

Inform

Issue 51

February / March 2007

Going smoke-free gives everyone space to breathe

'Space to breathe', the first phase of a public information campaign to help prepare the public, employers and businesses in Northern Ireland for the new smoke-free legislation, which comes into effect on Monday 30 April 2007, was launched at the HPA on 8 January 2007 by Health Minister Paul Goggins.

Launching the campaign, Mr Goggins said: "This legislation is extremely important and will have a positive impact on the health of people across Northern Ireland. It is therefore essential that we all understand our rights and responsibilities."

The campaign has been developed by the HPA on behalf of the DHSSPS and aims to raise awareness about the new law and encourage compliance and support. It runs from 8 January up until 30 April.

Television, poster and radio advertising forms part of this campaign. Print materials including guidance information and no-smoking signage for businesses, posters and a public information leaflet will also be distributed in support of the campaign.

A new website www.spacetobreathe.org.uk has been developed and will provide the public and businesses with information about the legislation as well as information about second-hand smoke and smoking cessation support.

The legislation will mean that smoking will no longer be permitted in enclosed and substantially enclosed public places and workplaces.



Health Minister Paul Goggins MP, left, and Dr Brian Gaffney, Chief Executive HPA, launch the 'Space to breathe' public information campaign in the run-up to the 30 April introduction of the smoke-free legislation.

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

INSIDE:

- No Smoking Day campaign
- ASDA supports breastfeeding
- Schools' health toolkit
- Public attitudes to mental health



**Health
Promotion
Agency**

New appointments



Sheelagh Hughes

Sheelagh has joined the HPA as a part-time Publications Officer on a fixed term contract to cover a maternity leave. A graduate in modern languages, she is an experienced writer and editor and runs her own company Editorial Solutions. She holds a journalism qualification and a diploma from the Chartered Institute of Public Relations.

Hepatitis C translations

The HPA has produced translations of the leaflet *Hepatitis C: could I be at risk?* in Arabic, Bengali, Chinese (complex), Irish, Lithuanian and Portuguese. These translations of the English resource for the public were commissioned by the DHSSPS in support of its action plan for the prevention, management and control of hepatitis C in Northern Ireland.

The translations are available from the DHSSPS website at www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/phealth Along with the public leaflet, the HPA has already produced a pack on the new programme aimed at professionals. The leaflets and packs were distributed following the launch of the action plan on 17 January.

Translations of material in support of the DHSSPS's childhood immunisation campaign launched last autumn are also underway. The five information leaflets aimed at parents are being translated into 10 regional and minority ethnic languages. These are: Arabic, Chinese (complex), Chinese (simplified), Hindi, Irish, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian and Urdu.

These will also be available to download from the DHSSPS website when completed.

No Smoking Day 2007

No Smoking Day 2007 takes place on Wednesday 14 March and this year the campaign aims to communicate that No Smoking Day is a trigger point for smokers who want to start a new, healthier lifestyle, free from smoking.

The HPA will be running a television advertising campaign from 5 March, which will remind smokers how many days are left until No Smoking Day. This will give smokers the opportunity to mentally prepare themselves to give up on 14 March. The television advertisement will also promote the Smokers' Helpline 0800 85 85 85.

Meanwhile, a television and radio advertising campaign promoting the range of help and support available to smokers who are trying to stop smoking went on air on 28 December 2006. This campaign will continue to run in January and March.

Supermarket joins 'Breastfeeding welcome here' scheme

ASDA will be the first national supermarket group to join the 'Breastfeeding welcome here' scheme.

The 'Breastfeeding welcome here' scheme promotes businesses and organisations where mums are welcome to breastfeed their baby when they are out and about. Members of the scheme display a window sticker and certificate stating 'Breastfeeding welcome here'.

Nearly 100 businesses and organisations from all over Northern Ireland have already joined the scheme and others are going through the process to become members and be listed on the regional breastfeeding website www.breastfedbabies.org

Thirteen ASDA stores across Northern Ireland are joining the scheme and Regional Breastfeeding Coordinator Janet Calvert of the HPA welcomed the move: "We commend ASDA for its proactive approach and hope others will follow its lead."

