

Inform

Issue 41

June/July 2005

'Breastfeeding welcome here' initiative launched by HPA

"Is breastfeeding welcome here?" was the question breastfeeding mums were asking businesses across Northern Ireland during National Breastfeeding Awareness Week.

The theme of the week was 'Breastfeeding out and about' and on Tuesday 10 May the HPA launched a regional initiative 'Breastfeeding welcome here' to support mothers who wish to breastfeed in public. The scheme aims to encourage social acceptability of breastfeeding and increase awareness about the importance of breastfeeding to the health of both mother and baby.

Janet Calvert, Regional Breastfeeding Coordinator with the HPA, said: "Research shows that over half of Northern Ireland mothers breastfeed their babies at birth but more than a quarter of these women will have given up breastfeeding by the end of the first week, and just over half will have stopped by the time their baby is six weeks old. This is often because they feel there is a lack of support, particularly when they want to feed their baby outside the home."

The 'Breastfeeding welcome here' scheme promotes places for mums to breastfeed their baby and was first suggested by a group of peer support mothers in North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Trust.

Eileen Friel, Breastfeeding Coordinator of the Breastfeeding Mothers Group at the Mater Maternity Hospital, said: "The 'Breastfeeding welcome here' scheme aims to change the negative attitude towards breastfeeding in public in Northern Ireland by asking local businesses to welcome breastfeeding in all areas of their business open to the public."

Mother of two Sinead Boyle said: "When I had my first child three years ago, I had no experience of where I could go to breastfeed while I was out of the house. This scheme is really important because it gives someone like me the confidence to know where I can go and where people will be supportive so I don't have to worry about being asked to move or stop breastfeeding."

Citybeat, the Belfast-based radio station, ran a text poll during the day of the launch asking listeners to vote whether or not they thought it was acceptable for mothers to breastfeed in public places. The result was encouraging, with 87% saying it was acceptable.



Three of the breastfeeding mums attend the HPA launch along with Sinead Boyle and Eileen Friel, and Janet Calvert and Margaret McCrory of the HPA.

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

- INSIDE:**
- Weight Wise at work
 - HPA on show at Balmoral
 - Walking challenge Works Well
 - Get Active Cash Grant Awards

New appointments



Brian McCalden

Brian has joined the HPA on a six month contract as a Publications Officer. He will be responsible for preparing a variety of materials for publication in both electronic and printed formats, with a particular role in the fields of mental health, drugs, alcohol and sexual health. Previously he worked in senior editorial positions across a range of publications and as a Press Officer for Royal Mail. Brian holds a BA (Hons) degree from the University of Ulster and a Post Graduate Certificate in Public Relations, Marketing and Advertising from Queen's University, Belfast.



Karen Glass

Karen has joined the HPA on a six month contract as Support Services Administrator. Her main role is to provide administration support to all Senior Managers, Public Health. This involves providing secretarial support for meetings and organising and booking venues for conferences and seminars. Previously Karen worked as a customer services administrator in the private sector. She holds a BSc (Hons) in Psychology from Queen's University, Belfast.

Weight Wise at Work

In Northern Ireland the 1997 *Health and social wellbeing survey* showed that almost half of all men and more than one third of women are overweight, with a further one fifth of men and one quarter of women being classed as obese.

At least 18 million sick days a year can be attributed to obesity, according to the National Audit Office. The workplace is being targeted by Weight Wise – the three year nutrition campaign run by the British Dietetic Association – in June. Weight Wise at Work aims to raise awareness of the importance of diet and health among employees and what employers can do to promote healthier eating in the workplace.

The HPA is promoting the message by distributing the updated leaflet *Small changes big benefits* to employees. We are also raising awareness with employers through a new leaflet, *Promoting healthy eating at work – a simple guide for employers*. This provides information on the benefits of promoting healthier eating in the workplace and why healthier employees are important for the success of



the business. It will also provide practical information on what they can do in the workplace to promote healthier eating.

Meanwhile, the resource *Small changes big benefits* will be distributed to men in a number of venues during Men's Health Week 2005. The purpose of Men's Health Week is to heighten awareness of preventable health problems and early detection and treatment of disease among men and boys. Men's Health Week 2005 will run from 13–19 June.

