

Inform

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Top award for Agency

The Agency's policy on 'Special Leave for Domestic, Personal and Family Reasons' recently won the 1998 Health and Personal Social Services Opportunity 2000 Annual Award.

Sponsored by the Health and Social Services Executive, the award is designed to encourage HPSS employers to promote and sustain a culture which will actively contribute towards assisting staff in balancing their domestic and work related responsibilities. It particularly encourages women to develop their careers within the service.

The Agency received £5,000 and a Certificate of Achievement. The money will be reinvested in the development of good practice.

Secretary of State visits the Agency

In January the Agency launched its latest initiative to support parents in informing young people about the dangers of drugs.

Parents need to be well informed themselves in order to talk to their children about drugs. To support them, the Agency inserted the popular and recently revised booklet 'Drugs and Solvents - A Guide for Parents' into a number of newspapers. This followed recent TV advertising on drugs, aimed at both parents and young people.

The Secretary of State Dr Mo Mowlam visited the Agency on 18 January to add her support to this work.

Speaking at the launch, Rob Phipps, Alcohol and Drugs Programme Manager said: "Every year we have a new group of young people who are being offered drugs. This makes it necessary to provide information on an ongoing basis and it is here that parents have a vital role to play."

The initiative received a large amount of media coverage.



Drugs initiative: Pictured with the Secretary of State, Dr Mo Mowlam, on her visit to the Agency are: Dr Brian Gaffney, left, Chief Executive of the Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland and Mr Douglas Smyth, Chairman of the Agency.

Physical activity

At the recent meeting of the Northern Ireland Physical Activity Strategy Group, each Government department presented an annual report on progress in their sector in relation to physical activity.

Departments have now been asked to draw up plans for the period 1999/2000 for discussion at the next meeting. A number of potential opportunities have been identified for inter-departmental and inter-agency approaches.

Cycling is an example where the Department of Environment, the Department of Education, the Department of Agriculture, District Councils, the Health Promotion Agency and other organisations can all contribute to increasing participation. Opportunities to cooperate in terms of planning and implementation will be discussed.

Mental health strategy

The Regional Working Group, established by the Agency, has formed a sub-group to develop a consultation process for the strategy on mental health. The views of a wide range of organisations will be sought to guide strategic direction in this area.

A two-day meeting has been planned for 10-11 February 1999 and invitations have been sent to community, voluntary and statutory organisations concerned with promoting mental health. The meeting will focus on outlining the priority issues and establishing a strategic framework for action.

Following this meeting a draft document will be prepared for further consultation.

Young people's health conference

A national research conference 'Changing Families and Changing Communities' is being held in Regents College, Regents Park, London on Monday 15 March 1999.

Organised by the HEA, the conference will explore young people's health in the context of changing family structure and community environments.

Speakers include Dr Helen Roberts from Barnardo's and Dr Ceridwen Roberts from the Family Policy Studies Centre. For further details and registration, please contact: Professional Briefings on (0171) 233 8322 or email: profbriefings@msn.com

Policy development and advice

Strategy implementation

The Agency is planning a two day symposium in March to take forward the implementation of the Food and Nutrition Strategy on behalf of the Ministerial Group on Public Health.

Approximately 60 places will be offered to representatives from the six groups of key players identified in the Strategy. These are: the food production and processing sectors; food retailers; caterers; nutrition educators; the education sector; the voluntary and community sectors.

The symposium will be used to prepare a draft implementation plan for the Strategy and to agree sectoral roles and responsibilities.

Health Promoting Schools

Following the successful three-year European Network of Health Promoting Schools initiative, the Agency discussed the outcomes of the project with the Health Education Liaison Group (HELG). It was agreed to use

the criteria for a Health Promoting School, which have been tested in Northern Ireland and refined by the teachers involved, to assist schools in raising standards and in developing their work in this area.

The commitment to improvement shown by many schools in Northern Ireland has been recognised by the Department of Education, Northern Ireland in its document 'School Improvement: The Northern Ireland Programme'.