According to Heather Lyons, Operations Manager for ASDA: "This is a very significant development for ASDA and I'm delighted that our Northern Ireland stores have taken this lead in supporting the HPA's drive to make breastfeeding part of everyday life."

"At ASDA we aim to be one step ahead and, as the first supermarket to join the 'Breastfeeding welcome here' scheme, we hope to show how taking small but significant steps can help improve lifestyles by making everyday events, such as shopping, so much more family friendly."



Celebrating the ASDA adoption of the 'Breastfeeding welcome here' scheme are, from left, Heather Lyons, Operations Manager ASDA; Anthea Lappin with baby Eva; and Janet Calvert, Regional Breastfeeding Coordinator, HPA.

Planning for health toolkit for schools

A toolkit to assist school development planning for health has been published as a PDF file on the HPA website at <http://www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk/schooltoolkit>

It is aimed at helping principals and staff consider what makes a school a healthy place for everyone, and is linked to the creation of healthy settings as highlighted in *Investing for Health*.

The toolkit has been developed as a result of extensive work with teachers during the recent three year pilot initiative on developing health promoting schools in Northern Ireland.

Over 200 schools took part in this initiative. The toolkit was tested with them and contains:

- information on the recognised criteria for a healthy school;
- indicators of good practice for each of the criteria;
- an audit process to help schools identify strengths, areas for improvement and priorities for action;
- a range of audit tools to involve pupils, staff, parents and external agencies and provide essential knowledge for planning.

Information about the toolkit and how to access it is being distributed to all schools in Northern Ireland.



Health professionals back new e-learning site

The HPA is developing a new e-learning site on 'brief interventions in smoking cessation' which aims to make training more accessible to people who may not have the time and flexibility to attend face-to-face training sessions.

This is in response to a training needs assessment carried out with healthcare professionals, including GPs, practice nurses, community pharmacists and dentists. This found that over 80% of health professionals would participate in an e-learning course if it was relevant to their needs. The needs assessment also identified a high level of interest in training in smoking cessation.

An advisory group comprising representatives from key partner organisations has been overseeing this project, which is now in its final stages. A hard-copy version of the content and design for the e-learning site has been completed and reviewed by a range of healthcare professionals. The site is now being built and tested for usability.

It is anticipated that the site will be launched this spring, and will encourage and support professionals to carry out brief interventions with smokers. Brief interventions have been shown to be an effective way of getting smokers to quit.

CEMACH newsletter

The CEMACH regional office issued its first newsletter with the HPA in December. The aim of the newsletter is to disseminate information about current and planned CEMACH projects to all health professionals who contribute to the work.

It aims to present a good balance of current work being undertaken by the CEMACH regional office for Northern Ireland, other work throughout the United Kingdom and advance notice of upcoming work and events.

If you are not on the mailing list to receive the *CEMACH newsletter* please contact the CEMACH regional office, Email: northern.ireland@cemach.org.uk or Tel: 028 9031 1611. The newsletter can be downloaded at www.cemach.org.uk/northernireland.htm

Get active cash grants

The Get Active awards initiative is funded by the DHSSPS and has been developed by the HPA in support of the *Northern Ireland physical activity strategy*.

This is the ninth year of the get active awards and so far the scheme has helped 1,027 local groups to improve health through physical activity. Evaluation has shown that the scheme has met its objectives and been an important motivator in helping people increase and sustain their level of physical activity.



Application forms are being widely distributed and can also be downloaded from the publications section of the HPA website under the area of work for physical activity.

Applicants will be notified about the outcome of their applications by Friday, 18 May.

Actively Ageing Well

The five year Actively Ageing Well initiative delivered by Age Concern Northern Ireland and the HPA, which was funded by the Big Lottery, concludes activity under this funding phase in June 2007.

The initiative aimed to promote better health and wellbeing through physical activity and involved over 60 community and older people's groups.