The HPA is supporting the week by working with the Men's Health Forum to draw attention to the theme of overweight and obesity. Information contained in *Small changes big benefits* highlights the importance of waist measurement as a guide to risk.

Passive smoking competition winners

The government consultation on smoking in public places in Northern Ireland may have closed but the campaign to highlight the dangers of passive smoking is continuing through www.up-2-you.net, the HPA's website for young people.

A recent competition run on the website about the health effects of passive smoking attracted more than 3,000 entries. Victoria Creasy, HPA Senior Manager, Public Health, handed out the prizes to 10 lucky winners in April.

Victoria said: "The huge response to this competition is very encouraging and we have received more than double the entries submitted last year. We would like to thank all the organisations that have helped us to distribute the promotional materials for the website.

"It is important that young people are encouraged to voice their opposition to smoking, especially if they are subjected to passive smoking by their friends or family. The Up-2-You website provides the facts that can help young people to do this."

The website is aimed at pupils in school years 8, 9 and 10 as a health promotion tool and deals with smoking, passive smoking, alcohol, drugs and mental health. In recent months the website has received an average of around 3,500 hits per day.



Some recent winners of the Up-2-You website competition for young people with Victoria Creasy, HPA Senior Manager, Public Health.

Mental Health First Aid

The HPA was pleased to facilitate a recent meeting of interested participants to learn of Scotland's National Programme for Improving Mental Health and Wellbeing.

Mental Health First Aid is the initial help given to someone experiencing a mental health problem before professional help is sought. The programme includes a 12 hour evidence-based training course aimed at improving the mental health literacy of the general population and was originally developed in Australia.

The HPA will be following up this meeting with participants to further discuss the potential of the approach in Northern Ireland.

Challenges and opportunities for Investing for Health

The second regional Investing for Health conference entitled 'Challenges and opportunities' will now take place on Thursday 17 November 2005 at the Radisson Roe Hotel, Limavady.

The day will be dedicated to highlighting the broad spectrum of work taking place in Northern Ireland which is contributing to improving health and reducing inequalities.

It will explore the challenges and opportunities for Investing for Health (IfH), build commitment and influence future work to ensure the strategy's potential is fully realised.

The conference aims to:

- recognise, validate and assist work to achieve the goals and objectives of IfH;
- build ongoing commitment to tackle challenges and opportunities;
- help integrate the strategy into key partners' work programmes;
- support partnership working across organisations and communities.

Further details on the conference themes, opportunities for participation and how to book will be made available shortly on the conference website www.ifhconference2005.net

Breastfeeding awareness campaign success

The HPA's public information campaign on breastfeeding which was launched in May 2004 ran again in February 2005. The campaign used television, radio and poster advertisements to raise public awareness of the health benefits of breastfeeding, promote breastfeeding as socially acceptable and encourage wider uptake among mothers in Northern Ireland.

Research carried out in September 2004 and March 2005 sought to assess the awareness of the campaign among the general public in Northern Ireland and, in particular, knowledge of the campaign's key messages. This research also enabled an evaluation of any changes in campaign awareness between its first (2004) and second (2005) year.

Advertisement	Awareness	
	2004	2005
Poster 1: 'Breastfeeding, good for baby, good for mum'	37%	39%
Poster 2: 'Other people can eat here, so why can't he?'	23%	52%
Television advert: 'Breastfeeding – good for baby, good for mum'	19%	58%
Radio 1: 'News for the people of Northern Ireland'	16%	13%
Radio 2: 'Amazing baby food'	14%	14%

The findings showed that unprompted awareness of any advertisements about breastfeeding rose between 2004 and 2005.

Prompted awareness of the poster and television advertisements also rose between the two years. However, awareness of the radio advertisements remained constant or fell slightly.

In 2004 the greatest awareness by male and female respondents was for Poster 1, whereas in 2005 the greatest awareness was for the television advertisement. Respondents who had recalled Poster 2 were asked if they would be more supportive of breastfeeding mums feeding their babies discreetly in public. In 2004, 67% reported 'yes' to this question and in 2005 support rose to 84%. This is a strong indication that the campaign is having the desired effect of changing public attitudes towards breastfeeding.

