

Inform

The bimonthly newsletter of the Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland

Issue 61

October / November 2008

Sportsmen back HPA's young men's mental health campaign

Sportsmen have united in support of the HPA's campaign to raise awareness of mental health issues among young men.

The IFA, Ulster GAA and Ulster Rugby have teamed up to endorse the agency drive to encourage players and supporters, particularly those aged 15 to 24 years, to talk about their problems and seek help.

Representing these sports are Crusaders' Colin Coates, Armagh's Oisín McConville and Ulster Rugby's Justin Fitzpatrick.

The three organisations are working with the HPA to promote the mental health message, 'Don't cover up your problems,' at key fixtures and youth training programmes as well as signing up to undertake Mental Health First Aid training.

Dr Brian Gaffney, Chief Executive of the HPA, said: "To reduce the number of deaths by suicide in Northern Ireland, it is vital to continue to raise awareness about mental health and suicide and help change public attitudes around talking about problems.

"Many young men, particularly in our target age group, respect and identify with sports personalities and are often more likely to take notice of them rather than some health professionals.

"The support of these three sportsmen and key sports organisations such as Ulster Rugby, Ulster GAA and IFA can only help to fight the stigma that unfortunately continues to surround mental health here."

The young men's campaign was developed in response to actions outlined in *Protect life: a shared vision. Northern Ireland suicide prevention strategy and action plan 2006-2011*.



Lending their support to the launch of the HPA's campaign to encourage young men to talk about their problems and seek help are, from left, Ulster Rugby's Justin Fitzpatrick; Crusaders' Colin Coates; Dr Brian Gaffney, Chief Executive, HPA; and Armagh's Oisín McConville.

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

INSIDE:

- Annual report highlights achievements of HPA
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- Training and events: October 2008–January 2009



**Health
Promotion
Agency**

New appointments



Dr Elizabeth Reaney

Liz has joined the HPA as a Consultant in Public Health. She will be working with Dr Angela Bell and the CEMACH team in the development of confidential enquiries and regional information on the health of mothers and children. Most recently, Liz was a Senior Medical Officer in the DHSSPS, covering acute services,

maternal and child health. Her experience also includes 12 years in community paediatrics, training in public health, and research and teaching in the department of epidemiology and public health at Queen's University Belfast.

Students advised to mind mental health

A guide to mental health has been distributed to first year students in further and higher education settings across Northern Ireland.

The HPA, in partnership with NUS-USI, launched the resource on 30 September to coincide with the start of a new college year.

Mind your head: a student guide to mental health was rewritten following qualitative research carried out with young people in further and higher education in 2006.

The resource aims to increase young people's knowledge and awareness of issues that have the potential to impact on their mental health. It also provides practical advice and support as well as further information on the support services available to them.

Speaking at the launch in Belfast Metropolitan College, Katie Morgan, President of NUS-USI, highlighted some of the difficulties facing students as they enter further and higher education.



"Going to college can be a trying time. There are deadlines, exams, living away from home and making new friends. It's easy to see why some students find it can all get a bit too much.

"We all adapt to new situations in different ways. For those who are feeling stressed out about the transition from secondary to third level education, there are a number of ways you can protect your mental health."

Further and higher education settings across Northern Ireland received 42,000 copies of the booklet for distribution to all first year students. For further information on the booklet, contact Deirdre McNamee at d.mcnamee@hpani.org.uk

Mental health training needs identified

The HPA has consulted with a wide range of stakeholders in response to training objectives identified in the *Promoting mental health strategy and action plan 2003–2008* and *Protect life: a shared vision. Northern Ireland suicide prevention strategy and action plan 2006–2011*.

A mapping exercise has also been completed to help identify current training provision and to highlight gaps. Among the key recommendations being drawn up is the need for the development and implementation of a training strategy for mental health promotion and suicide prevention in Northern Ireland, incorporating guidelines for training standards.

The HPA has also been asked to coordinate a pilot regional training programme as an interim response to some of the priority training needs identified to date. Details of this programme are now being considered in partnership with key stakeholders across all sectors.

