

# Inform

Issue 25

October/November 2002

## Solvents highlighted at launch of report

Tuesday 24 September saw the launch of the Agency's 11th Annual report by HPA Chair, Alice Quinn. The report marks the completion of another challenging and successful year for the Agency during which positive feedback was received on the findings of the organisation's second five-year review.

Speaking at the launch, Dr Brian Gaffney, Chief Executive, restated the Agency's commitment to collaborative working and support for *Investing for Health*, the Government's new strategy for public health, in working to reduce inequalities in health in Northern Ireland. He also highlighted some of the major achievements of the past year in tackling risk factors for the biggest threats to health here.



At the launch, from left, Angeline McTier, Project Manager, Re-Solv Northern Ireland, with Dr Brian Gaffney, Chief Executive, Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland and Jo Daykin, Northern Ireland Drugs and Alcohol Strategy Coordinator.

One of these areas is drug and alcohol misuse and both Alice Quinn and Brian Gaffney welcomed Jo Daykin, Northern Ireland Drugs and Alcohol Strategy Coordinator, to the Agency to officially launch *Volatile Substance Abuse. A professional's guide*. This resource has been produced by the HPA on behalf of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and is now also available as a PDF from the Agency's corporate website.

The Annual report details the full range of partnerships and alliances, which has helped the Agency accomplish its work, together with a summary of financial statements for the previous financial year. Copies of the report can be obtained from public libraries and it is also available to download from the Agency's website: [www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk](http://www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk)

**MISSION:** To make health a top priority for everyone in Northern Ireland

- INSIDE:**
- New look flu campaign
  - 'Getting active together'
  - Cigarette campaign evaluation
  - Training and development



**Health  
Promotion  
Agency**

## New appointments

As part of the Agency's recent recruitment drive, three new members of staff have now taken up their positions within the Agency.

### Michele Crooks - Publications Officer



Michele's role will be to develop print and electronic publications for the Agency's public information, research and training materials. Michele previously worked as Production Editor with Woodhead Publishing, Cambridge, and as an abstract writer with HW Wilson, Dublin. She holds a BA (Hons) in Psychology

and a M Phil in Publishing Studies. E-mail: m.crooks@hpani.org.uk

### Linda Giles - Publications Officer



Linda has recently taken up the post of Publications Officer with the Health Promotion Agency and will have responsibilities similar to Michele.

Her background is in newspapers, publications and television including positions as reporter at The Kerryman, sub-editor for the NewsLetter and Irish

News, editor Catering & Licensing Review, news producer UTV, production editor Lafferty Publications and launch editor for Medicine Weekly. Most recently she was editor of the Newry Democrat.

She has a BSSc in Sociology and MSSc in Irish Politics both from Queen's University Belfast.

E-mail: l.giles@hpani.org.uk

### Tony Sheridan - Communications Manager



Tony will have a key role in implementing the Agency's corporate communications strategy and will assume responsibility for the production of a range of publications. He will also be involved in the implementation and review of quality standards related to the Agency's communications procedures.

Tony holds a BA (Hons) in European Business Studies and a post-graduate qualification in Management Studies from the Ulster Business School. He has over 10 years experience in both public and private sector marketing management and holds the post-graduate diploma from the Chartered Institute of Marketing, of which he is a member. E-mail: t.sheridan@hpani.org.uk

## Drugs awareness campaign success

During February 2001 the Agency launched a drugs campaign using posters placed in the toilet or washroom areas of selected pubs and nightclubs across Northern Ireland. The campaign aimed to help reduce the level of drug-related harm in Northern Ireland among 18-30 year olds through information about the harmful effects of drugs and the concept of 'safer dancing'.

In particular, the campaign aimed to increase awareness of long-term damage to health from drug usage, the effects of specific drugs, such as speed, ecstasy and cocaine, and to raise awareness among the target group of certain 'safer dancing' concepts, including the need to look after your friends, the issue of 'date rape' drugs, rehydration and mixing alcohol and drugs.

