

# Inform

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## Research endorses the power of brisk walking



The HPA has invested in further promotion of its 'Go walking' campaign with a rerun of its television advertisements to encourage more people to take steps towards increasing

physical activity by taking up brisk walking.

The 'Go walking' campaign, funded by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety through the NI Physical Activity Strategy, is based on a consensus of national and international research.

The most recent and detailed studies reveal that brisk walking on most days of the week can halve a person's risk of developing coronary heart disease and it is now known to prevent other serious health problems including osteoporosis, high blood pressure, obesity and Type II diabetes. Recent research shows that walking is also an ideal way to control weight and maintain weight loss.

Dr Brian Gaffney, Agency Chief Executive, said: "This campaign is aimed at the 70% of our population who take little or no exercise. Brisk walking for 30 minutes on most days of the week is a realistic and achievable way for these people to improve their physical and mental health.

"Health organisations and experts throughout the world recognise that the greatest increase in health benefit comes to inactive people who start to take regular moderate exercise, such as brisk walking. It is important to remember that while more vigorous activity may provide increased protection against some problems such as heart disease, a little activity is always better than none."

The rhythm of the TV advertising jingle reflects the pace that brisk walkers should work up to, but everyone can start off at their own pace. Evaluation of the campaign shows that it has become increasingly effective in encouraging people to increase their physical activity since it was launched in 1999.

Examples of research on which the 'Go walking' campaign guidelines are based include:

- MacAuley et al. The Northern Ireland Health and Activity Survey. Belfast: HMSO, 1994.
- British Heart Foundation Statistics Database 2000. Annual compendium: 2000 edition.
- Berlin JA and Colditz GA. A meta-analysis of physical activity in the prevention of CHD. *American Journal of Epidemiology* 1990; 132: 612-628.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American College of Sports Medicine. Physical activity and public health - A Recommendation from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American College of Sports Medicine. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 1995; 273: 402-407.

Each phase of the 'Go walking' campaign has been evaluated and results are reported in: *Research and Analysis of Physical Activity Information in Northern Ireland* (unpublished).

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

- INSIDE:**
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  - Hib campaign
  - Concern at tolerance for smoking
  - Healthy Cities conference



**Health  
Promotion  
Agency**

## New appointments

As part of the Agency's continued expansion, three new members of staff have now taken up their positions with us.



### Gillian Gilmore

Gillian Gilmore has joined the Agency as a Research Officer. Previously she worked in course developmental research and nutritional immunology at the University of Ulster Coleraine. She holds a BSc in Biomedical Science and is currently completing her PhD in Nutrition.



### Lesley Mailey

Lesley Mailey has joined the Agency on a six-month contract as Support Services Administrator. Previously she worked for the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland (formerly Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust). She holds a BSc (Hons) in Sociology from the University of Ulster Jordanstown, certificate in Community Development

from the Ulster People's College and certificate in Management Practices from the University of Ulster.



### Adam McCune

Adam McCune has joined the Agency as Web Development Assistant. Previously he worked in the areas of web development and electronic publishing for organisations such as Childlink Information Service, The Stationery Office and the Northern Ireland Assembly. Adam is currently completing a BSc in Computer Science.



### David Porter

David Porter has joined the Agency as Health Promoting Schools Coordinator. He will have a key role in coordinating and developing the new Regional Health Promoting Schools Initiative. A former teacher in post-primary and further education in the NEELB area, David moved into health promotion in 1996 with Homefirst Community Trust

in the NHSSB area. He holds a BSc in Combined Sciences, post-graduate certificate in Education and post-graduate diploma in Health Promotion.



### Stephen Wilson

Stephen Wilson has joined the Agency in the newly-created post of Senior Manager - Planning and Coordination. He spent the past 11 years working on Policy and Programme Development with the Sports Council for Northern Ireland after having worked in local government in Scotland. Stephen holds a BSc (Hons) in Geography and

an MSc in Recreation Management.

## Health Promoting Schools on the move

The HPA is taking a leading role in an exciting new regional initiative, Health Promoting Schools: An Investing for Health Partnership.

