

Inform

Issue 48

August/September 2006

Cross-border support for launch of suicide guidelines

The HPA has welcomed the launch of the all-island guidelines on the portrayal of suicide in the media. The Irish Association of Suicidology (IAS) and Samaritans launched *Media guidelines for the portrayal of suicide* at joint events held in Belfast and Dublin, facilitated and supported by the HPA and the National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP) in the Republic of Ireland.

Dr Brian Gaffney, Chief Executive of the HPA, said: "Suicide is everyone's responsibility and the media have an important role to play, not only in the prevention of suicide, but also in promoting positive mental health messages and reducing the stigma that surrounds mental illness.

"We know that more work needs to be done with the media around the awareness of suicide and the promotion of recommended guidelines. This collaboration with the National Office for Suicide Prevention, in supporting the IAS and Samaritans' guidelines, will assist work we plan to do in partnership with the media around training for journalists and media students."

Suicide is the biggest cause of death among men and women under the age of 35 on the island of Ireland. In 2003, a total of 587 people died by suicide, which represents one death every 15 hours.

Health Minister Paul Goggins said: "Suicide is a difficult and emotive subject that needs to be handled sensitively. I am anxious to do all that I can to prevent suicide in our society and very much welcome the launch of these media guidelines.

"It is vitally important that the media handle and report their stories appropriately and sensitively. I am grateful for the cooperation of Samaritans and the Irish Association of Suicidology in the development of the guidelines."

See the article on the suicide prevention strategy on page 7.

At the launch of the media guidelines are, from left, Dr John Connolly, Secretary of the Irish Association of Suicidology, Dr Brian Gaffney, Chief Executive of the HPA, Colm Donaghy, Chief Executive of the SHSSB Board and Chair of the Northern Ireland Taskforce on Suicide Prevention, and Sarah Nelson, Strategic PR Manager for Samaritans.



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

INSIDE:

- Breastfeeding conference
- Draft suicide prevention strategy update
- Training and events
- www.drugsalcohol.info development



**Health
Promotion
Agency**

New appointments



Dr Andrew Gamble

Andrew has joined the HPA as Health Development Officer in information and research on a fixed term contract covering maternity leave. His role will involve working in the areas of mental health, Health Promoting Hospitals and community planning.

A graduate in medicine from The Queen's University of Belfast, Andrew worked for over two years in the Antrim Area and Causeway Hospitals. He previously worked for the Northern Ireland Regional Medical Physics Agency, researching blood flow in the eye.

Health Promoting Schools success

The organisational development of schools that enables them to support and protect the health of pupils, staff and the community linked to them has been the central focus of the pilot Health Promoting Schools (HPS) initiative, which is managed by the HPA.

The initiative has now reached its final year and the regional evaluation commissioned by the HPA has confirmed its success in meeting the aims, objectives and expected outcomes. The HPA will continue to advise the DHSSPS on issues related to the possible mainstreaming of the healthy schools framework.

The final schools from each of the five Education and Library Boards have received recognition certificates at celebration days in Antrim, Omagh, Armagh, Downpatrick and Belfast. The occasion provided the opportunity for the schools to give a brief presentation on examples of good practice that have been achieved through their participation in the HPS initiative.

Presentations by pupils, ranging from the 'dancercise' routines from St Mary's High School in Newry to a sketch on 'bog standard toilets' from Ballinderry Primary School, were among the highlights.

It is significant that the recently released policy and guidance document from the Department of Education, *Extended Schools. Schools, families, communities – working together*, recognises the role of healthy schools. It states that the Department and the DHSSPS are: "Developing a new healthy schools policy to support schools as settings that enable children and young people to learn and develop in ways that support good physical and mental health and wellbeing. Extended Schools will have an important role in helping to deliver this policy, by working with others to establish a whole school approach to health and wellbeing. Schools are therefore asked to pay particular attention to this aspect of Extended Schools."

The document recognises the success and achievements of the HPS initiative in laying the foundations for mainstreaming healthy schools in Northern Ireland.