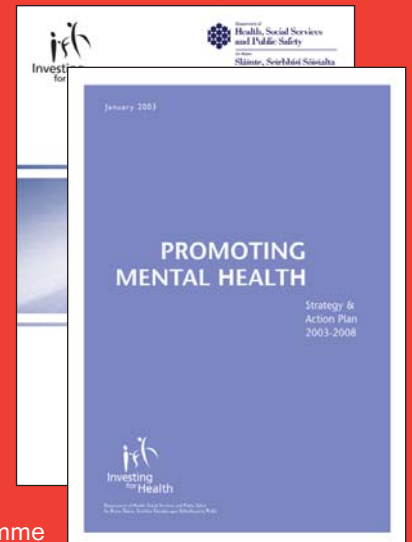
For further information, please contact Michelle McMaster, Mental Health Promotion Coordinator: Training and Development, HPA, on 028 9031 1611 or at m.mcmaster@hpani.org.uk

MHFA training programme delivery

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) originated in Australia and is a 12 hour training programme aimed at helping participants recognise and respond to the early symptoms of mental health problems.

The HPA is adapting the materials for Northern Ireland in consultation with MHFA instructors who took part in a pilot delivery of MHFA. A number of key individuals and organisations with specialist knowledge and expertise in mental health are also contributing to the process.

We would like to hear from any groups or organisations that might have an interest in the delivery of this programme or in becoming involved in the training for instructors. Enquiries relating to MHFA developments can be made to Michelle McMaster, Mental Health Promotion Coordinator: Training and Development, HPA, on 028 9031 1611 or at m.mcmaster@hpani.org.uk



HPA advises on liquor licensing law proposals

The Minister for Social Development has said that when developing proposals on liquor licensing, she will consider recommendations raised by the HPA.

Margaret Ritchie MLA was responding to a letter co-signed by 14 organisations, including the HPA, that stated proposals for amendments to current liquor licensing laws, put forward by direct rule Minister David Hanson in 2006, were inadequate for tackling young people's drinking.

The letter, sent in August, asked Minister Ritchie to consider a range of measures that have been shown to be effective, when reviewing the proposals.

The measures were:

- establishing a minimum price for the sale of alcoholic drinks to prevent below-cost selling;
- outlawing drinks promotions, which encourage people to drink more;
- ensuring rigorous enforcement of, and significant penalties for, those who sell alcohol to minors.

The letter was signed by the HPA; the five health and social care trusts; Barnardos; Coleraine Borough Council; the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools; the Institute of Public Health in Ireland; the Royal College of Nursing Northern Ireland; South Belfast Highway to Health; the Ulster Cancer Foundation; and the Youth Council Northern Ireland.

A recent HPA research report shows that one third of 11–16 year olds who have tried alcohol have bought it from a pub, off-licence or shop. The HPA believes that reducing young people's access to alcohol is a key component in any strategic approach to reducing and preventing young people's drinking.

Seminar to focus on young people's drinking habits

The HPA is planning the follow-up event to the March 2008 seminar on young people and alcohol. 'Preventing and reducing young people's drinking: what works?' will take place on 21 January 2009 at the Comfort Hotel in Antrim.

The aim of the first seminar was to set the scene on Northern Ireland research into young people's drinking. This follow-up seminar will look at what is effective in reducing or preventing young people's drinking.

Expert speakers will include Professor David Foxcroft from Oxford Brookes University, who recently completed a literature review of what is effective in preventing young people's alcohol misuse. Kathryn Armstrong from the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment will discuss how the new Northern Ireland curriculum can contribute to improving young people's health.

A range of interactive afternoon parallel sessions will focus on local work to address young people's drinking in a variety of contexts, including in schools and communities, and with families.

For more information or to book a place, go to the events/training section on the HPA's website.

Reaching out to older people

'Promoting good mental health' is the theme for year two of the Ageing Well Reach initiative.



The three-year Reach project by Age Concern Northern Ireland and the HPA helps older people to maintain good mental health. Each year, 40 groups for older people are provided with a six to eight week activity programme, leadership training and organisational support.

In support of this year's theme, Age Concern Northern Ireland and the HPA are developing a training module 'Healthy minds – promoting good mental health'. This will explore what good mental health is, the issues that impact on older people's mental health and how to recognise signs of anxiety and stress. It will also identify ways to promote healthy minds.

In addition, community and older people's groups are consulting their members on how they can improve their emotional health and wellbeing through a range of activities. This can include stress management, relaxation techniques, yoga, tai chi, armchair exercises, creative writing, and arts and crafts.

