4Life that I found really helpful.”

Steve Morton, Health & Wellbeing Manager at Public Health England North West, added: “The Breastfeeding Friend from Start4Life is a great tool for mums in the North West who are looking for help and advice about breastfeeding.

Support can make a real difference to successful breastfeeding so the suite of digital support services from Start4Life can be really beneficial for those who might require a bit more help.”

For more information visit www.nhs.uk/start4life



World TB Day

March 24 marked World TB day, an opportunity for people to join the fight against TB and re-inforce messaging about reducing cases of TB incidence.



In the North West in 2016, 11.9% TB cases included a social risk factor, such as homelessness, being in prison or drug use.

Tackling TB – particularly in the homeless community - is a priority for the North West TB Control Board.

TB is an infectious illness caused by airborne bacteria. It can cause serious health problems – particularly if it is not caught early. However TB is curable with antibiotics if diagnosed and treated early.

We know that whether in the UK or overseas, homeless people and those living in poor housing conditions are at a greater risk of TB than others.

Rough sleeping, cold, poor nutrition and drink or drug abuse can make it more likely that someone exposed to TB will go on to develop the illness.

We also know that homeless people can think the symptoms of TB are simply the impact of their lifestyle on their health, so can delay seeking help.

If you work with homeless people, you can help by looking out for:

- A persistent cough over three weeks
- Persistent fever
- Heavy sweating at night
- Loss of appetite
- Unexplained weight loss
- General and unusual sense of tiredness and being unwell
- Coughing up blood

More information on TB and homelessness and what you can do to help if you work with homeless people is available [here](#) and via [TB Alert](#).

You can watch the short video below, featuring Stephen Flannigan, Specialist Nurse in Infectious Disease.



Making every contact count in Manchester

Healthcare providers and commissioners came together at a joint PHE North West and Health Education England event in Manchester to showcase Making Every Contact Count.

Making Every Contact Count (MECC) uses the millions of day-to-day interactions between organisations and individuals to encourage them to make positive changes to their physical and mental health wellbeing.

MECC focuses on the lifestyle issues that, when addressed, can make the greatest improvement to an individual's health:

- Stopping smoking
- Drinking alcohol only within the recommended limits
- Healthy eating
- Being physically active
- Keeping to a healthy weight
- Improving mental health and wellbeing.

Local authorities and acute and community hospital trusts explained how they're promoting MECC in their areas.

Click [here](#) to find out more about Making Every Contact Count.

You can find out what people thought of the event by watching the short videos below.



Community health and wellbeing work in Halton scoops top prize

A pioneering programme of community work to improve health and wellbeing in Halton has won a top regional award.

Well Halton, which aims to reduce poverty and increase entrepreneurship, won the Culture for Innovation Award at the North West Coast Research and Innovation Awards 2018.

Led by Halton Clinical Commissioning Group, Well Halton has taken an innovative approach, partnering with Widnes Vikings Rugby League Club to promote ways to keep well – and avoid emergency services unless necessary.

Local health staff and community members have been encouraged to develop ideas that tackle problems in the heart of our community.

Some other successes include recruiting army veterans to construct children's growing areas in schools and nurseries, taking 250 residents to an engineering day at Sci Tech Daresbury, recycling hundreds of coats for children via the Sewing Rooms project, and fixing up bikes donated by the police for local young people.

Chris Carlin of Well Halton, said: "I was extremely proud to collect the Culture for Innovation Award on behalf of Well Halton. Our programme is all about building on the cultures of local communities in order to help local people generate their own solutions. It's fantastic that non-clinical work like ours can be considered innovative."



The Well Halton team receive their award

The awards were presented at a celebratory event held at Preston North End, recognising research and innovation that has made a significant improvement to NHS and social care.

This was the third North West Coast awards event and judges dealt with a record number of entries. It was organised jointly by the Innovation Agency, NIHR Clinical Research Network: North West Coast, and NIHR Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care North West Coast.

Lancashire and South Cumbria Air Quality Summit

More than 60 public health professionals and academics gathered at Lancaster University to discuss ways to improve air quality across the North West in February.

Air pollution is the largest environmental risk to the public's health, contributing to cardiovascular disease, lung cancer and respiratory diseases.

Chaired by Director of Public Health for Blackburn with Darwen Prof Dominic Harrison, the event saw presentations from Lancaster University's Prof John Goodacre, who highlighted links to the Health Innovation Campus being built adjacent to the main campus.



Cllr Brian Taylor and Cllr Charlie Edwards encouraged local organisations to work together before Prof Barbara Maher from Lancaster Environment Centre highlighted the emerging evidence of particulate matter in the brain of patients with Alzheimer's disease.

Paul Cartmell from Lancaster City Council and Andrew Hewitson from Lancashire County Council outlined local approaches, while Matthew Clark from Shropshire County Council presented on coordinating action. The final presentation saw Liverpool John Moores University's Prof John Whitelegg highlighted Dusseldorf as an example of making big changes to tackle air pollution. The German city recently banned diesel cars and launched a car free housing development.

