



Public Health  
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health



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Chief Executive

## Friday message

Friday 6 November 2015

**Dear everyone**

Over the summer we have been reviewing the forward direction of Well North. This is our joint programme with Manchester University and so far six local authorities across the north to pilot new approaches to engaging with local communities, public and voluntary services to help improve the health and care of the poorest fastest. As you know, we were hit by a severe blow with the sudden and unexpected passing of Professor Aidan Halligan back in April. Not only had Aidan been the Founder of Well North, but he was also the inspiration for its ambitious vision to radically change the life chances of thousands of our citizens who face some of the worst health inequalities in the country. In the aftermath of Aidan's death it felt right to pause and reflect on the future direction and leadership of Well North. To this end, back in July, we appointed a small team led by Lord Andrew Mawson to carry out a [Rapid Review](#) of the Well North programme. This has produced a first class report and I am delighted to say its recommendations were fully and unanimously accepted by the Well North Board last week. It creates an excellent framework for building on the legacy of what's gone before and create a vibrant and entrepreneurial approach to improving health outcomes in the Well North pilot sites and beyond. It was the unanimous view of the Well North Board that the programme would be extremely well served by appointing Andrew as the Chair and Sam Tunney as the Chief Executive. This makes for a dynamic leadership team and it will undoubtedly lead the Well North programme to great success. Andrew is best known as the Founder of the Bromley by Bow Centre in East London and numerous other entrepreneurial projects working across sectors. He was awarded an OBE for his work in 2000 and became a Crossbench Peer in 2007. His other credentials are that as the son of a Bradford milkman he is a Northerner through and through! It is already clear that his extensive knowledge and networks, along with his charismatic leadership is going to serve Well North and the communities we are seeking to serve, extremely effectively.

On Wednesday the Department of Health published its response to the public health grant consultation on how best to make the in-year reduction of £200m. It has decided to reduce every local authority's allocation by a standard, flat rate percentage. No one would ever argue that reducing the public health grant was a good thing, however given it is happening this provides clarity and leaves local authorities' funding unchanged relative to each other. I know this is a difficult ask, not least as the public health responsibilities of local government are so intertwined with the NHS and the delivery of frontline care, but I have every confidence in their ability to manage and prioritise with the least possible impact.

On Tuesday we updated the [Public Health Outcomes Framework tool](#) (PHOF), the [online Health Profiles](#), [Local Tobacco Control Profiles](#) and all mortality indicators in the [Longer Lives](#) tool. The PHOF tracks the health of the nation over time to help, among others, the NHS and local authorities understand what is happening nationally and locally, and support appropriate action. This quarterly update includes a host of new data and indicators not previously available in the public domain, including excess weight in adults and the fraction of mortality attributable to particulate air pollution. It estimated that 5.3 percent of all adult deaths in England are caused by long-term exposure to man-made particulate air pollution, making air pollution the largest environmental risk associated with deaths each year. There are actions we can all take now to improve air quality. For example, national and local government can help promote an integrated public transport system which could reduce congestion, businesses can introduce incentives for staff, and as individuals we could be thinking about walking or cycling to school or work, not just to limit carbon dioxide emissions but to improve our health through physical exercise.

**With best wishes**