'Breastfeeding welcome here' celebrates first year

The HPA is celebrating a successful first year of the 'Breastfeeding welcome here' scheme, a Northern Ireland initiative to support breastfeeding mums when they are out and about with their babies.

Janet Calvert, Regional Breastfeeding Coordinator at the HPA, commented: "We are delighted with the response we have received from businesses. There are over 70 businesses and community facilities in the scheme, ranging from coffee shops and restaurants to community centres and libraries. Joining the scheme gives organisations an opportunity to boost their business and benefit the local community at the same time."

The latest breastfeeding figures for Northern Ireland show that there has been a rise of almost 10% in the rate of babies being breastfed at birth, with 63% breastfed in 2005 compared to 54% in 2000. However, local breastfeeding rates are consistently lower than in England, Scotland and Wales, and continue to be one of the lowest in Europe.

The Streat Café in Newtownards is the latest business to join the scheme. Owner Paul Dalzell said: "We decided to join the 'Breastfeeding welcome here' scheme and are happy to support and welcome the breastfeeding mums."

The 'Breastfeeding welcome here' scheme has been developed by the HPA in partnership with breastfeeding support groups across Northern Ireland. Businesses that are open to the general public, have non-smoking facilities and support breastfeeding are eligible to join the scheme.



At the first birthday celebrations are, from left, Susan Shaw with baby Hugh, Simon Shaw, Kerrie Milby from the Streat Café, and Janet Calvert, Regional Breastfeeding Coordinator, HPA.

Health Promoting Hospitals conferences

The 14th International Health Promoting Hospitals (HPH) conference took place in Palanga, Lithuania, on 25–26 May and was attended by HPA-based Health Promoting Health Service Programme regional coordinator Barbara Porter. The conference theme was 'Integrating health promotion: prevention, treatment and care for chronic diseases across the health system' and included two poster presentations from the Mater HSS Trust that demonstrated the potential for hospitals to deliver the health improvement agenda.

Keynote speakers reinforced the need for joined-up planning and delivery between hospitals and the primary care teams, especially in the management of chronic diseases. The HPA-produced CINDI report *A strategy to prevent chronic disease in Europe: a focus on public health action* was referred to as a good resource. It can be found on the HPA's corporate website at www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk

For further information and to access the papers from the conference, which will be available in the autumn, go to www.univie.ac.at/hph/palanga2006/ The 15th annual HPH conference will be in Vienna on 11–13 April 2007 and further information is available on the website www.univie.ac.at/hph/vienna2007

Meanwhile, the third all-island HPH conference entitled 'HPH at the forefront of change' will be held in Wexford on 19–20 October 2006. The conference will examine the contributions HPH can make to the current changes occurring within both healthcare systems. The deadline for submission of abstracts and posters is 18 August 2006. For further information, contact Barbara Porter at b.porter@hpani.org.uk or Tel: 028 9031 1611.

TB and BCG booklets go multi-lingual

The HPA's series of public information booklets to inform both professionals and the public about TB, and the new targeted 'neonatal and others at risk' BCG programme, are now available in nine other languages.

BCG and your baby – protecting babies against TB provides advice on the BCG vaccination, which offers protection against TB for those babies at risk. *Tuberculosis – the disease, its treatment and prevention* offers general advice on the control of TB.

Both booklets have been translated into nine regional or minority languages and are available as PDF files for downloading from the DHSSPS website. The languages are Arabic, Complex Chinese, Hindi, Irish, Lithuanian, Portuguese, Russian, Simplified Chinese and Urdu.



The English versions are available from central health promotion resource services, maternity units, health visitors and GP practices. We will continue to contribute to the ongoing development of immunisation materials with the production of a range of new information for the childhood immunisation programme. This should follow the anticipated introduction in 2006 of a new vaccine for babies and booster doses of some existing vaccines.

Mental Health First Aid pilot evaluation

The HPA is working in partnership with Cooperation and Working Together (CAWT) and Aware Defeat Depression to pilot Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) – a programme to address the promotion of positive mental health to young people aged 16–25 in the border regions of Ireland. MHFA was originally developed in Australia and adapted for the Scottish Executive's national programme for improving mental health and wellbeing. It consists of 12 hours of evidence-based training that teaches participants how to recognise the symptoms of mental health problems. The course also shows participants how to provide initial help to a person with symptoms of a mental health problem and how to guide a person with symptoms to seek professional help.