Leaders of the Ageing Well Reach group met in September at network meetings to get an update on the project, influence future activities, share information about their different activities, and learn how to do a massage, either on themselves or on each other.

Age Concern Northern Ireland, the HPA, and community and older people's groups are working together to build an environment in which the mental health needs of older people are recognised and promoted in a constructive and positive manner.

For further information, contact Elma Greer on 028 9024 5829 or at egreer@ageconcernni.org

Annual report highlights achievements of HPA

The HPA has published its *Annual report* for the financial year 2007–2008, marking the completion of another challenging and successful period.

The report highlights many of the partnerships, programmes, training and professional development initiatives, research, campaigns and publications that helped us meet our objectives for the year.

These include work in the areas of alcohol, breastfeeding, drugs, mental health, sexual health, tobacco, physical activity, maternal and child health, nutrition, health protection and healthy settings.

At the launch of the 17th *Annual report* in September, HPA Chief Executive, Dr Brian Gaffney, welcomed the major role health promotion will have within the new health structure.

"If, as the Minister for Health has outlined, the main driver for health and social care is to be health improvement, then the roles and functions of the HPA will form a central and expanded feature of the new system," he said.

"The new Regional Agency for Public Health and Social Well-being will continue to focus on health promotion as well as have a wider responsibility for health protection, improvement and development in order to address existing health inequalities and public health issues. This can only be good news for the health of the Northern Ireland public and we look forward to playing a fundamental role within the new agency."

As highlighted in the report, two key areas of work that the HPA focused on during the year were tobacco and mental health. The introduction of smoke-free legislation in April 2007 was a major milestone for public health and the HPA is

undertaking several research projects to evaluate the impact of the legislation on children and adults, as well as continuing to raise awareness of the effects of smoking through public information campaigns.

The HPA was commissioned to carry out a number of actions identified in *Protect life: a shared vision. Northern Ireland suicide prevention strategy and action plan 2006–2011*, including depression awareness training for GPs, the development of the 'Minding your head' campaign focusing on adults and young men, Mental Health First Aid training and the promotion of Lifeline, a free telephone helpline (0808 808 8000).

Dr Gaffney continued: "At least one in five people in Northern Ireland show signs of a possible mental health problem. In promoting good mental health and working towards reducing the number of deaths by suicide in Northern Ireland, we need to continue to raise awareness of and reduce the level of stigma surrounding mental health and this will undoubtedly continue to be a major priority of the new regional agency."

The report, which also details the operating and financial review for the year, can be obtained from public libraries. It is also available to download as a PDF file from our corporate website at www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk



Stakeholder website adds engaging section

Engage, the website and e-network for the DHSSPS stakeholder involvement programme for health and social care, has added a section for case studies.

The case study library is an opportunity to showcase work on stakeholder involvement and personal and public involvement (PPI), and to share experiences with engage network members.



A major programme of stakeholder involvement is under way on the planned changes for health and social care. The programme was established by the DHSSPS as a focal point for stakeholders to inform and influence policy and action.

Engage is a key communication tool for information sharing and support among stakeholders and can be found at www.engage.hscni.net

Keeping abreast

The next issue of the HPA publication *Keeping abreast* will be distributed at the upcoming 3rd all-island breastfeeding conference in the Kings Hall Conference Centre, Belfast, on 21 October.

Content includes information on National Breastfeeding Awareness Week, the UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative statement on dummy use, and the launch of the CD-ROM resource 'Breastfeeding awareness for schools'.



If you would like to receive a copy of *Keeping abreast*, please contact Lesley Blackstock on 028 9031 1611. Alternatively, you will be able to view a PDF file of the newsletter at the HPA website, www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk/breastfeeding

HPA campaign highlights tobacco sales law change

The law on the age of sales of tobacco products in Northern Ireland changed on 1 September. It is now illegal to sell tobacco products to anyone under the age of 18 (previously 16).

All tobacco products, such as cigarettes, cigars, rolling or pipe tobacco, and rolling papers, are affected by the new legislation.

The age of sales law now requires retailers of tobacco products to replace any existing signage (statutory notice) with a sign stating the new legal age restriction for tobacco products. All tobacco vending machines must also now display an updated sign.