Prof Dominic Harrison said of the event: "I think it went well. We had some very good feedback from participants and some very strong support for continuing with the University and health Hub collaboration in the air quality collaboration."

You can follow tweets from the day by searching #AirQualityLandSC on Twitter.

Alcohol CLear Peer Review in the North West

PHE North West supported Warrington and Wirral to undertake a peer review session on Friday 2 March 2018 in Liverpool.

The two local authorities completed the national Alcohol CLear self-assessment with the aim of identifying good practice, gaps in the system and future actions to reduce the harm from alcohol.

As part of the process the two LAs shared their self-assessments and identified key challenges prior to the day.



Attendees included alcohol and drug public health commissioners, CCGs, treatment providers, chairs of strategic boards and other key stakeholders.

The session allowed the time and safe space to challenge, share and develop collaborative programmes of work.

Warrington and Wirral will now work together to explore better ways of delivering IBA (Identification and brief advice), look at ways to deliver communications strategies, licensing practice, and much more.

New film showcases Birchwood Centre's Junk Food Café success

An initiative supported by Well Skelmersdale is turning unsold food donated by supermarkets into healthy meals for local people in Skelmersdale.



The Birchwood Centre's Junk Food Cafe offers hot, tasty meals to community members. Any unused fresh food is also available to buy on a 'pay as you feel' basis, to help people on low incomes to access healthy food.

The Junk Food Cafe is also a great way to overcome isolation, encouraging people to enjoy conversation and make new friends over a delicious meal. Find out more by

watching the film at <https://vimeo.com/262374850/2f171ce54d> and visiting the Cafe's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/TRJFPSkelmersdale/>

Oral cancer guide

Public Health England North West's oral cancer guide for helping early detection has received a PHE quality initiative highly commended runner up award.

Oral cancer rates across the country are expected to rise by 33% over the next 20 years, while Cheshire and Merseyside have the highest incidents and mortality rates in England, with experts believing late presentations and lifestyle factors such as drinking, smoking and diet being the cause of the problem.

Led by Dental Public Health Consultant Yvonne Dailey, PHE North West worked with NHS England, Cancer Research UK, Local Authorities and the Local Dental Network to produce the tool which helps practices to manage early detection and bolster prevention initiatives via embedding making every contact counts into the ethos of all local dental practices.



The oral cancer guide for helping early detection received the PHE quality initiative highly commended runner up

Dental Practitioner and Vice Chair of the Local Dental Network Steven Korb said:
“The oral cancer toolkit has helped provide me with an easy to follow, organised, step by step approach to managing my two-week referrals.

“In addition to providing some really useful guidance around what can be a difficult conversation it gives me a good degree of assurance that I have not missed out on anything along the way in this potentially life changing process.”

To find out more about the guide, contact Yvonne.Dailey@phe.gov.uk.

NWC Research and Innovation Awards 2018

The Cheshire & Merseyside Health Protection Team were shortlisted for the North West Coast Research and Innovation Awards under the Taking Research into Practice category.

Dr Alex Keenan, Epidemiology & Surveillance Analyst, explains more.

“Whilst we didn’t win, being shortlisted into the final three was an achievement we are proud of. We have a long-standing interest in research after initially starting a programme of research following a large measles outbreak in 2012/13, this programme has blossomed into a culture of research within the team.

“This particular project centred around an innovative study on susceptibility to measles in Liverpool showing that although MMR uptake is higher than the national average, susceptibility to measles remains above the WHO elimination threshold.



The Cheshire and Merseyside Health Protection Team were shortlisted for the North West Coast Research and Innovation Awards

“When the implications for policy change were highlighted, it became clear that this project was an ideal opportunity to put workplace research into practice.

“This has resulted in both an immediate innovative campaign and a longer-term legacy collaborative plan using the strengths of all partners, including various bodies within Public Health England, NHS England, and the University of Liverpool.

“The immediate innovative campaign began in 2016/17 and identified children who were unvaccinated with MMR in school years 9 and 11 across Cheshire & Merseyside.

“The households of the children identified as being unvaccinated were approached to discuss consent for MMR vaccination, and offered vaccination as part of a highly-targeted catch-up campaign. The longer-term legacy plan will repeat this process annually.

“Preliminary results show that susceptibility to measles in the more vulnerable groups has decreased substantially as a result of this work.”

Key information

May 2018 – National walking month and Action on Stroke month

June 2018 – Cervical Screening month

11 June – Diabetes week

21 June – National clean air day

5 July – NHS is 70

28 July – World Hepatitis day

1 August – World Breastfeeding month

Public Health England exists to protect and improve the nation’s health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. We do this through world-leading science, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships and the delivery of specialist public health services. We are an executive agency of the Department of Health and Social Care, and a distinct delivery organisation with operational autonomy. We provide government, local government, the NHS, Parliament, industry and the public with evidence-based professional, scientific and delivery expertise and support. To find out more about PHE, take a look at the [Business plan 2018-19](#) and the PHE [remit letter](#) looking more closely at our role.

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