

Overview from CIEH Wales

Meeting of Council

17th April 2008

Report from Graham Jukes, Chief Executive

1.0 Summary and recommendations

- 1.1 This report summarises the activities and progress in ongoing projects in Wales being led by Julie Barratt since the last meeting of Council.
- 1.2 Council is recommended to note the report.

2.0 Detail

- 2.1 The Pennington Review into the 2005 E coli outbreak in Wales commenced taking evidence in public in February. The public element of the review has been much delayed by the police investigation into the outbreak and the fact that all of the witnesses were required to sign confidentiality agreements. Much work has however been done by the Inquiry Team, and the public taking of evidence is the last phase of the Inquiry. CIEH has provided such assistance as has been sought, we were not required to give evidence as, although providing media comment through out the outbreak we had no role in the investigation proper. Professor Pennington expects to report to the National Assembly in late 2008.
- 2.2 In January 2008 the Director Wales was invited to meet with the project planning team from the Healthcare Inspectorate Wales. This team is putting together an audit tool to be used by its Inspectors when they carry out inspections of hospitals. The team wished to have the view of CIEH on the appropriateness of the tool as designed, to ensure that it is fit for purpose and further to ensure that it does not encroach into areas that are the enforcement responsibility of local authorities. The Director made a number of comments on the draft audit tool and facilitated a link between the Healthcare Inspectorate Wales and the Wales Heads of Environmental Health Food Safety Technical Panel, which two groups have agreed to jointly develop an audit tool for use in inspection of ward kitchens. This is a particularly important piece of work as the Minister for Health and Social Services has requested it be undertaken in the light of some very poor press coverage of condition in ward kitchens, and sought the input of CIEH.

- 2.3 The Chief Medical Officer for Wales has been tasked with producing an Alcohol Action Plan for Wales by the Minister for Health and Social Services. The Director Wales was invited to a meeting with staff from the department of the CMO to advise what work has been undertaken by CIEH in this regard, and specifically to provide details of the Alcohol Interventions toolkit that we have produced (see paragraph 2.7 below). CIEH able to provide comment on the pre-consultation draft, and specifically raised a number of issues that should be addressed, including the existence of numerous and mutually exclusive finding streams, paucity of the existing alcohol related cost and impact evidence base and the relationship between alcohol and other drugs in the substance misuse programme. CIEH has specifically been asked to encourage the take up of the Best Bar None initiative by local authorities through out Wales, and we were successful in securing funding of £10,000 per local authority for 2008-9 from the Welsh Assembly Government to be used in addressing alcohol related issues. The funding, and the role of CIEH in securing it has been widely welcomed, and at the time of writing just over half the local authorities in Wales have committed to the Best Bar None initiative.
- 2.4 In December 2006 the Welsh Assembly Government produced 'Planning for Change' a consultation document on preparation for climate change. A number of groups were convened to take forward some of the actions arising out of the consultation responses, including the Cross Sector Climate Change Group and the Adaptations Sub Group. CIEH has been invited to take part on both groups. Both groups have met a number of times, the Sub Group has also held three consultation events in Cardiff, Llandudno and in Carmarthen. The Strategic Group is currently preparing a draft Action Plan for Tackling Climate Change in Wales due to be presented to the First Minister before the summer recess. The actions are likely to have considerable impact on local authorities and the way in which they operate and may have a significant effect on the role of EHPs. CIEH therefore continues to engage with this project.
- 2.5 In March the Director met with Siân James MP following a request made by Mrs James to local authorities in Wales for details of sun bed provision in their areas. The Director appraised Mrs James of the details of the research conducted by CIEH into sun bed provision in Wales and the efficacy of the controls in place to secure their safe use. Mrs James proposes to discuss the research findings with Dawn Primorolo, the Health Minister, and to use them to support her call for a licensing regime to be put in place. She indicated her full support for the CIEH policy in respect of sun beds and has indicated that she wishes to work with us both nationally and in Wales in the matter.
- 2.6 On 13th March the Director and the Chief Executive attended the launch of the Committee on Climate Change in Cardiff. The event was chaired by Jane Davidson AM, Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing and addressed by the Chair of the Committee, Lord Turner. The launch was attended by a number of National Assembly Members and Members of the European Parliament and useful links were made which will allow CIEH to engage with the Committee both in Wales and in England.
- 2.7 The CIEH Wales Regional Conference, 'Public Health : Changing Behaviours' takes place on 23-4th April, in Cardiff. The key note address will be given by the Sustainable Development Commissioner for Wales, Peter Davies, and the Chief

Medical Officer for Wales and senior officers and representatives from the Welsh Assembly Government, Welsh Local Government Association and National Public Health Services for Wales will be present. The Wales Directorate will be launching four pieces of research (the Welsh Assembly Government commissioned study into airborne particulate levels before and after the ban on smoking in public places, an update on a 10 years study of attitudes of bar workers to the ban on smoking in pubs, the study into controls on the use of sun beds, and the sampling programme to demonstrate presence of undeclared allergens) and launching the Alcohol Interventions Tool kit. A full report on the conference will be given to the next meeting of Council.

2.8 In the period since my last report to Council the Directorate has had considerable engagement with the media. Two CIEH generated stories were carried on X Ray, the BBC Wales Consumer watchdog programme, featuring the CIEH Allergy Research and the sun bed research. The Director appeared representing CIEH in both programmes with practising EHPs demonstrating the work that had been carried out. The Director has also been invited to write an occasional column in the Western Mail, the largest nationally circulating newspaper in Wales and has provided an article on registration of food premises and training of food handlers to coincide with the Pennington Review beginning to take evidence in public. There has also been ongoing local publicity relating to the Abergavenny Food Festival including coverage on local radio and in the black and white media, and the Director has continued to contribute newspaper reviews to BBC Radio Wales.

3.0 Implications

Environmental	None specific
Equal opportunities	None specific
Financial	Within existing resources
Legal	None specific
Personnel	Within existing resources
Public health	None specific
Public relations	None specific
Background papers	Research reports into Allergen Sampling, Sun Bed Controls and Airborne Particulates with Director CIEH Wales.
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