Funded through the Investing for Health strategy, 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.

Initially 10% of nursery, special, primary and post-primary schools have been targeted throughout Northern Ireland. They will be supported through the process by a regional coordinator and five local coordinators, one from each of the Education and Library Board areas. Also crucial to the success of the initiative will be the establishment of regional and local networks and partnerships to support the needs of the coordinators and participating schools.

Already 180 schools are on the 'move' and it is hoped that in conjunction with a proposed new curriculum, the initiative will be the vehicle to embed the Health Promoting Schools concept into the development plans of all our schools in Northern Ireland. For further information on this initiative, contact David Porter at the Agency on 028 9031 1611.

## Breastfeeding conference an outstanding success

The second regional breastfeeding conference organised by the HPA in association with the Breastfeeding Strategy Implementation Group took place on 13 May in Armagh City Hotel.

Approximately 250 delegates attended what proved to be an excellent day for all involved in promoting and supporting breastfeeding.

The keynote speaker was Professor Mary Renfrew, who spoke on promoting breastfeeding in areas of social deprivation and helping to reduce the risks of formula feeding. Other speakers included Dr Helen Ball on breastfeeding, bedsharing and infant sleep, Sue Ashmore on avoiding unnecessary supplements, and Dr Mary Hepburn on supporting drug users to breastfeed.

Local projects were presented by Jacqueline Morton, Down and

Lisburn Trust, Margaret Boyle and Mary Conway of Causeway Trust, Ann McCrea, Sperrin and Lakeland Trust, and Vera Kelso, Armagh and South Tyrone.



Nicola Anderson at the launch of the breastfeeding conference. Also pictured is Janet Calvert, Regional Breastfeeding Programme Coordinator at the Health Promotion Agency.

# Campaign to deliver extra dose of Hib vaccine

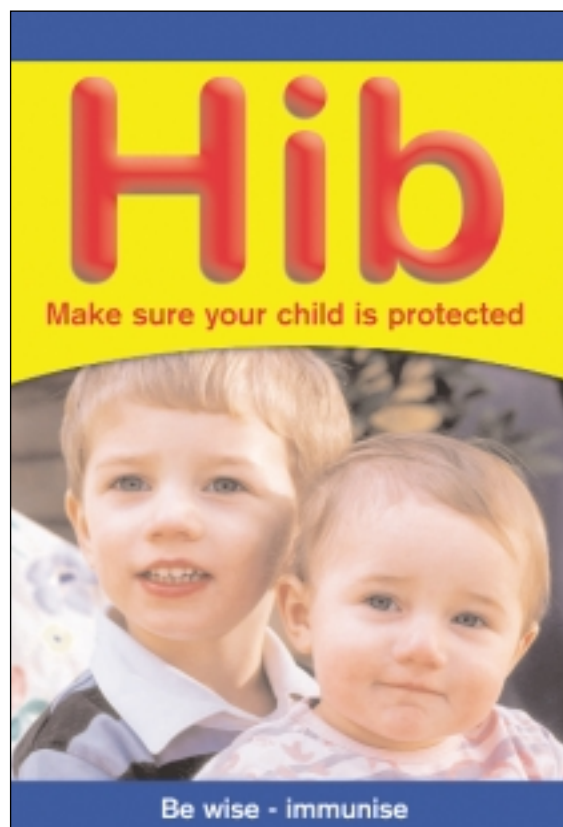
Dr Henrietta Campbell, Chief Medical Officer, launched a campaign on 12 May to offer all children here aged six months to four years an extra dose of the Hib vaccine. This is required to enhance the immunity of children in this age group against Hib infection.

Hib is an infection that can cause serious illness in young children, including meningitis, painful joints, pneumonia and epiglottitis (swelling of the throat, leading to a severe blockage of the airway). Hib leads to death in 1 in 20 cases.

The campaign to deliver an additional dose of the vaccine will ensure more complete protection against the serious risks to young children's health caused by Hib. It will take around four months to complete.

