

Inform

Issue 26

December 2002/January 2003

Seasons Greetings

The end of a year is a time for looking back as well as looking forward, so it presents an opportunity to thank everyone who has worked with us over the past 12 months.

We appreciate and acknowledge the good working relationships we have with many of you. These contribute much to making significant progress in reaching our shared aim of improving health for everyone in Northern Ireland.

The Chair, members of the Board, Chief Executive and staff wish you a very happy Christmas and good health in the New Year.

Kids go bananas for Snack Pack

The Snack Pack, a major *Investing for Health* initiative, was officially launched by the Chief Medical Officer, Dr Henrietta Campbell, in The Long Gallery, Parliament Buildings, on 21 October. The high-profile launch was attended by around 70 children representing several schools which will be participating in the scheme. Guests also included principals, teachers and representatives from the Health Action Zones.



The Snack Pack are cartoon characters used in the two year pilot initiative to provide a free piece of fresh fruit each school day to all children in Primary 1 and 2 classes in over 80 targeted schools in Health Action Zones. The Fresh Fruit in Schools scheme



will be managed locally by the four Health Action Zones. The HPA developed and published the printed resources and promotional items, contributed to the regional launch and is undertaking a major evaluation of the scheme.

Enjoying their fresh fruit at the launch of the initiative are, from left, Levi Glover and Marina Kilpatrick from Edenbrooke Primary School, Shankill Road, Belfast.

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

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 - Mind your head



**Health
Promotion
Agency**

New appointments

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

Stephen Cousins - Web Developer



Stephen is our new Web Developer. He will be responsible for increasing the range, scope and quality of the Agency's websites focusing on specific issues such as drugs, alcohol and smoking. He will also be developing a corporate intranet system and providing advice on the continuing development of electronic

communication within the Agency. Stephen holds a BSc (Hons) in Computing from Portsmouth University.

Health Development Officers

The Agency has appointed three new Health Development Officers. All officers will be responsible for supporting the implementation plans of the Agency in relation to a range of regional health strategies. They will also set up, maintain and develop relevant databases of information for a number of outputs including publications, websites and briefs to enable effective and efficient planning of Agency activities.

Deborah Hunter



Deborah is responsible for producing and providing information for the drugs and alcohol website. A graduate from Queen Margaret's College Edinburgh, she holds a BSc (Hons) in Social Science specialising in health promotion.

Julie Hill



Julie has also joined the Agency as Health Development Officer. Previously Deputy Manager with Action Mental Health, Julie has a BSc (Hons) in Psychology from Queen's University Belfast and a certificate in Management from the Institute of Management, Belfast.

Dympna McKay



Dympna was previously a Programme Manager with Springboard, a cross-community organisation. She holds a BSc (Hons) in Social Anthropology, an MSc in Information Management from Queen's University Belfast and a diploma in Health Promotion from the University of Ulster.

Public Health Forum plan for Cardiff

The UKPHA's 11th annual Public Health Forum will be held at the Cardiff International Arena and Convention Centre, Wales, on 18-20 March 2003. The forum is the largest multi-disciplinary event of its kind in the UK and is developed and promoted in association with over 30 other organisations involved in public health.

The event comprises plenary sessions each day with key speakers, seminars, parallel sessions and a poster exhibition. It also provides opportunities for all organisations with an interest in public health to exhibit and/or organise sessions and fringe events.

This year the forum will address issues around the theme of Improving Public Health and Wellbeing: Building National and Local Capacities, covering the latest developments in policies and practice. Keynote sessions include an opening address by Jane Hutt, Minister for Health and Social Services, Welsh Assembly Government.

Seminars include:

- Physical activity: today's best buy in public health
- The challenge for public health of evidence based practice
- Inequalities and local strategies: releasing the NGO potential
- Rural health: addressing the issues
- Urban health issues

Parallel topics include:

- Measuring inequality and tackling inequalities
- Ethnic and minority health
- Primary care and public health
- Developing the public health workforce
- Strategic partnerships
- The role of local authorities
- Community development and planning
- Researching public health

For a programme and a registration form, or for further details, contact Hampton Medical Conferences. Tel: 020 8977 0011, e-mail: ukpha1@hamptonmedical.com

Promoting Health puts the spotlight on cancer

The December issue of *Promoting Health* looks at the subject of cancer, particularly cancer prevention. One in every three people in Northern Ireland will be diagnosed with cancer at some stage in their lives. Around 8,700 new cases of cancer are diagnosed here every year, and one in five die as a result. There are articles on cancer and prevention, genetics, programmes from a world-wide through to a local perspective, a focus on research, equality issues, and the environment. The Sellafeld argument, the recent local cancer conference and the voluntary sector are also featured.