As part of the pilot, 15 instructors from the health sector and Aware Defeat Depression were trained in the delivery of MHFA. Instructors then delivered 21 MHFA courses to staff who work with, or are in contact with, young people.

To determine the effectiveness of the pilot, the HPA is conducting an evaluation to examine the acceptability and appropriateness of MHFA in the CAWT region.

The evaluation also aims to identify the key factors in achieving sustainability of the programme for future roll-out across the region. The research methods employed in the evaluation include administering a pre- and post-training questionnaire to instructors and participants. A focus group discussion was also conducted with instructors.

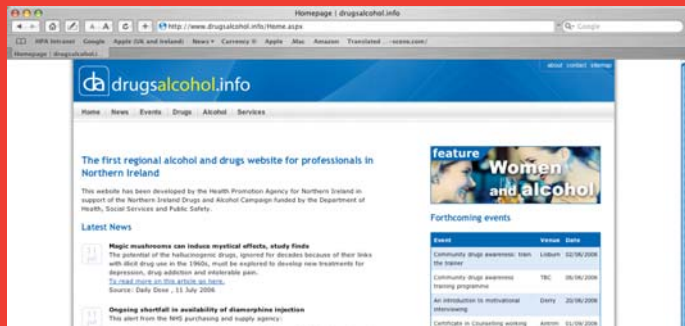
Initial findings from the instructors' perspectives are promising. It was



widely expressed by instructors that MHFA was beneficial in raising participants' mental health literacy levels, as well as tackling the issue of stigma. Demand from participants to take part in the pilot and demand for future courses were both high. Instructors also felt confident that participants gained knowledge in mental health literacy and were motivated after the training to apply their knowledge to someone with a mental health problem.

Further data input and analyses of participants' views are currently under way. A final report on the full evaluation will be presented to CAWT in the autumn and will be available on the HPA website as a PDF file by the end of the year.

Northern Ireland drugs and alcohol website



The HPA has redeveloped the regional drugs and alcohol website for professionals www.drugsalcohol.info which went live in June. A number of new features have been added, including the latest research and information on both binge drinking and women and alcohol. The site has been further improved by a searchable database of drug and alcohol services.

Victoria Creasy, Senior Manager for Public Health at the HPA, said: "www.drugsalcohol.info aims to support those people who carry out vital work to prevent and identify substance misuse, and who treat or care for those with drug or alcohol problems, so they can continue providing good quality services to those who need them."

Rob Phipps, Regional Drugs and Alcohol Strategy Team Coordinator, DHSSPS, which has funded the website, said: "The website will make an important contribution to meeting the outcomes of the new alcohol and drug strategy; in particular, informing and disseminating concepts and examples of good practice, as well as providing links to education and training for professionals."

Dr David Stewart, Director of Public Health, Eastern HSSB, has also supported the redevelopment.

Information materials will be distributed to those working in the area of alcohol and drugs across Northern Ireland to further promote the website, which currently receives around 8,000 visits per month.

Breastfeeding conference

The Health Service Executive in the Republic of Ireland, the HPA and the Association of Lactation Consultants in Ireland are organising an all-island breastfeeding conference on Friday 6 October 2006 in the Conference Centre, Croke Park, Dublin.

The conference theme is 'Breastfeeding in a bottle feeding culture'. The keynote speaker will be Dr Jack Newman, a paediatrician from Toronto who is well known for his expertise in breastfeeding. Several other speakers from Ireland and the UK will also be presenting. The conference fee will be €60, or £40, for health professionals and €30, or £20, for voluntary breastfeeding support workers. Anyone interested in booking a place should contact Naomi Boland on Tel: +353 1 2744295 or Email: Naomi.boland1@maild.hse.ie

Actively Ageing Well writing competition

In April 2006, people from 60 groups across Northern Ireland were invited to describe, in a short story or poem, their experiences of participating in physical activity as part of the Actively Ageing Well (AAW) initiative, a five year community development initiative created by Age Concern Northern Ireland and the HPA, with funding from the Big Lottery Fund.