Research was commissioned in spring 2001 to evaluate this campaign. Part of the evaluation took the form of a survey of 392 young people attending 38 poster venues in Northern Ireland.

### Awareness of Different Media Employed During Campaign

Media	% Aware
Promotional information	75%
TV	62%
Posters in toilets	57%
Information in pubs and nightclubs	38%
Leaflets in toilets	19%

### Top Four Messages Recalled (Unprompted)

1 "Don't leave drinks unattended"	67%
2 "Ecstasy can cause brain damage"	66%
3 "Mixing drugs is dangerous"	65%
4 "Don't mix drugs and alcohol"	64%

Eight out of 10 participants also agreed that posters are a good way of highlighting the dangers associated with drugs (86%) and that the posters remind people of the risks associated with drugs (88%). Locating the posters inside toilets was also seen as a very good idea (86%).

A significant number also reported changes in attitude and, when presented with some attitudinal statements related to the drug campaign, the highest level of agreement was with the statement, "More aware of the importance of looking after my friends when I'm out" (61%).

Fourteen per cent of participants also stated that their opinion of drugs had changed as a result of seeing the posters.

This evaluation has aided the development of new drugs posters which will be tested among 18-30 year olds this month before appearing in pubs and clubs later this year.

# New look for regional flu c

As reported in the previous issue of Inform, the Agency has been working on the development and implementation of a new public information campaign to support and promote the flu immunisation programme. Under the banner 'Protect yourself - catch the vaccine, not the flu', this year's theme focuses on the need for individuals to take action to protect themselves from this potentially serious illness.

The campaign aims to achieve a 60% uptake among individuals from the 'at risk' group, as well as maintain an uptake of 70% among those aged 65 years and over. This is the first time a target has been set for the 'at risk' group, which includes those with a chronic heart or chest condition such as asthma, diabetes, chronic kidney disease or lowered immunity due to disease or treatment such as steroids or cancer therapy.

Focus groups again showed that people respond well to the integrated approach that has been a strength of this campaign. Regional promotion of the campaign to raise awareness is reinforced locally by advice from GPs, a range of health service personnel, community pharmacists and voluntary organisations.

Leaflets produced to support the campaign will once again emphasise that the vaccine cannot give anyone the flu, as this was again identified as a concern among some members of the public.

The television advertisement, broadcast from 2 October, features a range of everyday measures people take in order to protect themselves, such as wearing seatbelts, cycle helmets, life jackets and gardening gloves. It will then go on to show that having the flu vaccine is an important way in which they can protect themselves and their health.

The television advertisement, broadcast on UTV and Channel 9 until 17 November, is supported by radio advertising, advertising on buses, posters and an information leaflet. The leaflets have already been distributed to GP surgeries and will be made

available from the Agency's website in Arabic, Cantonese, Irish and Urdu following the campaign launch.

## Pneumococcal vaccine available for over 65s

People in the 65+ age group who take up the invitation to have the flu vaccine this year will be encouraged by their GP or practice nurse to take the opportunity to be vaccinated against pneumococcal infection at the same time.

This vaccine, unlike the flu vaccine which is needed every year, gives protection for 10 years. One jab therefore gives long-

**Protect yourself**

**Catch the vaccine not the flu**

If you suffer from a serious medical condition\* or are aged 65 or over, it makes sense to get the flu vaccine. Make an appointment with your GP or find out if there is a flu clinic in your practice.

\*eg a chronic heart or chest condition (such as asthma), diabetes, chronic kidney disease, lowered immunity due to disease or treatment such as steroids or cancer therapy.

**Health Promotion Agency**

## 'Go walking' and cycling



An information booklet has just been produced to support the Agency's 'Go walking' campaign, which has been broadcast recently on UTV.

The booklet provides information on walking and cycling opportunities across Northern Ireland and also contains contact details of the many organisations involved in organising these activities, such as local councils, the forest service and local parks. General information on the health benefits to be gained from regular walking and cycling is also included.