The circulation of *Promoting Health* has continued to grow this year and in an effort to keep costs down, we have made it available on our website as a PDF. If you have been receiving a printed copy of the journal and would prefer to get it from the web, you can register for an email alert for each new issue by completing the form distributed with the December issue. Please also complete and return the form if you wish to continue to receive a printed copy.

Keeping abreast of mothers and babies



The HPA has just produced the first issue of *Keeping abreast*, a twice yearly newsletter published on behalf of the Northern Ireland Breastfeeding Strategy Implementation Group. This newsletter is intended to help keep all those involved in working with mothers and babies up to date with progress towards achieving the aims of the Northern Ireland Breastfeeding Strategy.

This issue introduces the strategy, its aims and objectives and some of the people involved in helping to implement it. It reports on the first regional breastfeeding conference and outlines recent research into breastfeeding, including the findings of the 2000 Infant Feeding Survey, the latest in a series of surveys carried out every five years in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

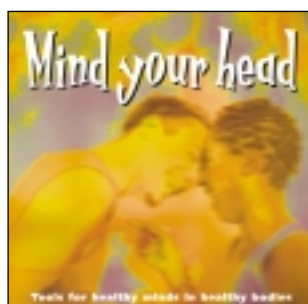
The newsletter also highlights the initiatives which took place to support National Breastfeeding Awareness Week in 2002, and provides details of forthcoming conferences and seminars on breastfeeding. *Keeping abreast* has been distributed to a wide range of people working with mothers and babies in Northern Ireland and is also available as a PDF from our website.

Students are advised to 'Mind your head'

The HPA, in partnership with NUS-USI, has recently published a guide for students, *Mind your head*, that aims to help them combat stress and mental health problems. The booklet offers tips on how to maintain mental and emotional wellbeing and avoid stress at a time of instability.

The focus is on the importance of good relationships, self-esteem and communication skills as factors which affect student mental health. It also contains a comprehensive contact list of helpful local organisations and websites. There is also an accompanying support guide for parents, tutors and student advisers.

These two resources were launched to an invited audience on Friday, 6 December, at the Holiday Inn, Ormeau Avenue, at which the keynote speaker was Dr Peter Gallagher, consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist.



Copies of these resources can be obtained from NUS-USI, 29 Bedford Street, Belfast BT2 7EJ. Tel: 028 9024 4641.

AIDS - it hasn't gone away

A new sexual health poster has been designed specifically to encourage people to not be complacent about HIV/AIDS and to promote awareness of World AIDS Day, which falls annually on 1 December. This poster forms part of an information campaign promoting safer sexual health launched earlier this year.



The posters have been placed on the back of toilet doors in pubs and clubs throughout Northern Ireland in selected venues which are popular with the 18-30 age group.

The poster for World AIDS Day also promotes the services and contact numbers of the various GUM clinics for anyone who is concerned about their sexual health.

Breast screening material gets a makeover

The HPA is revising the literature (leaflets and letters) used to support the Northern Ireland breast screening programme, following a review by a working group chaired by the DHSSPS. The information material targets all women aged 50-64, inviting them for breast screening and notifying them subsequently of the result of their mammogram.

The review highlighted the need for informed consent by women to the breast screening procedure, the development of two additional leaflets to be sent to women depending on the result of their mammogram, and revision of the letters mailed to women in the

target group. Revision of the material is underway and this comprises four letters and three leaflets:

- *Breast screening: Your early warning system;*
- *Breast screening: What to expect at your second visit;*
- *Breast awareness: Looking out for changes.*

Using focus groups drawn from each of the four HSS Board areas, we have pre-tested two of the leaflets and two letters that will accompany them, to gauge the effectiveness of the changes. Final production of the material is due early in the New Year.

Research highlights drinking patterns

A report on quantitative research into the drinking trends of adults in Northern Ireland is being published by the HPA. The report - commissioned by the Agency - is the first major research into alcohol consumption here since 1990, and it reveals not only how people drink but also how much they drink.

The research is supportive of the Government's Drugs and Alcohol Strategy implementation model. The greater understanding of our local drinking culture provided by the research will ensure that future health promotion initiatives on alcohol are appropriately targeted.

The research shows that, of those who completed a seven day drinking diary, 37% of men and 20% of women are drinking more than the Government recommendations for low risk drinking, and more than half of young males drink to excess.

A substantial proportion of Northern Ireland drinkers, especially those aged 18-29 years, concentrate their drinking into one or two heavy drinking sessions at the weekend, often on a Saturday night. This pattern of drinking is particularly concerning as independent research shows that this is more likely to cause harm than if the same amount of alcohol was consumed over several drinking occasions throughout the week. The report also examines how factors such as age, sex, socioeconomic status and income affect drinking behaviour, as well as looking at where we drink and with whom we drink. It also explores how people perceive their own drinking habits and how these perceptions compare with the reality.