With the assistance of a sub-group of HELG, the Agency has developed a draft self-assessment guide for schools.

The draft document has been discussed with teachers attending in-service training organised by Northern Education and Library Board and the Northern Health and Social Services Board, and with a number of other relevant groups. It is presently being further refined and following final discussion with HELG, the Agency would intend to make the self-assessment guide available to schools.

Public information campaigns

No Smoking Day

Smokers will be encouraged to 'take the plunge' and stop smoking on No Smoking Day on Wednesday 10 March. The day is a great focus for helping people who want to stop smoking.

In support of the event, the Agency will be running a television advertising campaign to raise public awareness and encourage smokers to take part.

The Agency will be evaluating the Northern Ireland No Smoking Day Campaign and the results will be available in May 1999.

A range of No Smoking Day materials including balloons, sweatshirts, T-shirts, stickers and pens can be purchased from the No Smoking Day Campaign Office in London. Further details can be obtained from Dermot Ryan: Tel: 0171 916 8070.



Healthy eating in 1999

The Health Promotion Agency will link with the UK-wide Food Awareness Week, organised by the British Dietetic Association, in promoting healthy eating in 1999.

The slogan for Food Awareness Week is 'Give Me 5'. It will be used to highlight the theme, which is 'it makes sense to enjoy at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables every day', and to build on the awareness achieved during the 1998 Healthy Eating Campaign.

The week is targeted at children and young people aged 5-18 years and will take place from 10-16 May 1999.

More details about activities associated with the week will be included in the next issue of *Inform*.

Physical activity

A public information campaign to promote participation in physical activity is currently being developed by the Agency on behalf of the Ministerial Group on Public Health.

The aim of the campaign is to raise awareness of the many benefits of physical activity to health, particularly among those in the 40+ age group. It also aims to provide information on the range of activities available in Northern Ireland for people of all ages and abilities.

Baseline research has already been carried out, against which progress towards increasing awareness and participation can be measured.

Further details on the campaign will be available in future issues of *Inform*.

Research, information and analysis

Convenience advertising

On average people spend 2 minutes 54 seconds in a toilet cubicle, which is plenty of time to read a poster!

Over the last three years, the Agency has displayed posters with information relating to sexual health in the toilets of approximately 65 pubs, clubs and universities across Northern Ireland.

The posters are aimed at 18 to 35 year olds and the venues have been selected on the basis of the average number and age of customers who frequent the venue.

The posters were developed following qualitative research with 18 to 35 year olds and cover issues such as choosing condoms, the risk of sexually

transmitted infections in Northern Ireland, contraception and the effects alcohol can have on decision making.

The messages are featured on A4 posters and displayed in tough plastic frames. Longer messages are placed in toilet cubicles and shorter messages are placed above urinals, wash hand basins and hand dryers.

Checks are made every fortnight to replace damaged posters or ones that have been removed and to record any graffiti relating to the posters.

This information is then included in a bi-monthly report. An evaluation of the campaign is underway and results will be available in a future issue of *Inform*.



Drugs campaign - parents evaluation

Results from the evaluation of Phase III of the public information campaign on drugs were very positive. The campaign was launched on Monday 16 November 1998 at the beginning of European Drug Prevention Week. It included a television advertising campaign, an information booklet for parents and a range of supporting activities organised by voluntary and statutory organisations working in the community.

A total of 1,000 parents with children aged 8 to 21 years were interviewed as part of the evaluation process. A summary of the results showed that:

- 67% were aware of the television advertising campaign;
- 97% of these respondents, on prompting, said the main message was talk to your children

about drugs (a large percentage of these respondents (81%) said the television advertisement would encourage them to talk to their children about drugs);

- 85% felt that it was very important to have accurate information about drugs;
- only one fifth of parents were aware of the booklet for parents (however since the evaluation an additional 200,000 booklets have been printed and distributed via the Irish News, Newsletter and Mirror newspapers);
- 69% felt the most useful information in the booklet was how to tell if your child is taking drugs (68% felt the information about what to do in an emergency was the most important);
- 72% identified the local GP or Health Centre as the most likely source of information. Other sources considered when prompted included a telephone helpline (77%), a local voluntary drug agency (70%) and friends or relatives (69%).