AAW aims to improve the health and wellbeing of people aged 50 and over through the promotion, development and delivery of safe, sustainable physical activity programmes. Partnerships with additional support from local Health and Social Services Trusts and councils have also contributed to the overall success of the work.

For the competition, entrants had to say in their own words what being part of the AAW project had meant to them and what kind of activities they took part in. It was an excellent way to capture the benefits of physical activity through very real and moving examples.

Winner of first prize in the poetry section was Marjorie Cassells with the following poem:

***'Now look in the mirror and what do I see
Not that same old face, I see a brand new me
So take my advice in this story I tell
Join a group! Get active! Get well'***

Lyla Hynds, who received first prize in the story section, said: "I was really delighted and excited to receive this prize on behalf of my own club, the Nifty Fifty Plus in Portadown. Our involvement in AAW just proves that when people put the effort into improving their health, they really receive the benefits."

A selection of entries will feature in a publication later in the year. This will be made available at an AAW celebratory event on 20 September 2006 in the Europa Hotel, Belfast. For further information, contact Age Concern Northern Ireland on Tel: 028 9024 5729.



Wading through the entries are, back from left, Billy Simpson, Belfast Telegraph; Paddy Joe McClean; Elma Greer, Age Concern NI and AAW representative; front from left, Linda Barclay, HPA and AAW representative; Walter Love, BBC; and Baroness May Blood. (Panel member Alison Beattie, Age Concern NI, was unavailable for the photo).

Focus on Healthy Living Centres

Through the Healthy Living Centre (HLC) programme, the



Healthy Living Centres
Support and Development Programme

HPA is continuing to work with HLCs to develop support in the broad range of issues they face. Networking and sharing information is an ongoing programme.

A focus day held in May in Loughry College provided an opportunity for HLCs to present their work and, through a facilitated session, find out more about recovering or funding the full costs of projects or services (Full Cost Recovery).

Among the 19 HLCs in Northern Ireland is the TASSK (Targeting Access to Service Skills and Knowledge) HLC, which promotes health and wellbeing in the Banbridge and Craigavon areas. It has been used by around 12,000 people over the last four years, 10% of the area's population.

Set up in 2002 following a successful New Opportunities Fund application (now Big Lottery), TASSK currently applies for follow-up funding from a number of sources and is also researching models to achieve sustainability. TASSK operates a partnership model, working closely with over 40 organisations that offer assistance in meeting the health and wellbeing needs of many communities.

Over the past four years, TASSK has been involved in programmes or services covering the following important areas:

- palliative care;
- drugs and alcohol;
- men's health;
- Cook it!
- child safety;
- Fit and Well – development of a GP referral system for people requiring a health regime;
- suicide prevention;
- child safety;
- respite, training and support for young carers.

In partnership with Investing for Health, several new and innovative programmes have been organised, offering advice on smoke alarms, food cooperatives and healthy communities. TASSK also funds five organisations that promote health through lay health workers, and promotes health and wellbeing to individual organisations through involvement on management committees and focus groups.

To find out about other work or for more information, please contact TASSK on Tel: 028 4062 9930 or Email: info@tassk.org

Board meeting

The next meeting of the Board of the HPA will be on Thursday 10 August. The meeting will take place at 3.30pm at the HPA offices, 18 Ormeau Avenue, Belfast BT2 8HS. Members of the public are welcome to attend.

Positive feedback for His 'n' Hers play

In autumn 2005, educational theatre company Replay Productions visited 23 schools and 7 arts or community centres across Northern Ireland with the His 'n' Hers play aimed at pupils aged 14. Issues covered included sexual maturity, teenage relationships, pregnancy and parenting. The play was designed to be used in conjunction with the Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) Guidelines for schools.

The HPA assisted Replay by advising on content and the development of supporting materials, and by carrying out an evaluation of the production, consisting of three parts:

- Pre-production and post-production questionnaires with pupils at two schools, carried out to assess changes in pupils' willingness to talk to parents or other people about sensitive issues, information seeking behaviour, and attitudes towards issues around sex.
- A survey of pupils who had seen the production, to assess their opinions of the play and materials.
- A survey of teachers at 13 schools that staged the production, to investigate opinions about the play and materials.