The Agency has provided support for this campaign through the production of a range of information materials for professionals and the public. Leaflets will be distributed via the Child Health System to parents of those in the target age group with their invitation to attend their local health centre for vaccination. Health visitors and GP practices will also help distribute information to the public.

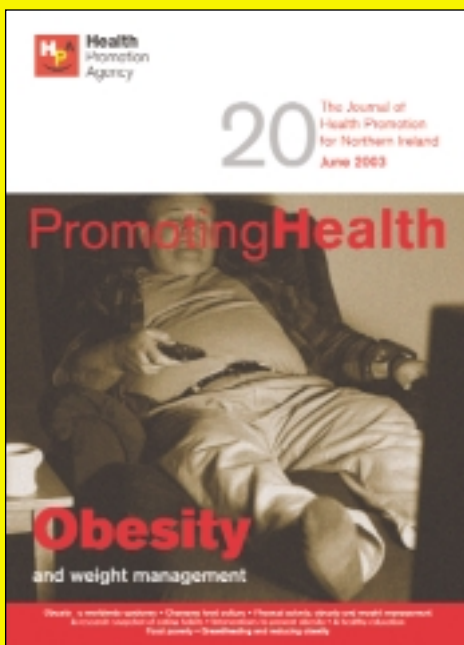
An information pack has also been produced for professionals. This includes a letter from the Chief Medical Officer and Chief Nursing Officer, a copy of the leaflet for parents, an A3 poster, a factsheet on Hib and a factsheet on the DTwP primary immunisations.



## Promoting Health adds weight to debate

Across the world in almost all countries, developed and developing alike, obesity has reached epidemic proportions with more than one billion adults overweight. In Northern Ireland this epidemic is also gathering pace with surveys indicating that more than half of our adults are overweight and almost one in five obese.

The June 2003 edition of *Promoting Health* looks at the issues of overweight and obesity, the major causes, the resulting risks to health and the economic costs.



The changing food culture and ways of preventing overweight through schools initiatives and physical activity are also reported on. The benefits of breastfeeding and how policy can help stem the rising tide of obesity also feature.

## Don't be SHI about positive sexual health

Since the 1990s, through the Contraception Education Service, HPA in collaboration with fpaNI (Family Planning Association Northern Ireland) has worked towards making sexual health information accessible to the general public, community workers, and health, education and social services professionals.

The tendency to interpret sexual health within the narrow parameters of preventing pregnancy and/or infection has been replaced by the notion that good personal and sexual relationships can promote physical and mental wellbeing. This more-encompassing definition will be incorporated in the *Northern Ireland Sexual Health Strategy* being drawn up by DHSSPS.

To more accurately reflect the wide range of information provided by the Contraception Education Service, the service will be renamed Sexual Health Information (SHI). In the next year SHI will continue to provide the latest local and national medical and social data on all aspects of sexual health through its telephone helpline; free leaflets; publications for professionals including a quarterly newsletter and a series of factsheets; and promoting positive sexual health in consumer print and broadcast media.

For further information, contact fpaNI's helpline on 028 9032 5488 or 028 7126 0016. The factsheets are also available on HPA's web site [www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk](http://www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk)

## Agency concern at tolerance for smoking

The HPA has expressed concern at the decision of the Royal Victoria Hospital to build seven rooms in the hospital for smokers.

Dr Brian Gaffney, Agency Chief Executive, highlighted the widespread dismay at this step: "The Royal Victoria Hospital deservedly has a world-wide reputation for excellence in health care. The hospital's decision to build rooms to facilitate smoking, for the minority of the population who smoke, has therefore caused shock among those who have been working to send out a clear message that smoking is one of the biggest threats to our health.

"To have a top hospital feel that it must accommodate this habit rather than support people in giving up smoking undermines the excellent work of other newer, local hospitals, which have taken a clear stand against allowing smoking in any of their buildings."

He said that colleagues across Europe - and as far away as Australia, Canada and America - were appalled by what they regard as a backward step, as the dangers of smoking to smokers and others, through passive smoking, had been well documented.