Evaluation of the initiative was undertaken by Community Evaluation Northern Ireland. A summary report *Actively ageing well: key achievements*, which outlines the benefits, successes and key learning outcomes, has been produced and disseminated.

A link to a PDF of the report will be available from the HPA website under the area of work, 'Alliances for health'. The report will also be available on the Age Concern Northern Ireland website which can be accessed at www.ageconcernni.org

HPA steps up campaign

The HPA ran a campaign in January to encourage people to get active. The campaign 'Every small step is a forward step' included television, bus and poster advertising, all highlighting the benefits of 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on five or more days of the week and the easy ways to fit physical activity into the day.

The campaign also included a competition to win step counters with Downtown and Cool FM Radio.

The advertising campaign ran from 3 until 31 January 2007. Information leaflets and posters were also distributed to GP surgeries, pharmacies, schools, and libraries throughout Northern Ireland.

Prisons event feedback

A 'Promoting healthy prisons' conference last September, organised by the HPA and the Northern Ireland Prison Service and aimed at raising awareness of health issues for the whole prison population, was attended by 161 delegates from across Ireland and the UK.

Feedback on the event was very positive. Delegates highlighted the quality and substance of presentations, which covered the health issues of the prison population and the use of a whole prison approach. When asked what impact the conference would have on their work, delegates responded that it had increased their knowledge, understanding and awareness of the issues within prisons, and would promote a focus on health promotion.

Focus on HLCs

East Belfast Community Health Information Project

The HPA facilitates a support and development programme for the 19 Healthy Living Centres (HLCs) in Northern Ireland. Among these HLCs is East Belfast Community Health Information Project (EBCHIP).

EBCHIP is engaging with 84 east Belfast residents as trainee lay health information workers. These are all volunteers who have devoted over 2,600 hours this year (10,000 hours since the project began) with the primary aim of benefiting the wider community and addressing the source of ill health through social networks and engaging in public policy change.

The training has allowed for many new and increased initiatives in the east Belfast area including: increased availability and uptake of health check screening in community venues, increased accessibility of acupuncture for addiction issues and stress relief, and a community reference point for a wide range of health needs.

The lay health workers have taken on the role of referring relevant health information to their neighbourhood contacts. Over 15,000 people have been reached since the start of the project.

Lay health workers take a lead in prioritising the most relevant issues that affect their community and work collectively to bring about change. They have organised innovative ways of addressing these in a wide variety of settings such as local pubs, hairdressers and cinemas, and have covered a range of issues such as diabetes, hypertension,

suicide prevention, drug and alcohol awareness, stress, nutrition, men's isolation and medical services.

The success of the project has been achieved through people passing on information in everyday situations, so that signposting people to relevant services has become incorporated into local people's way of life.

For further information on EBCHIP, see www.ebchip.org or contact Alan Houston, Project Coordinator, on Tel: 028 9046 7914 or Email alan@eastbelfast.com



EBCHIP lay health information workers celebrate their training achievements at an awards ceremony: back from left, Ian Kerr, Alan Houston, Project Coordinator; front from left, Tom Kinnier, George Bell, Billy Carson, Billy Brooks, Gerry Potts.

Research shows public attitudes to mental health

To mark World Mental Health Day last October, the HPA organised a seminar to launch the findings of research carried out to establish public attitudes to mental health in Northern Ireland and to engage with key stakeholders on the planned public information campaign to address mental health.

Findings from the research, which was carried out in March and April 2006, indicated that attitudes to mental health are very complex. The survey revealed that people do not immediately think of mental health when asked to consider health problems facing Northern Ireland. Knowledge about specific problems is very limited, with the youngest and oldest age groups being the least knowledgeable.

People greatly underestimate the level of mental health problems experienced. In addition, when asked if they themselves had experienced a mental health problem, 15% admitted they had. However, studies estimate that the actual figure is around one in five (20%). This under-reporting may be due to stigma about the issue, or lack of awareness.

The issue of stigma is complex and this was explored through attitudinal questions relating to mental health and mental illness. There was no variation in responses between the genders or age groups; however, findings suggested a variation between social class grouping. Interestingly, the DE social class group displayed least stigma, with respondents more likely to admit that they themselves had experienced a mental health problem.