Encouragingly, in both 2004 and 2005 there was a significant difference between those who had seen the campaign and those who had not in terms of future intentions. This appears to confirm that becoming aware of the breastfeeding campaign messages has contributed to a rise in parents intending to choose breastfeeding.

Awareness	Women: yes, intend to breastfeed		Men: yes, would encourage partner to breastfeed	
	2004	2005	2004	2005
Aware of campaign	35%	35%	36%	43%
Not aware of campaign	22%	20%	19%	28%

Balmoral Show 2005 shop window for HPA work

The HPA once again took part in the Balmoral Show, held this year from 11–13 May. We were part of a larger exhibition called 'Northern Ireland Government Departments...Working for You!' where each Government department was represented. The two priority issues we highlighted at the show were passive smoking and binge drinking. HPA staff members were on the stand at all times over the three days and chatted to visitors about these issues as well as the HPA and its work.

We showed the HPA television ads on passive smoking and binge drinking and distributed relevant public information literature on these issues. We also ran the interactive display taken from our Up-2-You website showing how passive smoke can circulate around a home. The new 'wheel-like' resource we designed to show people the number of units in their favourite drinks proved a good way of prompting a discussion about units of alcohol and drinking.

The show provided a valuable opportunity for HPA staff members to get out into the community and talk with people directly about issues that affect their health.



HPA staff member Fiona Campbell, left, with some visitors to the HPA stand at Balmoral.

Drug related harm conference success

The 16th International Conference on the Reduction of Drug Related Harm took place in the Belfast Waterfront Hall from 20–24 March. The conference theme was 'Widening the agenda' and drew 1,040 delegates from around the world. Experts, researchers, scientists and advocates of harm reduction came to share and learn from each other's experiences of harm reduction programmes. Conference sub-themes included HIV/AIDS, legislation and criminal justice, conflict situations, and young people.

Although the major focus of the conference was on the use of illicit drugs, the issue of alcohol-related harm was also highlighted in several sessions. Tim Stockwell discussed the need for the integration of harm reduction principles into traditional alcohol policies and also the need for a change to the culture of drinking. Kevin Brain and Fiona Measham addressed the issue of 'Boozing and bingeing' by illustrating the link between the current trend of 'night time economy' and the hedonistic approach of young people to drinking.

While the conference focused on issues of worldwide interest, a number of presentations highlighted their relevance within the context of Northern Ireland. These covered areas such as the increase in drug use associated with change in the political situation, the need to further develop harm reduction strategies according to needs, such as needle exchange, and the importance of education and interventions for young people. A pilot study for young people in Belfast and Lisburn, the School Health and Alcohol Reduction Project, adopted from the Australian Harm Reduction Programme SHARP, was presented and is an example of how international good practice may be adapted for use at a local level.

Small business walking challenge Works Well

Businesses taking part in the HPA's workplace health pilot initiative, Work Well, have been improving the health of their employees and walking their way to achieving a more active and healthier workforce.

Employees of small businesses in Northern Ireland involved in Work Well have been pounding the pavements during the month of April in a step-o-meter challenge. The Housing Rights Service, Belfast, won the coveted overall organisational award and Laura Foster from Rhyme Thyme Day Nursery in Ballyclare won the individual award and prize for the most steps walked. She managed a massive 735,287 steps over the period of the challenge.

The winners were announced at the Work Well Business Network Meeting hosted by the HPA on 4 May.

The HPA is competing with the General Consumer Council and the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland in a separate walking competition during the month of May. The winner of this will be announced shortly.

Inaugural mental health promotion conference sets the standard

Over 250 participants met in Dublin Castle from 20–22 April 2005 to consider the themes of the conference 'Mental health promotion – going from strength to strength'.

The conference was organised by the Clifford Beers Foundation, an international charity working to promote mental health, in collaboration with the HPA, DHSSPS, Department of Health and Children (Ireland), The Scottish Executive, The Welsh Assembly Government, and the National Institute for Mental Health (England).

It was the first conference in a series to be hosted by each member of the collaborating group throughout the UK and Ireland. The HPA worked jointly with colleagues in the Department of Health and Children (Ireland) to support the conference development.