Research has shown that most addicted adult smokers begin smoking as teenagers. The law change will help growing efforts to prevent young people from starting to smoke.

A communications campaign was developed by the HPA to highlight the legislation. It aimed to inform retailers and the wider public of the age of sales law change and to encourage compliance.

The campaign ran from 29 August to 5 October and included radio, press, trade, outdoor and online advertising, and direct mail.

The direct mail activity, including a guidance leaflet for retailers and over-the-counter signage, was distributed to the environmental health departments of local councils for onward circulation to tobacco retailers throughout Northern Ireland.

It is the responsibility of the environmental health departments to enforce the law on the sale of tobacco products to underage customers. The penalties for failing to comply with the new legislation include: a fine of up to £2,500 for selling tobacco products to anyone under the age of 18, and a fine of up to £1,000 for failing to display the correct signage, which applies to both over-the-counter and vending machine sales.

Welcoming the law change, Dr Brian Gaffney, Chief Executive of the HPA, said: "The aim of the age of sales legislation is to prevent children and young people from

starting to smoke in the first place. Most addicted adult smokers begin smoking as teenagers and the younger a smoker starts, the more likely they are to die from smoking. Raising the age to 18 and bringing the legislation in line with alcohol sales sends a clear message about the dangers of smoking.

"Legislation alone will not prevent young people from experimenting with or taking up smoking but needs to be part of a broader set of actions aimed at discouraging young people from smoking."



Dr Brian Gaffney welcomes the change in legislation that makes it illegal to sell tobacco products to anyone under the age of 18 in Northern Ireland.

HPA supports flu vaccine immunisation programme

The HPA is supporting the flu immunisation programme with the print and distribution of posters and information leaflets.

These have been issued to GPs, pharmacies, occupational health departments, nursing and residential homes, public libraries and the central health promotion resource services at the four health and social care trusts.

The main campaign leaflet has been translated into Arabic, Cantonese, Irish, Portuguese and Urdu. Copies of the leaflet and translations are available as PDF files from the HPA website, www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk



Training and events: October 2008–January 2009

The events/training section on the HPA website www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk will be kept updated with further information. There will be an online booking facility for most events unless otherwise stated. Look out for the **B** symbol.

Health and wellbeing in the workplace: what works?

9 October 2008

W5, Odyssey, Belfast

This half-day conference will look at a variety of factors that affect health and wellbeing in the workplace.

For further information, a conference agenda and booking form, see the events section at www.bitc.org.uk or contact Melanie Doherty at Business in the Community on 028 9046 0606.

Why children die: a pilot study and beyond

16 October 2008

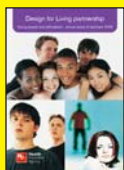
King's Hall Conference Centre, Belfast

The findings of a confidential enquiry into child deaths in England, Wales and Northern Ireland during 2006 will be presented at this CEMACH conference. The event launches the first publication of the *Why children die* report and will initiate the dissemination of key recommendations for health professionals involved in this area.



Design for Living partnership seminars 2008

Following the success of previous events on the theme of young people and self-esteem, these annual seminars, supported by the Design for Living partnership, are being repeated.



The seminars are facilitated by key speakers who have vast expertise in the field of mental health, self-esteem and young people.

- **Child and adolescent mental health – Simon Ward**
15 October 2008, Radisson SAS, Belfast.
- **Young men and self-esteem** for Lloyd
5 November 2008, **Fully Booked** The Hotel, Cookstown.
- **Self-esteem and relationships – Dr Tony Humphreys**
8 December 2008, Corr's Corner Hotel, Newtownabbey.

Breastfeeding: making a difference

21 October 2008

Kings Hall Conference Centre, Belfast

This HPA and Health Service Executive (HSE) 3rd all-island breastfeeding conference will feature many speakers from a broad range of disciplines related to infant feeding. For further information, see the events/training section of the HPA website or contact Lesley Blackstock on 028 9031 1611 or at l.blackstock@hpani.org.uk



Collaboration, innovation and change: maximising the effectiveness and impact of partnerships for health

11–12 November 2008

Ramada Hotel, Belfast

This two-day course provides an evidence-based, conceptual framework against which to examine your experience of working collaboratively and building partnerships and alliances for health.

For further information, go to the events/training section of the HPA website.