It is generally accepted that help-seeking is prevented by stigma, and findings from this survey suggest this is the case. However, the knowledge and literacy findings also suggest that for some, especially younger people and males, help-seeking is just as likely to be prevented by lack of recognition of a problem or symptoms. In turn, low knowledge of mental health is related to lack of willingness to

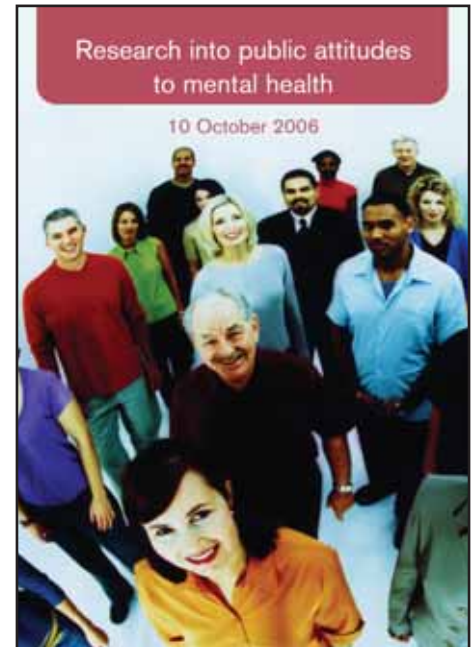
acknowledge the issue in society, which is perhaps due to stigma.

The survey also revealed that fewer people know or understand they can protect and improve their own mental health in the same way that physical health can be protected and improved.

The seminar was attended by 102 people from a wide range of organisations including local government departments, health, education and youth services, and by people with mental health problems and their carers.

Participants had the opportunity to discuss the findings from the research and to hear initial proposals for the public information campaign scheduled to run in March. The information campaign supports *Protect life: a shared vision, the Northern Ireland suicide prevention strategy and action plan 2006–2011*.

A further stakeholder consultation event was held on 31 January when details on the public information campaign were made available, along with an opportunity for discussion.



HLC regional alliance launched at Stormont

The Healthy Living Centre Regional Alliance (HLCRA) was officially launched on 11 December 2006 at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. The alliance aims to raise awareness of HLCs, demonstrate their impact and sustain their vision and approach.

The launch enabled HLC representatives to showcase their activities and inform guests of the key issues they face. The invited audience included MLAs and representatives from HLCs, a range of government departments, HSSBs and the voluntary and community sectors.

As part of the ongoing work to support HLCs, the HPA helped to facilitate meetings with the health spokespeople from the main political parties and key government departments and agencies in order to raise awareness of the work undertaken by HLCs.



Marking the launch of the HLCRA at Stormont are, from left, Kieran McCarthy MLA, Danny Power, Chairperson HLCRA, and Alice Quinn, Chair HPA.

Training and events – February–April 2007

7–15 February 2007

Assessing depression effectively

In response to *Protect life: a shared vision, the Northern Ireland suicide prevention strategy and action plan 2006–2011*, the HPA has organised five one day training seminars entitled 'Assessing depression effectively'. The seminars are targeted specifically at practice managers and practice nurses and are designed to:

- increase awareness and recognition of depression;
- develop a structured approach to assessment;
- introduce a range of evidence based tools for use in assessment;
- develop skills in assessing suicide risk.

The seminars are planned for the following dates:

Wednesday 7 February	Lagan Valley Island, Lisburn
Thursday 8 February	Malone House, Belfast
Friday 9 February	Glenavon House Hotel, Cookstown
Wednesday 14 February	Tara Centre, Omagh
Thursday 15 February	Seagoe Hotel, Portadown

For further information and a booking form, please contact Claire Hind at the HPA on Tel: 028 9031 1611 or Email: c.hind@hpani.org.uk

7 February–22 March 2007

GP depression-awareness training

The Northern Ireland suicide prevention strategy, *Protect life: a shared vision*, includes a commitment to the provision of training in depression awareness for GPs and other primary care professionals and staff.