A PDF of the report will be available to download from our website.

New appointments to the Agency board

Mrs Janet Leckey



Mrs Leckey lives in Newtownabbey and since 1995 has been a research fellow in educational development at the University of Ulster. In 1997 she was appointed a lay panel member in the Family Proceedings and Youth Courts. She is also actively involved with CRUSE bereavement care.

Mrs Valerie Owens OBE



Mrs Owens lives in Belfast and is practice development manager with the Probation Board, for whom she has worked for the past 30 years. She has worked in inner city neighbourhoods and has been involved in intermediate treatment programmes with young offenders.

Ms Gemma Harkin



Ms Harkin lives in Londonderry and has over 20 years' experience in social welfare, housing and disability, with particular reference to service users. Since 1996 she has been a director (community sector) with the City Partnership Board Derry/Londonderry.

CINDI Winter School features New Public Health

The CINDI (Countrywide Integrated Noncommunicable Disease Intervention) programme aims to prevent non communicable diseases such as heart disease, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes and to promote the health of people within its member countries. At present 28 countries participate in the programme which is coordinated by the World Health Organization in Copenhagen. The Health Promotion Agency coordinates CINDI programme work in Northern Ireland.

The 5th CINDI Winter School will be held in Finland on 20-24 January 2003. Entitled New Public Health: Theory and Practice, the programme comprises an intensive, high level

training seminar and is aimed at anyone involved in the planning, implementation or evaluation of national, regional or local programmes in the field of non-communicable disease prevention and health promotion. Dr Brian Gaffney, Chief Executive of the Agency, is a member of the CINDI faculty and will be teaching at several sessions.

For further information on the winter school, please contact Prof Aulikki Nissinen (Tel: 00-358-9-4744 8336), Dr Tiina Laatikainen (Tel: 00-358-9-4744 8936) or Ms Elina Hirvikallio (Tel: 00-358-9-4744 8628) or alternatively fax: 00-358-9-4744 8338.

WHO report highlights European state of health

The latest *European Health Report* responds to the statutory requirement to provide the EU member states with essential public health information. It gives a broad concise picture of the health status and health determinants in the region, and identifies areas for public health action for the member states and the European public health community.

Three of the main contributors are from the UK and include the HPA's Dr Brian Gaffney, W Philip T James CBE (International Obesity Task Force), and Sir Michael Marmot (University of

London). The report focuses on evidence useful for decision-makers in public health and helps to summarise and feed back to member states the information collated during the Regional Office's work with member states. This covers key topics and issues in public health in Europe, in the context of the values and principles of the World Health Organization.

Copies of the report may be obtained from WHO Regional Office for Europe, Copenhagen, or visit: www.who.dk/eprise/main/who/progs/ehr/home

Update on training events

Four training events have taken place since the last issue of **Inform**. These were Positive Partnerships, Stress Management and Cook it! All were very well attended and the evaluations will be posted on the web shortly. The fourth event, Good Advice-Giving for Positive Behaviour Change, commenced with a two day introduction on 4-5 November and continued on 2-3 December.

A one day seminar, Boy to Man: Survival Skills!, took place on 21 November. This was aimed at those working to promote health in young men and details of the event are on our website.

Plans for future training events include training on writing a research brief, as well as professional updating for drugs and alcohol. Also, due to over-subscription for events to date, we are planning repeats for some and details will be confirmed at a later date.

Details about any of the training events can be obtained from Máire Campbell, Regional Health Promotion Manager (Training and Professional Development), e-mail: m.campbell@hpani.org.uk

Health Promoting Schools initiative receives funding



The HPA is a member of a partnership which involves the long established Health and Education Liaison Group (HELG) which brings together the five Education and Library Boards, health promotion representatives from each of the Health and Social Services Board areas, and representatives of the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools

(CCMS) and the Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA).

This partnership has received funding for a two year period to establish an initiative which seeks to further the development of Health Promoting Schools in Northern Ireland. The initiative aims to enable schools to provide an environment where the physical and mental wellbeing, health and safety of staff and pupils are supported in partnership with family, community and external agencies.

To take forward development, support and expertise, a coordinator will work with each Education and Library Board area, supported by a local management group. The whole school is involved in the process and the initiative aims to involve 10% of schools over the funding period.

Further information is available from Linda Barclay at the HPA. Tel: 028 9031 1611.

Supporting schools in developing RSE policy

In partnership with fpaNI (previously the Family Planning Association, Northern Ireland), the HPA received funding under the Myths and Reality: Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood initiative from DHSSPS to develop support materials for post-primary teachers. These are aimed at helping teachers to implement and/or review their policy on Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in support of the Department of Education guidelines.