Diploma in nutrition and health

Starting 12 November 2008

Antrim area

Delegates undertaking this diploma from the Royal Institute for Public Health are nominated by councils.

For further information, contact Lesley Blackstock on l.blackstock@hpani.org.uk

Fully Booked

All-island obesity conference

13 November 2008

Europa Hotel, Belfast

This HPA and HSE conference will feature national and international speakers and will provide information on current policy developments, research and surveillance relating to obesity and effective interventions in a range of settings.

For further details, see the article on page 7.

Further information and online booking will be available soon at www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk

Creating healthy workplaces training

19–20 and 26–27 November 2008

BT Training Solutions, Belfast

This four day training course aims to equip participants with the skills and knowledge to either advise and support other organisations in creating healthy workplaces, or to implement a programme of development within their own organisation.

For further information, see the events/training section of the HPA website.

Preventing and reducing young people's drinking: what works?

21 January 2009

Comfort Hotel, Antrim

For further information, see the article on page 3 or contact Carrie Crossan at c.crossan@hpani.org.uk

Mental Health Promotion Network celebrates World Mental Health Day

Following the successful World Mental Health Day celebrations in 2007, the Mental Health Promotion Network, which is facilitated by the HPA, will once again organise a series of events across all five health and social care trusts from 7–10 October.

The HPA will fund guest speaker Dr Nick Baylis, who is a therapist and has lectured in Cambridge University for the past seven years on the skills of wellbeing. The title of the series of five seminars is "Improving your wellbeing – a really practical guide". For further information on the seminars see the list of trust contacts below:

Event details

Belfast HSC Trust

7 October, 9.30am – 12.30pm
Knockbracken Hall, Knockbracken Healthcare Park, Belfast
For further details contact:
margaret.woods@belfasttrust.hscni.net or
maria.morgan@belfasttrust.hscni.net
Tel: 028 9056 4941

Western HSC Trust

7 October, 2.30pm – 5.30pm
Silver Birches Hotel, Omagh
For further details contact:
MarieT.Dunne@westerntrust.hscni.net
Tel: 028 7186 5127

Southern HSC Trust

8 October, 9.15am – 1pm
Seagoe Hotel, Portadown
For further details contact:
angela.corr@southerntrust.hscni.net
Tel: 028 3741 2424

Northern HSC Trust

9 October, 10am – 1pm
Tullyglass Hotel, Ballymena
For further details contact:
jayne.mcconaghie@northerntrust.hscni.net
Tel: 028 2563 5575

South Eastern HSC Trust

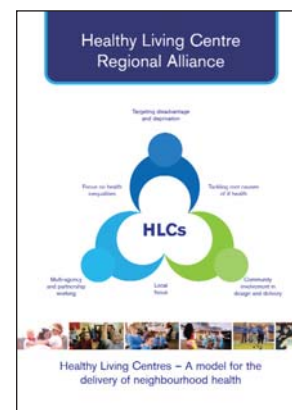
10 October, 9.30am – 1pm
Great Hall, Downshire, Downpatrick
For further details contact:
pat.mcgreevy@setrust.hscni.net
Tel: 028 4461 3311 or
Fiona.molloy@setrust.hscni.net
Tel: 028 9151 0182

For further information on other events planned to celebrate World Mental Health Day, log on to www.mindingyourhead.info

HLC Regional Alliance makes it real with conference

The HPA facilitated the Healthy Living Centre (HLC) Regional Alliance to organise a conference in September entitled 'Making it real: models of good community health improvement practice'.

The event provided an opportunity for members of management groups and staff to come together with invited stakeholders to share examples of evaluated practice from community-based health improvement work undertaken by HLCs in tackling health inequalities.



Each HLC discussed an element of its practice, the outcomes, and the challenges in sustaining this work at local level.

HLC Regional Alliance Chair, Danny Power, launched a briefing paper at the event, *Healthy living centres: a model for the delivery of neighbourhood health*. This describes the work of the HLCs in Northern Ireland and their contribution to current health and health-related policy implementation.

Weighing up the evidence at obesity conference

The HPA and the Health Service Executive (Republic of Ireland) are organising the second all-island obesity conference. Entitled 'Obesity: weighing up the evidence', the event takes place on 13 November at the Europa Hotel, Belfast.