With one in every four adults suffering from poor mental health, the issue has been recognised as a major public health issue. The themes of the conference reflected our regional *Promoting mental health strategy*: strengthening individuals, strengthening communities, and strengthening partnerships.

Keynote introductory speakers included Margaret Barry, Department of Health Promotion, National University of Ireland; Maurice Mittelmark, President of the International Union for Health Promotion and Education; and Clemens Hosman, Global Consortium for the Advancement of Promotion and Prevention in Mental health (GCAPP).



Tom Moore, Irish Congress of Trade Unions, presents first prize in the organisational category to Kathryn Young and Una McGirr from the Housing Rights Service, Belfast.

Get Active in the Community Cash Grant Awards scheme

The selection of the seventh annual cash grant applications to support the development of opportunities for physical activity in the community has been completed. The scheme which supports the physical activity campaign of the Northern Ireland *Physical activity strategy and action plan* attracted 264 applications this year.

A review of the application process following the sixth annual awards resulted in small changes to the selection criteria. As the scheme has developed, applicants are now asked to provide at least five sessions of activity for members of their communities and groups.

Funding for these cash grants is provided by DHSSPS and is allocated to each area on a population basis. The HPA is once again grateful for the service provided by the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland in administering the application and selection process, and to the physical activity coordinators in each area for their expertise and advice in assisting with selection.

The following is the final breakdown of the selection for 2005/2006:

Health Board area	Applications received	Grants awarded
EHSSB	103	65
NHSSB	76	48
SHSSB	48	32
WHSSB	37	28

Each group awarded funding will be asked to evaluate its activity. This information will then help us highlight the tremendous efforts of voluntary and community groups in supporting and developing physical activities which improve people's health and wellbeing.

Maternal and child nutrition conference

The HPA is hoping to stage a conference on maternal and child nutrition this autumn. The plan is to address a range of related issues including: nutrition during pregnancy and breastfeeding, weaning, breastfeeding, healthy eating for children and food safety.

We will keep you posted with details about the programme as well as information on how to book in the next issue of *Inform* and on our corporate website at www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk

Health Promoting Schools evaluates positively

A very positive and encouraging *Final report on the evaluation of Health Promoting Schools: an Investing for Health partnership* was presented to the HPA by the evaluation team from Queen's University, Belfast (with dpo consultants). A summary report is currently being finalised by the HPA for publication.

The emerging key themes from the report confirm that:

- it is a timely and important initiative which is being effectively managed and continuing to evolve successfully against a background of review in education and health;
- it provides a framework to address many health-related issues for pupils and staff, and to deliver and add value to the proposed new curriculum in personal development;
- it has made a significant contribution to the promotion of school improvement through self-evaluation and school development planning.

Based on the evidence of the previous three years of the initiative, the DHSSPS has secured additional funding for the 2005–2006 financial year. This will help to consolidate the excellent progress that has been made by the coordinators and their management partnerships in developing schools as healthy organisations, and in facilitating the introduction of programmes which promote healthy living.

In addition to the 128 schools already committed to becoming health promoting schools, the funding will allow a further 5% of schools across Northern Ireland to participate in the initiative.

Partnership approach to Fit Futures obesity process

'Fit futures: Focus on food, activity and young people' is a cross-departmental initiative established to examine options for tackling the underlying causes of overweight and obesity in children and young people. It was formally launched by the Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety in August 2004.

More than 100 people connected to the initiative attended an event in Lisburn in March, organised by the Fit Futures steering group, to conclude the engagement process.

Participants were encouraged to engage in workshops to create a vision of a fit future and then to identify the key actions necessary to deliver this vision.

Prior to the event, a local research and information baseline was compiled on behalf of Fit Futures by the HPA. This detailed the major sources of local information on overweight and obesity, as well as its causes, and was published on the website: www.investingforhealthni.gov.uk/fitfutures.asp This site also featured reports on the views of children, young people and parents, and a summary of the views and analysis from the first two phases of the engagement process.

It is expected that the Ministerial Group on Public Health will receive the recommendations of the Fit Futures taskforce before the summer. These will influence a revised *Physical activity strategy and action plan* and the draft *Food and nutrition strategy*.