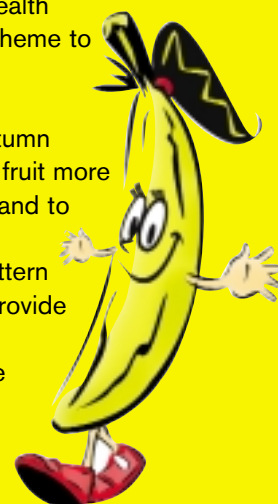
Copies of the new booklet are now available from GP surgeries, pharmacies and local councils as well as the Agency's website.

## Grape expectations for scho

The Health Promotion Agency is currently engaged with the Investing for Health team and the four Health Action Zones in the development of a scheme to provide fresh fruit to school children.

The pilot scheme, which will run from autumn 2002 to summer 2004, will aim to make fruit more accessible for Primary 1 and 2 children, and to encourage them to develop the habit of eating fruit as part of a healthy eating pattern both in school and at home. It will also provide opportunities to raise awareness of the benefits of healthy eating and to promote good food hygiene.

Schools invited to participate in the pilot



# ampaign

term protection against pneumococcal infection, which is responsible for many serious illnesses and it may cause up to half of all cases of pneumonia. It also causes a significant proportion of cases of ear and chest infection, sinusitis, meningitis and septicaemia.

The vaccine has no serious side effects and as with any vaccination, some people may have mild soreness and swelling at the site of the injection, or a slight fever afterwards.



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scheme will be selected from within the four Health Action Zones. Funding for the scheme, which will support the implementation of the new public health strategy, *Investing for Health*, has been secured by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety through the Ministerial Group on Public Health. The scheme will be launched in late October.

For further information on this initiative, contact Angela McComb, Regional Health Promotion Manager, Nutrition. E-mail: [a.mccomb@hpani.org.uk](mailto:a.mccomb@hpani.org.uk)

## Promoting Health

The latest issue of *Promoting Health - Putting children first* was published in September. The journal examines how poverty and disadvantage impact on children's health, and considers action aimed at reducing the health inequalities suffered by children from lower income families.

The issue reports on recent research into how children are affected by poverty, and explores the results of disadvantage through articles on oral health, accidents in the home, nutrition, breastfeeding and the particular difficulties experienced by Traveller communities. Key local initiatives, such as support schemes for parents and afterschool clubs, are also highlighted.

On a final note, we would like to remind readers to complete and return the insert included in issue 17, to confirm how they would prefer to receive future issues of the journal. *Promoting Health* is now also available from our website and readers can sign up to receive an e-mail alert informing them of the content of each issue as soon as it is published. To receive this alert please contact Nina Campbell. E-mail: [n.campbell@hpani.org.uk](mailto:n.campbell@hpani.org.uk)



## Protecting you and your baby

The antenatal screening leaflet *Protecting you and your baby* has just been published by the Agency on behalf of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS).

The leaflet will be used by antenatal clinics as they introduce the new DHSSPS guidelines to carry out six tests on a single sample of blood taken at the first antenatal visit. Pregnant women will now be asked to give written consent for each of these tests and the leaflet has been designed to

provide them with all the information they need to make this decision.

Antenatal clinics will be able to obtain supplies of the leaflet from the Central Health Promotion Resource Service in their local Board area. This can be timed to coincide with the introduction of the tests in their antenatal clinic. A phased introduction will commence in October 2002 in the Ulster and Antrim Area Hospitals and will include other Trusts by April 2003.

## HPA in heartfelt initiative

The Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland (HPA) and the Northern Ireland Chest, Heart and Stroke Association (NICHSA) recently joined forces to raise awareness of 'Young At Heart', an initiative coordinated by the National Heart Forum (NHF).

On 1 October, Dr Brian Gaffney, Chief Executive HPA, and Andrew Dougal, Chief Executive, NICHSA, together with representatives from the NHF, met with policy and decision makers from the Health Service and education sector at Stormont to discuss the recommendations of 'Young at Heart'.