All teachers reported that the play had fulfilled their expectations, with no negative feedback from either parents or teachers. As well as contributing towards the RSE guidelines, teachers highlighted that His 'n' Hers fulfilled other aspects of the curriculum, including drama and English. They added that the production could be used with older pupils, in youth clubs, and that they would recommend the production to other schools.

Pupils picked up on the issues of pregnancy, relationships and pressure to have sex. Over three-quarters of the 145 pupils who completed the questionnaire reported that they had enjoyed the play, with 8 out of 10 agreeing that the play was up to date and suitable for both boys and girls.

Analysis is ongoing and findings will be presented over the summer. A final report will be available as a PDF file on the HPA website in the autumn.

IfH update

The HPA is currently developing plans for a series of Investing for Health (IfH) thematic workshops. These workshops will focus on the objectives within the IfH strategy that are making progress, as well as activities and best practice. In addition to highlighting progress towards the targets within each objective, the workshops will seek to identify areas for future development.



Work has also begun on the annual IfH update report for 2006, which will showcase regional and local work that contributes to the IfH strategy. The report will be available at the end of the year.

Training and events

Mental Health First Aid 24–25 August and 21–22 September 2006

Following the completion of a pilot project in partnership with CAWT and Aware Defeat Depression, the HPA plans to organise two Mental Health First Aid training events.

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is a 12 hour, evidence-based programme designed to improve the mental health literacy of the community. The training course is based on the better known concept of first aid training, teaching the participant to recognise the signs and symptoms of someone with mental health problems. It also offers advice on dealing with a crisis situation by guiding someone towards professional and other help.

If you are interested in attending either of the planned events, or would like further information, please contact Claire Hind at Tel: 028 9031 1611 or Email: c.hind@hpani.org.uk

Nutrition matters for the early years: healthy eating for the under fives in childcare September and October 2006

In recognition of the important role that child carers can play in promoting and protecting the health of children in their care, the HPA, in partnership with the Northern Ireland Childminding Association, NIPPA, the Childcare Partnerships, the Early Years teams, Oral Health Promotion and Community Dietitians, has revised and updated the publication *Nutrition matters for the early years: healthy eating for the under fives in childcare*. This offers comprehensive, straightforward guidance on providing a healthy, balanced diet for the under fives, and includes other helpful information.

We have planned a series of evening seminars to distribute the resource throughout September and October 2006. There will also be an opportunity at each seminar to win £50 worth of vouchers for either the Early Learning Centre or EDCO.

For further information, contact Lesley Blackstock on Tel: 028 9031 1611 or Email: l.blackstock@hpani.org.uk

Promoting healthy prisons conference 12 September 2006

For further information on this conference, its parallel sessions at Lagan Valley Island, a PDF file of the flyer, or to submit an online booking form, visit the events/training section at www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk

Child and adolescent mental health 19 September 2006

Due to the popularity of this event, to be held at the Comfort Hotel in Antrim, the Design for Living Partnership (HPA, Action Mental Health and the Youth Council for NI) has invited Simon Ward, Specialist Senior Educational Psychologist at the Children, Schools and Families Service in Sefton, to repeat the young people and self-esteem seminar on child and adolescent mental health.

The seminar flyer and online booking form is available to download under events/training at www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk

Adult binge drinking seminar 21 September 2006

The HPA is launching a binge drinking campaign in October 2006 to raise awareness of sensible drinking guidelines and highlight the health risks associated with drinking above this level.

We will be holding a half-day seminar in the Comfort Hotel, Antrim, on Thursday 21 September to provide information on the new campaign, as well as the opportunity to pose questions to a panel of experts from key organisations tackling adult binge drinking. The campaign and seminar have been funded through the Northern Ireland Drug and Alcohol Campaign by the DHSSPS. The event is free of charge and the closing date for bookings, which can be made on our website, is 25 August 2006.