A resource for schools, *The Fairy Godfather*, has been produced with the help of teachers. This is currently being disseminated through training for teachers which, with further funding from DHSSPS, is free to participating schools. The first training course is being provided for 50 teachers in the Western Education and Library Board area.

The training workshops help teachers to examine the values and culture of their school, the consultative process for informing and developing policy, the main issues within a policy framework and the implementation process, including consideration of teaching methods, evaluation and monitoring.

Further information about this initiative is available from fpaNI, 113 University Street, Belfast BT7 1HP. Tel: 028 9032 5488.

We help to *Dish it Up!*

The HPA is pleased to have been a member of a Steering Group to guide the development of *Dish it Up*, an interactive CD-ROM for use with children aged 11-12 years.

Dish it Up aims to foster positive attitudes to healthy eating and a healthy lifestyle in general. Based on a virtual day, the activities encourage young people to think for themselves and to look critically at their attitudes and lifestyle choices.

The development of the CD-ROM was coordinated by the University of Ulster, with funding from the Food Standards Agency. Copies of the CD-ROM have been distributed to all post-primary schools in Northern Ireland.

A copy of the *Dish it Up* CD-ROM can be requested from the Food Standards Agency at 0845 6060667.

Learning to *Cook it!*

Thirty delegates representing a wide range of voluntary and statutory organisations, including Sure Start, Action Cancer, First Key and after care practitioners, attended a two day training workshop on 29-30 October. The intensive event equips delegates with the necessary knowledge and skills to use the *Cook it!* programme.

Cook it! is a community-based nutrition education programme which is delivered in six weekly sessions by trained facilitators. It aims to increase knowledge and understanding of key nutritional messages, demonstrate how these can be translated into enjoyable, inexpensive meals suitable for the whole family, and also increase participants' cooking skills.

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

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www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk
www.drugsprevention.net
www.up-2-you.net
www.getalifegetactive.com

It's up to You to tune in to broadcasts

In 1992 the HPA worked with BBC NI Education in the development of a health and social education series of radio broadcasts for Primary 4 and Primary 5 pupils. These were so well received by teachers and pupils alike that this series is being repeated in 2003 and is once again being supported by the Agency.

It's up to You aims to promote positive attitudes towards a healthy lifestyle by focusing on both health and social issues relevant to seven and eight year olds. It will:

- assist pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding of their own physical, mental and social development;
- encourage an awareness of their personal responsibility in caring for their own bodies;
- help them to consider how they feel about themselves, and their attitude and behaviour towards others.

The broadcasts take the form of a lively story following the everyday activities of four children. They are designed to motivate rather than be loaded down with heavy facts and moral lessons, and allow children to distinguish between various forms of

behaviour. A large number of both health and social issues are built into each story, and some will be discussed in the follow-up talk between the presenters. It is anticipated that this will lead naturally to class discussion after the programmes, and allow teachers to focus on issues which are particularly applicable to their class.

Among the topics addressed are:

- the affect on the body of exertion
- personal endeavour
- playing safely (dangerous environments)
- germs and x-rays
- telling the truth
- friendship and conflict
- attitudes to disability
- healthy eating linked to physical fitness
- attitudes to older people
- vandalism
- changing relationships and circumstances

Broadcast weekly from 14 January 2003 at 11.40am on BBC Radio Ulster. A BBC website supporting this and other local education programmes can be found at www.bbc.co.uk/ni/education
For further information, Tel: 028 9033 8437/028 9042 5665.

Design for Living conference

The Design for Living Partnership plans to hold another conference on 29 January 2003 at Glenavna House Hotel, Newtownabbey. It will be aimed at practitioners who work with or for young people, and will focus on the importance of good relationships and communication skills and how these impact on the mental health of young people. Two resources will be launched at the conference - a small booklet for young people and a practitioner's guide that will provide advice and information on issues and concerns that affect young people. Conference flyers and booking forms are being distributed by Action Mental Health.

Web are we now?

For some time the HPA has been redeveloping the content and structure of its corporate website www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk The new website, which has just gone online this month, has been designed to address the many enquiries we receive about the work that we do and the resources we produce.

The site provides comprehensive information on each of the Agency's programmes of work. From alcohol to nutrition, right through to training and professional development, visitors are presented with information on the broad range of business activities involved in each programme, eg public information campaigns, press releases, training events, research and many others.

Resources form a major part of the site and many more of our publications including research reports, booklets etc have been added to the site, together with information on where they can be found and how they can be downloaded. Details and links to many relevant strategies and consultation documents are also available. It is hoped that the new website will provide a useful tool for health and education professionals, students and members of the general public.

Work has also been ongoing on our young people's website www.up-2-you.net The latest update includes a mix of entertainment news and health information for young people including news and reviews on the latest computer games, music and movies as well as a testing quiz on alcohol.