"The Agency and its partner organisations are working hard to encourage smokers to stop smoking and have provided a range of information and support to ensure that everything possible is done to help people stop. Feedback has shown that many people are responding to this message but mixed messages will undermine progress that has been made."

Dr Gaffney urged Board members at the hospital to reconsider their decision. He stressed that the RVH was in a prime position to demonstrate how a hospital can promote good health as well as treat and care for those who are ill.

## Breastfeeding research produced as report

*Breastfeeding in Northern Ireland - A summary report on knowledge, attitudes and behaviour* has been produced by the HPA.

This presents the findings of quantitative and qualitative research into breastfeeding in Northern Ireland. It explores the level of knowledge existing in Northern Ireland about the health benefits of breastfeeding and how this and other factors influence mothers in deciding how to feed their baby. It also examines the attitudes of the general public towards breastfeeding.

The results of this research have been used to inform the development of a regional public information campaign promoting breastfeeding. The report is being distributed to relevant health professionals and a pdf of the publication will also be available from the Agency website.



Thumbs up for the Belfast Marathon from the Agency participants, back from left, Michele Crooks, Linda Giles, Arthur McVeigh, Patricia Lavery, Dympna McKay, Adam McCune and Catherine Brown; front from left, Kevin Doherty, Lynn Black and Chief Executive Dr Brian Gaffney.

## Agency staff 'pound' the streets for charity

Ten members of staff did their bit for health promotion by running in the relay event of Belfast City Marathon under the HPA banner. The Agency entered two teams with each person running five-mile legs of a circuitous and challenging route around the city streets. Grand Parade/North Road in particular was no easy 'feet'!

Leading the posse was our Chief Executive Dr Brian Gaffney who set a blistering pace to give his team a finishing time of 4:19:09. Our other team came in at 4:39:43. A great effort on the day by our fit and faithful. As well as raising fitness levels, team members also raised hundreds of pounds for the official marathon charity, the Special Olympics.

## Re-birth for Pregnancy Book



The HPA has been involved in updating the information in the Northern Ireland version of The Pregnancy Book, which was originally published by the Department of Health in England.

The publication, which is designed for first-time mothers, will be printed locally and distributed by the Central Health Promotion Resource Services to antenatal clinics in their Health and Social Services Board areas.



## Diabetes - seminar evaluation

The diabetes seminar, held on 26 March, was a resounding success, attracting around 100 participants from a wide range of sectors including primary care, allied health professions, education and community and voluntary.

Participants highlighted that the event was extremely beneficial in terms of raising awareness about Type 2 diabetes. The multi-disciplinary seminar stimulated in-depth discussion on the way forward for tackling diabetes in Northern Ireland. A full report has been compiled and is to be given to the DHSSPS.

The evaluation from the diabetes seminar is now available on the HPA website at [www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk/Work/Training/evaluations.htm](http://www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk/Work/Training/evaluations.htm)

For further information please contact Maire Campbell at the Agency on 028 9031 1611 or e-mail [m.campbell@hpani.org.uk](mailto:m.campbell@hpani.org.uk)

**The HPA seminar, for health and education professionals, advised that healthy eating and increased physical activity can help to prevent the onset of Type 2 diabetes. Agency Chair Alice Quinn, left, with seminar speakers, Dr Mark Davies, Belfast City Hospital, and Tracey Douglas, Community Dietitian, North & West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust.**

## Belfast to host international Healthy Cities conference

Belfast is hosting an international conference on health and sustainable development in the Waterfront Hall on 19-22 October. The conference 'The Power of Local Action' celebrates 15 years of Healthy Cities action, but also aims to build partnerships, create policies and formulate action strategies for the future.

It will feature a variety of themes, including partnership-based planning for health and sustainable development; poverty, equity and the social determinants of health; conflict, violence and community safety; and evidence-based public policy. Each topic will be discussed in special sessions, and the programme also includes plenaries and keynote addresses.

The conference is open to everyone working on conference themes. Full details are available on the conference website at [www.healthycitiesbelfast2003.com](http://www.healthycitiesbelfast2003.com), or by contacting Belfast Healthy Cities on 028 9032 8811. The call for abstracts is open until Friday 13 June on the website.