Motivational interviewing 25–26 September and 23–24 October 2006

This four day workshop at Malone House in Belfast has been designed to address the issues of changing health behaviour. It aims to equip participants with a basic knowledge of the principles and practical skills of motivational interviewing.

The workshop will focus on effective skills in handling the interchange between practitioner and client. It will also address the important issue of constructive conversations that increase the likelihood of positive behaviour change. The course flyer and online booking form is available to download under events/training at www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk

Young people and mental health Autumn 2006/11 December 2006

The Design for Living Partnership (HPA, Action Mental Health and the Youth Council for NI) is planning further young people and self-esteem seminars for 2006/2007:

Physical activity and how this impacts on the mental and emotional health of young people Autumn 2006

This seminar will be facilitated by Professor Ken Fox, Professor of Exercise and Health Science at the University of Bristol.

Young people and self-esteem: self-esteem and relationships 11 December 2006

Dr Tony Humphreys, a leading consultant clinical psychologist, will facilitate this seminar on self-esteem and relationships.

For further information, please contact Claire Hind on Tel: 028 9031 1611 or Email: c.hind@hpani.org.uk

All-island HPH conference 19–20 October 2006

The third HPH national conference, 'HPH at the forefront of change', will be held at the Ferrycarrig Hotel in Wexford on 19–20 October. It will examine, under a number of headings, the contributions that HPH can make to the current changes occurring within the healthcare system, north and south. This will offer an opportunity for examples of good practice to be shared. Information on the call for abstracts and poster presentations is available from Barbara Porter at Tel: 028 9031 1611 or Email: b.porter@hpani.org.uk

Healthy workplaces pilot training course

The HPA is developing a pilot healthy workplaces training course on workplace health issues for people who support small businesses, ie with 10–50 employees, and who work in the areas of occupational health, health and safety, environmental health or health promotion. A training needs analysis is currently being completed so that training can be tailored to learners' specific needs. It is anticipated training will address the following:

- the settings approach to developing a healthy workplace;
- developing healthy workplace programmes, including needs assessment and action planning;
- different workplace health issues.

Each delegate will receive a handbook, an organisational health assessment tool and access to an online employee questionnaire. All of these tools can then be used by businesses to develop their healthy workplace programme. A limited number of places are available on the course and we invite individuals who work with small businesses on workplace health issues, and who are interested in taking part, to contact Julie Hill at the HPA. The training is free and will take place in October 2006.

Training will be evaluated at several different stages and since part of the evaluation will measure the impact on businesses, delegates should be working with, or have access to, a business interested in the development of a healthy workplace programme. The training course and associated resources and tools are the outcomes of the HPA's pilot Healthy Workplace initiative, Work Well.



For further information, contact Julie Hill at the HPA on Tel: 028 9031 1611 or Email: j.hill@hpani.org.uk

Coordinating centre for WHO HPH network

The HPA has signed an agreement with the World Health Organization (WHO) to act as the Regional Coordinating Centre of WHO HPH Network for Northern Ireland from 1 May. This fulfils part of the HPA's remit as a WHO Collaborating Centre for Training and Research in Communications and Information Technology in Health Promotion and Disease Prevention.

The international network comprises over 700 member hospitals from across Europe, with interest growing in other countries, including the USA and Canada. Many of the issues and concerns are common to members and the network provides the opportunity to share evidence on developing best practice and joint projects.

As coordinating centre, the HPA will act as the focal point between member hospitals in Northern Ireland, the International HPH Network and WHO. The HPA will also represent Northern Ireland hospitals at the HPH annual meeting.

If you have any HPH-related queries, please contact Barbara Porter at the HPA, on Tel: 028 9031 1611 or Email: b.porter@hpani.org.uk

Draft suicide prevention strategy

The draft suicide prevention strategy *Protect life: a shared vision* was launched by former Minister for Health, Shaun Woodward, at an event in the Culloden Hotel in March. A 12 week consultation period followed, finishing on 21 June. The HPA facilitated five public meetings which were attended by almost 250 people, as well as a number of smaller events held with key stakeholder groups.