The HPA in partnership with key representatives from HSSBs, primary care and public health, and the voluntary sector has developed a training programme for GPs. This programme, which is being organised in each HSSB area, will include a half-day training session, supported by supplementary literature and an interactive CD ROM.

In order to encourage a 'whole practice' approach, practices will be offered a follow-up event that will provide an opportunity to cascade the learning to others who are unable to attend and address wider practice issues in relation to detection, management and treatment of depression.

Funding for locum cover is available through your local GP Unit in your HSSB. The training sessions are as follows:

EHSSB

Wednesday 21 March 2007	12.30pm–5.15pm
Ramada Hotel, Belfast	
Thursday 22 March 2007	12.30pm–5.15pm
Lansdowne Hotel, Belfast	

NHSSB

Tuesday 27 February 2007	12.30pm–5.15pm
Clarion Hotel, Carrickfergus	
Wednesday 7 March 2007	12.30pm–5.15pm
Lodge Hotel, Coleraine	
Wednesday 21 March 2007	12.30pm–5.15pm
Ross Park Hotel, Kells	

SHSSB

Wednesday 7 February 2007	9.15am–2.00pm
Armagh City Hotel, Armagh	
Tuesday 13 February 2007	9.15am–2.00pm
Seagoe Hotel, Portadown	
Thursday 22 February 2007	9.15am–2.00pm
Canal Court Hotel, Newry	

WHSSB

Wednesday 21 February 2007	9.15am–2.00pm
City Hotel, Londonderry	
Tuesday 27 February 2007	9.15am–2.00pm
Manor House, Enniskillen	

An online booking form is available to submit or download under events/training at www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk

12 February 2007

Workplaces as settings to improve health

Jointly organised by the HPA and the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI), this morning seminar will explore the concept of a health promoting workplace. The approaches and learning from local programmes in workplace settings will be shared, providing an opportunity to identify key lessons and opportunities for future developments.

The seminar, which will take place at the Everglades Hotel, Londonderry, will be of interest to a broad range of stakeholders involved in working with or supporting workplaces, and practitioners working to improve health.

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

12–16 February 2007

Resource events for sexual health improvement

The Sexual Health Information Exchange Group (SHIEG), facilitated by the HPA, has introduced an initiative to support sexual health across Northern Ireland.

Members of the group wish to ensure that those who work on issues related to sexual health are aware of the help and resources in their geographic area. For this reason, a resource event has been organised in each HSSB area during the week of St Valentine's Day to enable the sharing of resources and raised awareness of local assistance in the drive to improve sexual health.

EHSSB

Wednesday 14 February 2007	10am–12.30pm
NICVA, Belfast	
'Be my Valentine'	
Contact: Cathy Curry, Tel: 028 9024 3143 or	
Email: cathy.curry@nwb.n-i.nhs.uk	
or Beth Gilhooly on elizabeth.gilhooly@nwb.n-i.nhs.uk	

NHSSB

Tuesday 13 February 2007	9.30am–1.15pm
The Elk, Toome	
'Fancy a date for Valentine's?' (sexual health resource show)	
Contact: Janice Armstrong, Tel: 028 2563 5575 or	
Email: janice.armstrong@homefirst.n-i.nhs.uk	

SHSSB

Friday 16 February 2007	10am–1pm
Mount Zion House, Lurgan	
Sexual health roadshow	
Contact: Lyndsey McCann, Tel: 028 3741 2424 or	
Email: hpromotion@adhsst.n-i.nhs.uk	

WHSSB

Thursday 15 February 2007	9.30am–1.15pm
Everglades Hotel, Londonderry	
'Fancy a date for Valentine's?' (sexual health resource show)	
Contact: Ann Linstrom, Tel: 028 7186 5127 or	
Email: alinstrom@westcare.n-i.nhs.uk	

14 March 2007

Reaffirming the role of healthy schools

A seminar aimed at reaffirming the whole school approach to health improvement is planned for Wednesday 14 March. The seminar will review the policy context for healthy schools from a European, national and local viewpoint. It will provide an opportunity to examine practice focused on encouraging a healthy schools approach, and consider lessons for future action.