Breastfeeding research

The Agency has been commissioned by the Department of Health and Social Services to carry out research into knowledge and attitudes towards breastfeeding in Northern Ireland.

The work is being managed by the Agency as part of the remit of the resources group of the Regional Strategy Group on Breastfeeding.

A number of adult members of the public, both men and women, across all socioeconomic groups, will be asked to take part in focus groups. In addition, a random sample of the general population will be interviewed as part of an omnibus survey.

The results of the research will be used to guide the development of public information approaches and resources on this issue.

Physical activity

A baseline survey to inform the development of the forthcoming physical activity public information campaign has been completed.

Findings indicate socioeconomic differences in terms of attitudes and behaviour towards physical activity, eg 92% of the professional or managerial sector reported that they could walk 1/4 mile without stopping or obtaining help, compared to 66% of people classed as unskilled.

The research will be used to measure progress towards the physical activity strategy participation targets.

Activate

Research undertaken to review the Activate Health Programme has now been completed. Activate trainers, tutors, leaders and health promotion coordinators were asked to make recommendations on training, content and organisation of the programme. A report is being prepared and will be available in March.

The findings will enable the Agency, in conjunction with Health and Social Services Boards, Trusts and other partner organisations, to develop the Activate programme for the new millennium.

Short course training

The Agency's short course training and professional development programme for 1998/99 has a number of new courses lined up for March and April.

Sexual health promotion in the primary care setting is a two day course designed for nurses and other professionals working in general practice, family planning and school health.

Current Issues in Health Promotion is a one day course to update professionals on concepts and approaches to health promotion. There is also a one day course exploring the potential of information technology (IT) in health promotion.

A course on Alcohol Education and Young People explores what we should be saying and to whom. For further information about any of the training courses see the Agency's Website or contact Claire Hind on (01232) 311611.

Regional training day

A one day workshop has been organised for health promotion specialists to review the National Occupational Standards for Professional Activity in health promotion and care. Organised by the Health Promotion Regional Training Group in association with the Agency, the workshop will be held in Craigavon Area Hospital on 9 March 1999.

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Publications and resources

Promoting Health

The Agency has published the sixth issue of its quarterly journal, 'Promoting Health', which examines inequalities in health and social wellbeing in Northern Ireland.

This issue includes a report on the Conference 'Inequalities in Health - Forming an Agenda for Action'. This was organised by the Community Development and Health Network and supported by the Health Promotion Agency in November 1998.

If you would like to be placed on the database to receive 'Promoting Health' on a regular basis, please contact Ann Marie McCann at the Agency.

New weaning resource

A new resource on weaning was well received during pre-testing with focus groups of new and expectant mothers. Following some small changes the resource will be printed during February and will be available from the Central Health

Promotion Resource Services in the Health and Social Services Board areas from March.

Activate Heart Health

The Agency has recently published a 'Heart Health' module for use within the Activate Health

Programme. The module is designed to promote coronary rehabilitation for people in the community following discharge from a hospital-based coronary rehabilitation programme.

Further details may be obtained from Frank Kelly at the Agency.



Advertising success

The 'LSD' television advertisement, produced as part of Phase III of the Agency's Public Information Campaign on Drugs, recently received two top advertising awards.

It won an award in the European Festival of Non-profit Communication Films in Milan and a Global Award (gold) in the Institute of Global Awards competition in New York.

Global award: Pictured with the Global Award are, from left: Stanley Davidson, Creative Director, Genesis Advertising, Maureen Gardner, Director of Communications and Corporate Affairs, Health Promotion Agency and Tara West, Copywriter, Genesis Advertising.



Website: www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk

The Agency's website features a range of information about the Agency and its work. The site will be regularly updated to provide a current source of information for anyone with an interest in health promotion. Any comments you may have, or suggestions for additional information you would like to see on the site, will be very welcome.