Many of the public meetings were attended by families who have been bereaved by suicide, and service providers from a range of statutory, voluntary and community organisations. The meetings provided an opportunity to raise awareness of the draft strategy, ask questions and comment on any aspect of the content. Colm Donaghy, Chair of the Suicide Task Force, Dr Brian Gaffney from the HPA, and Martin Bell from DHSSPS attended the meetings to answer questions. The meetings also provided an opportunity for individuals to complete the consultation questionnaire, or consider their organisational response, having had the opportunity to discuss the draft.

Several organisations working with young people helped the consultation process by holding meetings and events, consulting young people on the strategy and providing feedback to the DHSSPS on their important issues. Acknowledgement for their help and support is given to Voice of Young People in Care (VOYPIC), the Rainbow Project, NICCY, Include Youth and the Voluntary Services Bureau, supported by the Youth Council for Northern Ireland. Many other organisations were encouraged to respond to the draft, including Disability Action, the Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities, Animate and Barnardos.

Following the consultation, the DHSSPS received over 100 written responses from individuals and organisations, which are currently being considered. It is envisaged that the strategy will be published later in the year.

Childhood immunisation programme changes

Changes to the childhood immunisation programme take place from 4 September 2006 and include:

- the introduction of pneumococcal vaccines for babies at 2, 4 and 15 months;
- the timing of the Men C vaccine – (first and second doses given at 3 and 4 months, and the third dose combined with a booster dose of Hib at a new 12 month visit);
- a pneumococcal catch-up programme for children under two years.

Parents will not need to do anything until contacted. New leaflets will be produced for the public and professionals and will be distributed before the beginning of the programme, with further copies available from the central health promotion resource services. A TV ad will also be developed by the HPA and shown in September.

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

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No Smoking Day evaluation

This year's No Smoking Day (NSD) took place on Wednesday 8 March. The slogan for the UK's 23rd NSD event was 'Serious about stopping smoking? You can do it.' As in previous years, the HPA provided funding to include Northern Ireland in the quantitative research conducted annually in Great Britain (GB) to assess awareness of, and participation in, the NSD event.

The questions were entered on a Northern Ireland omnibus survey, with 1,006 interviews carried out on a representative sample of the adult population aged 16 and over.

The evaluation found that 80% of respondents were aware that 8 March was NSD, a figure similar to previous years (82% in 2005) and one that remains significantly higher than that in GB (61%). Awareness remains higher among smokers (87%) than among non-smokers (78%). Awareness was highest among those smoking 21 or more cigarettes per day (94%) and lowest among those smoking five or less (82%). There was least awareness in those aged 16–24 years (75%).

Nearly a quarter (23%) of smokers in Northern Ireland who were aware of NSD participated in the day by quitting for a time, cutting down or accessing information about quitting. This year, 14% of smokers aware of NSD made a quit attempt, compared with 16% last year. In contrast to previous years, more men (17%) made a quit attempt on the day than women (11%), with 25–34 year olds the most likely to try.

A PDF file of the summary evaluation report will be available soon on the HPA website.



Inform is published bimonthly 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 the editorial office by email at t.sheridan@hpani.org.uk or contact us in writing at the address below.

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www.drugsalcohol.info
www.getalifegetactive.com
www.smokefreenorthernireland.com
www.thesnackpack.net
www.up-2-you.net

Web are we now?

We have recently finished the redevelopment of the regional drugs and alcohol website for professionals at www.drugsalcohol.info. The new look site went live in June, with key features such as a searchable database of services. This allows users to list organisations by area, create customised PDF files and add organisations onto Microsoft Outlook. The site also enables users to subscribe to emails on site updates and to search listed conferences, courses and training events by area.

We are fully committed to improving all of our communications, including building websites, according to standards laid down by the Government and the international World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), which works to develop web standards, protocols and guidelines to ensure long-term growth for the web. To ensure that we keep up to date with new and emerging technologies, the HPA web development team recently attended the @Media 2006 conference in London. One main area of interest was the newly released Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (WCAG), against which the team is reviewing and evaluating current design methodologies and processes.

Feedback is always welcome on any aspect of our websites, publications and communications. Please email t.sheridan@hpani.org.uk with any comments.