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

27 March, 28–29 March 2007

Building capacity in mental health promotion

The HPA is delighted to announce two training opportunities in mental health. The focus of both courses will be on the practical application of learning and will help participants build skills, confidence and knowledge and become effective advocates for mental health promotion.

Introduction to evidence-based mental health promotion

This one day course on 27 March is relevant to participants from all sectors, including service users and those working in mental health services, wishing to develop their understanding of mental health promotion and their skills in evidence-based practice.

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

- understand the relationship between mental health and a wide range of health and social outcomes;
- reflect critically on the evidence base for mental health promotion interventions;
- develop indicators to measure success;
- demonstrate the contribution of mental health promotion in their work.

Advanced training for trainers course

This two day course on 28–29 March is an advanced course specifically designed for colleagues with an existing knowledge and understanding of mental health promotion although it does not require experience in the delivery of training.

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

- critically assess current debates about evidence of effectiveness and their relevance to promoting mental health;
- demonstrate the value of mental health promotion for different sectors and settings;
- apply social marketing techniques to marketing mental wellbeing;
- train others in the basics of mental health promotion.

Both courses will be facilitated by mental health promotion specialist Dr Lynne Friedli who has been involved in the development of policy and practice in public mental health throughout the UK and has worked extensively in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, providing training and policy support.

Places for both courses are limited to 20 participants per course. For further information, please contact Donna Beer on Tel: 028 9031 1611 or Email: d.beer@hpani.org.uk

11–13 April 2007

Health Promoting Hospitals

The 15th international conference on Health Promoting Hospitals (HPH) will be held this year in Vienna, Austria. The conference is entitled 'Contributions of HPH to the improvement of quality of care, quality of life and quality of health systems'. For further information and registration details visit <http://www.univie.ac.at/hph/vienna2007/>

19 April 2007

Healthy Living Centre celebration

A celebration event organised by the HPA, the Healthy Living Centre Regional Alliance and the Institute of Public Health will take place on 19 April, venue to be confirmed. The celebration will explore the work of HLCs over the last number of years and review their impact, successes and strengths as well as discuss how their vision and approach can be sustained.

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

Mental Health First Aid pilot training evaluation findings are positive

The HPA, in partnership with Cooperation and Working Together (CAWT) and Aware Defeat Depression, has been involved in piloting Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training in the border counties of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

This 12 hour evidence-based training was originally developed in Australia and adapted for the Scottish Executive's national programme for improving mental health.

Over 230 participants from a range of backgrounds attended the 12 hour evidence-based training which was facilitated by 15 instructors from the CAWT area who were trained as part of the pilot.

The findings from the evaluation of the training were positive, showing participants who received MHFA training were satisfied the training provided information that would allow them to recognise and provide initial help to someone with the symptoms of mental illness.

In the three month period after receiving training, almost 8 in 10 participants said they had encountered someone experiencing a mental health problem and offered MHFA.

Participants reported that MHFA had a positive effect on their knowledge, skill, motivation and confidence to offer someone with a mental health problem help. Results of the evaluation showed participants helped clients or colleagues at work, family and friends, callers to a helpline, those attending support groups and members of the general public.

In November 2006, the HPA organised an event to launch the findings from the pilot. This was attended by 98 people from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Participants heard from Betty Kitchener, one of the co-authors of the original programme in Australia, about the success of the MHFA programme and how it had been adapted in other countries.

The contribution of MHFA in meeting actions outlined in the *Promoting mental health strategy and action plan 2003–2008* and *Protect life: a shared vision, the Northern Ireland suicide prevention strategy and action plan 2006–2011* was clearly highlighted by the speakers at the event. Support for the programme to be adapted as an all-island initiative was overwhelmingly positive from the participants.