The initiative aims to combat coronary heart disease (CHD), which claims more lives than any other illness in Northern Ireland, by ensuring that every child born in the UK in this millennium can expect to be free of CHD until at least the age of 65.

On 2 October a further meeting was held with members of the Health and Education

Committees of the Northern Ireland Assembly in an effort to seek their backing of the initiative. The group also hopes to meet with the Chief Medical Officer and the Chief Inspector of Schools in the near future.

The Young at Heart framework, *Towards a generation free from coronary heart disease, Policy action for children's and young people's health and wellbeing*, sets out proposals for a national plan for children's and young people's health and wellbeing, with a particular focus on coronary heart disease prevention. The report also calls for the development of comprehensive national strategies to improve nutrition, increase physical activity and tackle smoking among children and young people.

Copies of the report can be obtained by contacting Dorothy Brown at the Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke Association, e-mail: [dbrown@nichsa.com](mailto:dbrown@nichsa.com) or by visiting the National Heart Forum website: [www.heartforum.org.uk/young2.html](http://www.heartforum.org.uk/young2.html)

# 'Every cigarette is doing you damage' campaign surveyed

Prior to the launch of the campaign 'Every cigarette is doing you damage' in January 2002, the Agency designed and commissioned a telephone survey to assess the attitudes, knowledge and health beliefs of adults in relation to smoking and to assess smokers' quitting intentions and quitting activity.

In order to assess any changes in attitude, knowledge or behaviour and to assess respondents' awareness levels, the survey was repeated in April 2002.

	Total Surveyed	Regular Smokers
Pre-campaign	1,209	639
Post-campaign (April 2002)	1,286	709

## Awareness of health advertising

Among those who were aware of any health advertising via TV, radio or newspaper (74% pre campaign and 85% post campaign), those who recalled, unprompted, advertising about smoking increased significantly from 32% to 70%.

## Awareness of campaign advertising

Descriptions of the 'Artery' advertisement and the two separate advertisements aimed specifically at men and women which promoted nicotine replacement therapies and the smokers' helpline were read to respondents.

Among those respondents aware of health advertising:

- 94% recognised the 'Artery' advertisement,
- 70% recognised the female support advertisement, and
- 62% recognised the male support advertisement.

## Changes in health beliefs

During both surveys, participants were asked, "In your opinion are there any illnesses caused by smoking?" Following the campaign, the number of respondents who answered "yes" to this question rose from 90% to 94%.

## Knowledge of illnesses and risks associated with smoking

The largest increase in respondents' knowledge related to artery illnesses or damage to arteries, 7% rising to 14%. The second largest increase related to heart disease or heart problems, with the figure rising from 42% to 50%.

Agreement with the statement 'smoking blocks up arteries with fatty deposits' rose from 77% to 92% and when asked specifically 'if every cigarette is doing you damage', agreement increased from 83% to 87%.

## Health effects of smoking

When asked what would have the most impact on their thinking about smoking, decay in the lungs was the item that the majority of smokers (54%) and recent quitters thought about most, followed by 21% who thought about blocked arteries.

## Impact of advertising

Fifty eight per cent of smokers said the advertising campaign made them more likely to quit with 41% saying it made no difference. Among recent ex-smokers, more than two thirds (67%) said that it helped them stay off cigarettes, while 32% said it had no effect.

# Phase two - focus on strokes

A second phase in the adult anti-smoking campaign *Every cigarette is doing you damage* is planned for January and February 2003.

The second phase of the campaign will focus on the link between smoking and strokes. Research commissioned by the Agency indicated that while smokers are aware of the link between smoking and lung cancer there was a low level of awareness of the link between smoking and other health effects such as strokes.

Support available to smokers will also be highlighted as part of this campaign with a rerun of the nicotine replacement therapy advertisements developed and broadcast in phase one. A new television advertisement promoting the smokers' helpline is being developed and will also be broadcast as part of phase two.