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

Alcohol, Drugs and Smoking

Victoria Creasy - v.creasy@hpani.org.uk

Breastfeeding - Janet Calvert

j.calvert@hpani.org.uk

Campaigns - Margaret McCrory

m.mccrory@hpani.org.uk

Health Promoting Hospitals

Barbara Porter - b.porter@hpani.org.uk

Health Promoting Schools

David Porter - d.porter@hpani.org.uk

Health Promoting Workplaces

Julie Hill - j.hill@hpani.org.uk

Human Resources - Fiona Campbell

f.campbell@hpani.org.uk

Investing for Health - Aodhan O'Donnell

a.odonnell@hpani.org.uk

Nutrition, Physical Activity and Oral Health

Angela McComb

a.mccomb@hpani.org.uk

Publications - Ruth Knowles

r.knowles@hpani.org.uk

Public Relations - Rosemary McGaughey

r.mcgaughey@hpani.org.uk

Research - Naomi McCay

n.mccay@hpani.org.uk

Training and Professional Development

Claire Hind - c.hind@hpani.org.uk

Staff charity fundraiser benefits NSPCC

Staff at the HPA this year voted to form a committee to raise money for Northern Ireland charities. This year's chosen charity is the NSPCC which is involved in a wide range of initiatives to prevent cruelty to children.

Our first event, a 'Quiz Night at the Races', took place on 27 April at Morrisons, Belfast. It was a resounding success, raising more than £1,400 for the NSPCC. Twelve teams took part in a brain-teasing quiz which was won by Pretty Vacant. This was followed by

supper and 'horse' racing. Our five 'horse' races were kindly sponsored by UTV, local architects Twenty Two over Seven, National Car Parks, Rocwell Water and Genesis Advertising and many organisations contributed prizes for the quiz and the ballot.

Reeling in small wooden 'horses' produced some serious jockeying for position and the stewards had to be consulted on more than one occasion! Luckily no horses or jockeys suffered serious injury and a good night was had by all.



Enjoying the recent HPA staff charity fundraising event are, from left, Janet Stange, Roberta Woods, Linda Giles and Basil Stange.

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



Health Promotion Agency

We hope that **Inform** is meeting your needs in terms of providing timely and relevant information about the HPA's work. We are always striving to improve our communications so we would welcome any comments you would like to make about **Inform**. Please contact me, the editor, on r.kelly@hpani.org.uk or write to me at the editorial office below.

Production team

Sean Arbuckle, Linda Giles and Rachel Kelly.

Editorial office

Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland
18 Ormeau Avenue, Belfast BT2 8HS.
Tel: 028 9031 1611. Fax: 028 9031 1711.

Websites:

www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk
www.breastfedbabies.org
www.drugsalcohol.info
www.smokefreenorthernireland.com
www.thesnackpack.net
www.up-2-you.net

Web are we now?

It's been a busy time on the web front since the last issue of **Inform** was published. The **Drugs and Alcohol** information website at drugsalcohol.info is currently in the midst of a major redevelopment which will allow visitors to search organisations providing relevant services by postcode.

The International Harm Reduction Conference website (www.ihrcbelfast.com) came to a successful conclusion with the conference taking place from 20–24 March 2005 at the Waterfront Hall, Belfast. A new section was added to the Breastfeeding website www.breastfedbabies.org to support the 'Breastfeeding welcome here' campaign which aims to support mothers who wish to breastfeed in public. A list of businesses that have pledged to support the initiative is available on the website and both parents and businesses interested in the scheme can complete an online information request form.

The HPA's corporate website continues to grow in popularity. In addition to being number one on www.google.co.uk for a search on 'health promotion', the HPA website is now also number one for health promotion with the following search engines.

Microsoft MSN Search	http://search.msn.co.uk	7.5 million results
Yahoo	http://www.yahoo.co.uk	30.2million results
Lycos	http://www.lycos.co.uk	3 million results
Altavista	http://www.altavista.co.uk	30.2 million results
Hotbot	http://www.hotbot.co.uk	3.2 million results
Dogpile	http://www.dogpile.co.uk	(first un-sponsored link)