## Leaflet translates into minority demand

The antenatal screening leaflet *Protecting you and your baby*, produced in October 2002, has been translated into another minority ethnic language.

Following demand from the growing Portuguese community, the leaflet and consent form is now available as a pdf from the DHSSPS website at [www.dhssps.gov.uk/phealth](http://www.dhssps.gov.uk/phealth) along with the original translations into Arabic, Cantonese, Hindi, Irish and Urdu.

## Third phase of cigarette ads

The third phase of the Agency's 'Every cigarette is doing you damage' campaign will be launched in June and will run until January 2004 with advertisements being broadcast in June, September, December and January.

Two new ads will feature, the first focusing on the link between smoking and lung cancer and the second on the damage that smoking does to the lungs and respiratory system. The support available to smokers who are trying to stop will also be promoted. The Smokers' Helpline ad and two ads promoting nicotine replacement therapies broadcast during phase two will also be shown. Materials about smoking and pregnancy are also planned as part of phase three.

## Top marks for Elizabeth

This year's Association of Health Service Managers /Health Promotion Agency award was presented in Coleraine on 7 March.

The award is presented each year to a student from the MSc in Health Promotion course who achieves the highest marks in the Management by Communication module. The award is donated by the former 'Association of Health Service Managers' (AHSM) and the HPA.



This year's award went to Elizabeth McClure (far left) and was presented by Raymond McKay, former member of the Association.

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

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## Get Active in the Community Cash Grant Awards scheme 2003

Judging of the fifth annual physical activity cash grant scheme has just been completed. The scheme, which forms part of the implementation of the Northern Ireland Physical Activity Strategy and is funded by the DHSSPS, attracted a total of 449 applications this year.

As in previous years, applications were of a very high standard with many of the groups meeting all the criteria. The response rate was also very high which meant the judging panel had a challenging job in identifying those groups that should be allocated awards. With a finite budget the panel had to make some difficult decisions and, ultimately, 35% of applications were offered an award.

A recent review of all the schemes indicates that these awards offer

excellent value for money. In the past three years the scheme has attracted just over 14,000 participants at a cost of approximately £5 per participant. Of all the projects funded, 44% were new groups and 77% of groups indicated that their activities continued on a regular basis. This suggests that the initiative is an important trigger for mobilising communities around the issue of physical activity.

The following is the final breakdown of results:

Health Board	Applications received	Applications awarded
EHSSB	174	63
NHSSB	89	40
SHSSB	77	28
WHSSB	109	25

## E-learning website pilot for GPs

The HPA has developed an e-learning website for GPs on smoking cessation which will be piloted with a group of doctors during May/June. The website was developed in response to some research conducted by the Agency on GP training needs.

It was indicated that more flexible methods of learning needed to be explored to allow GPs and other primary care professionals to access learning and development opportunities.



**Health Promotion Agency**

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www.DrugsAlcohol.info  
www.getalifegetactive.com  
www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk  
www.thesnackpack.net  
www.up-2-you.net

## Web are we now?

Work is ongoing to streamline and update the Agency's web presence. [DrugsAlcohol.info](http://DrugsAlcohol.info) is featuring an improved news section and the drugs database is being overhauled to speed user access to the site.

The continuous process of updating the corporate site has recently seen local support groups being added to the breastfeeding section and a range of Agency publications being added to the site in pdf format, including the latest edition of the Promoting Health journal on obesity and weight management.

We are also delighted to have received over 1,000 competition entries online, from the Up-2-You site at [www.up-2-you.net/content/competitions.asp](http://www.up-2-you.net/content/competitions.asp). The two lucky winners to be chosen on 30 May will get kitted out for the summer by one of the high street's fashion leaders! And just in case all that shopping makes them hungry, we're throwing in lunch too. There are also 10 runner-up prizes of £25 in vouchers for CDs, videos or computer games.

We are also pleased to welcome Adam McCune to our team as Web Development Assistant.