Printed resource materials will also be produced as part of this campaign including materials to promote the smokers' helpline which the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety is commissioning for Northern Ireland.

# 'Getting active' at first all-island conference



Plans for the first all-island physical activity conference, 'Getting active together!', which takes place on 27-28 November, are well underway.

The preliminary programme has been designed to appeal to the wide range of people who play an active role in developing or supporting initiatives which increase opportunities for physical activity.

During the conference, delegates will learn of the latest models and approaches aimed at reducing inactivity, together with examples of good practice. The role of partnership working will also be examined to show how all sectors can work together to enhance the development, delivery and evaluation of future programmes.

The conference will also facilitate a discussion on practical solutions to issues or concerns related to physical activity and provide delegates with an opportunity to put forward recommendations to help shape future planning throughout the island of Ireland.

Approximately 200 delegates are expected to attend the conference. All application forms should be returned to the Health Promotion Agency before Friday 25 October; early booking is advised.

For information on specific areas of the Agency's work contact:

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**Training and Professional Development** - Máire Campbell  
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## Training and professional development



A number of training events have now been developed to meet the needs of a range of professionals who work to promote health across Northern Ireland. The events have been designed to address key issues such as mental health, physical activity and general communication skills for promoting health.

A series of flyers will be distributed shortly to promote the training events for October to December 2002 and will be sent to all organisations and groups involved in promoting health. Information on these training events as well as an online booking facility can now be accessed from our website.

For assistance with your application, please contact Mary Patterson.  
E-mail: m.patterson@hpani.org.uk

Upcoming training events:

- **Positive partnerships**  
14 October
- **Stress management**  
28, 29 October
- **Good advice giving for positive behaviour change**  
4, 5 November and 2, 3 December
- **Boy to man: survival skills!**  
21 November
- **Getting active together!**  
(All-island physical activity conference)  
27, 28 November

For further information on the Agency's training and professional development programme, please contact Máire Campbell, Regional Health Promotion Manager, Training and Professional Development.  
E-mail: m.campbell@hpani.org.uk

## www.drugsprevention.net

The Agency's successful drug information website [www.drugsprevention.net](http://www.drugsprevention.net) which has secured funding for its continued development from the Drug and Alcohol Strategy Team, is being extended to include information on alcohol.

Similar information regarding alcohol, its use and misuse and work to prevent alcohol

abuse in Northern Ireland is being collated, and it is intended to start putting the new information online later this year. The amended site will be given a new domain name to reflect the changes envisaged.

For more information on this contact: Deborah Hunter, Project Officer, drugs website. E-mail: d.hunter@hpani.org.uk



**Inform** is published bi-monthly by the Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland to provide information on current areas of work involving the Agency.

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[www.drugsprevention.net](http://www.drugsprevention.net)  
[www.smoke-free.co.uk](http://www.smoke-free.co.uk)  
[www.up-2-you.net](http://www.up-2-you.net)

## Web are we now?

[www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk](http://www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk) - The latest issue of *Promoting Health* is now available to download from our corporate website. This issue, on the theme of 'Putting children first', looks at the inequalities that children face in reaching their full potential, both mentally and physically.

Also online is the recently launched Health Promotion Agency *Annual report 2001-2002*, launched on 24 September and is available as a PDF from the HPA website. The report highlights a successful year with the positive outcome of the Agency's second five-year review. *Volatile Substance Abuse: A professional's guide* is also available online as a PDF. Work is still continuing on the Agency's new website which will prove to be a useful tool for health professionals, students and the general public.

Other web initiatives currently underway include a website which will support the pilot project 'Fresh fruit in schools', by providing backup information and support materials for teachers in participating schools.

The website [www.getalifegetactive.com](http://www.getalifegetactive.com) will include all the relevant information for this year's Physical Activity conference taking place on 27-28 November 2002 in the Canal Court Hotel, Newry. The preliminary programme is now available online and includes an application form that can be downloaded. After the conference, presentations will be made available on the website for anyone who was unable to attend.