HPA Board meeting

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

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

A Healthy Service - Supporting health in hospitals

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

Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco

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

Breastfeeding

Janet Calvert – j.calvert@hpani.org.uk

Campaigns

Margaret McCrory
m.mccrory@hpani.org.uk

CEMACH

Dr Angela Bell – angela.bell@cemach.org.uk or
Terry Falconer – terry.falconer@cemach.org.uk

Healthy Schools

reception@hpani.org.uk

Health Promoting Workplaces

reception@hpani.org.uk

Human Resources

Fiona Campbell
f.campbell@hpani.org.uk

Investing for Health

Aodhan O'Donnell
a.odonnell@hpani.org.uk

Mental Health, Teenage Pregnancy and Sexual Health

Deirdre McNamee – d.mcnamee@hpani.org.uk

Nutrition, Physical Activity for the early years and Oral Health

Angela McComb – a.mccomb@hpani.org.uk

Publications

Ruth Knowles
r.knowles@hpani.org.uk

Public Relations

Jenny Dougan
j.dougan@hpani.org.uk or Rosemary McGaughey
r.mcgaughey@hpani.org.uk

Research

Naomi McCay – n.mccay@hpani.org.uk

Training and External Events

Claire Hind – c.hind@hpani.org.uk

Good for baby, good for mum

The HPA will be running an advertising campaign to promote breastfeeding, from 7 February until 6 March. The campaign will include rerunning the television advertisement 'Good for baby, good for mum' – which promotes the benefits of breastfeeding – on UTV and Channel 4. The television advertisement can be viewed on our corporate website www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk

Posters in washrooms and radio, bus, and newspaper advertising aimed at encouraging the wider public to support breastfeeding mums will also form part of this campaign.

Meanwhile, a report is now published and available on the HPA website which presents the findings of quantitative research carried out in 2004 to explore further the issues emerging from a survey on knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of breastfeeding in 1999. The initial survey followed the first year of the HPA's public information campaign on breastfeeding.

The report looks at patterns among the data of the two surveys and compares the 1999 pattern with that of 2004 to describe any changes that have occurred in behaviour or attitude. Since 1999, an increase in the incidence of breastfeeding in Northern Ireland is evident. The 2005 infant feeding survey showed an increase of almost 10 percentage points in breastfeeding initiation, from 54% in 2000 to 63% in 2005.

Public attitudes to breastfeeding, and knowledge about its importance to health, are improving, particularly in relation to breastfed babies being more resistant to infections and less at risk of developing allergies. This is most notable among prospective fathers and has the potential to improve breastfeeding outcomes, as a partner's knowledge and attitude towards breastfeeding is seen as significant in sustaining the decision to breastfeed.

The survey showed that most breastfeeding information is provided by midwives and in antenatal classes. Notably, in 2004 there was an increased level of information provided by health visitors and GPs. This is a positive trend which should continue as recent changes to policy will enable health visitors to provide antenatal visits. However, in both surveys those least likely to receive information are mothers who intend to bottlefeed or who have bottlefed previously.

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.

Production team

Linda Giles, Arthur McVeigh and Tony Sheridan.

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.getalifegetactive.com
www.knowyourlimits.info
www.smokefreenorthernireland.com
www.spacetobreathe.org.uk
www.thesnackpack.net
www.up-2-you.net

Web are we now?

The HPA has developed a website to support the 'Space to breathe' campaign, which is helping the public and businesses prepare for the introduction of the new smoke-free legislation. The site can be found at www.spacetobreathe.org.uk



Recently the HPA has been shortlisted for two internet awards. Our site www.knowyourlimits.info has been shortlisted for the Yahoo People's Choice Award 2006. Among the testimonials received are:

"A very functional resource! Providing a wealth of information for professionals and the general public. Congratulations!" Drug and Alcohol Coordinator, Western HSSB.

"I have used this on a number of occasions and I am really impressed with it." Addiction Services Manager, Foyle Trust.

Our breastfeeding site www.breastfedbabies.org has also been shortlisted in the Digital Media Awards 2007, Best Information Site category. We'll let you know how we get on in the next edition of *Inform*.

Other projects are in the pipeline for later in 2007, along with further developments and regular updates to our current range of sites.