Three key themes – policy, practice and science – will be explored, and a range of national and international speakers will feature. The conference will provide information on current policy developments, research and surveillance relating to obesity, and effective interventions in a range of settings.

The main aim is to inform public sector professionals and others about the latest developments in obesity, its prevention and management. It also provides a forum to discuss how this can influence the development of national, regional and local approaches to help combat overweight and obesity throughout the island of Ireland.

The conference will be of particular interest to those working in the field of policy development, planning, nutrition, health promotion, physical activity and sports development. The programme will be delivered by leading experts in obesity and promises to be an interesting and informative day.

Further information and online booking will be available soon at www.healthpromotionagency.org.uk



Contact details:

A Healthy Service – Supporting health in hospitals

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

Alcohol and Drugs

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

Food in Schools

Jennifer McBratney – j.mcbratney@hpani.org.uk

Health Intelligence (Research and information)

Diana Gossrau-Breen – d.gossrau-breen@hpani.org.uk

Naomi McCay – n.mccay@hpani.org.uk

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Linda Barclay – l.barclay@hpani.org.uk

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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.healthpromotionagency.org.uk

www.breastfedbabies.org

www.drugsalcohol.info

www.getalifegetactive.com

www.helpprotectyourself.info

www.hpa-pod.org

www.knowyourlimits.info

www.mindingyourhead.info

www.spacetobreathe.org.uk

www.thesnackpack.net

www.thinkitthrough.org.uk

www.up-2-you.net

www.want2stop.info

Schoolgirl cervical cancer jab campaign under way

The HPA has developed a public information campaign to support the introduction of the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine that can help protect against cervical cancer.

Around 1,000 women die from cervical cancer in the UK each year, but having the vaccine reduces the risk of getting the disease by over 70%.

From September 2008, the HPV vaccination is offered routinely in schools to girls aged 12–13 years (Year 9), to help protect them against cervical cancer as early as possible.

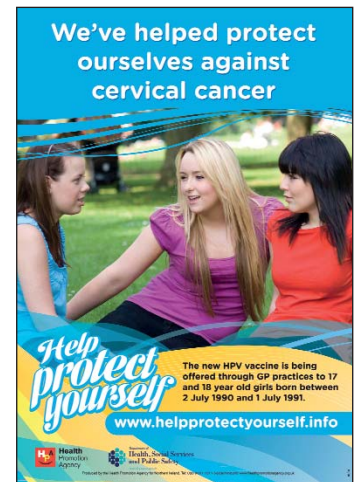
There is also a catch-up campaign so that all girls currently above Year 9 and up to the age of 18 will be offered the vaccine by 2011. This campaign began in GP practices in September with 17–18 year old girls born between 2 July 1990 and 1 July 1991.

The public information campaign includes high-profile advertising and literature for girls, their parents and health professionals. It was launched in St Joseph's College, Belfast, by the DHSSPS on 3 September.

Leaflets were published for girls aged 12–13 and 17–18, along with a question and answer booklet for parents and a factsheet for health professionals. The campaign also included television, cinema and radio advertisements, posters for schools and health professionals, and outdoor advertising.

A website www.helpprotectyourself.info was developed to support the campaign and to provide information on HPV, the vaccine and cervical cancer. The website provides PDF files of the public leaflets in English along with eight other languages for girls and their parents whose first language is not English.

The advertisements can also be downloaded from the HPA website.



Conference puts spotlight on offenders' health needs

Responding to learning disability, addressing addiction and improving mental health among offenders were on the agenda at a major conference recently organised by the HPA, the Northern Ireland Prison Service and South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust.

Speaking at the conference, attended by over 240 professionals from statutory, voluntary and community organisations, Dr Brian Gaffney, Chief Executive of the HPA, said: "The Bamford Review highlighted that people who have a mental disorder and come into contact with the criminal justice system are some of the most marginalised, stigmatised, vulnerable and poorly understood individuals in Northern Ireland and this conference is a welcome opportunity to look at how we address mental ill health and promote good mental health among offenders."

The conference also provided the platform for the Prison Reform Trust to launch its report, *No-one knows*, highlighting views of prison staff on how prisoners with learning difficulties are identified and supported in prison. Conference themes also included mental health and addiction with the afternoon being set aside for a range of presentations on these issues.