



The Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland NEWSLETTER

PROTECTING & IMPROVING PUBLIC HEALTH

August 2008

21st Century Public Health Act receives Royal Assent by Kevin Freeman, Director of Professional Development

On 16 July the Public Health etc (Scotland) Bill received Royal Assent and the Public Health etc (Scotland) Act 2008 came into being. The purpose of the new Act is to create a legal framework for the protection of public health today and for the next 100 years.

The Act places a duty on Scottish Ministers, health boards and local authorities to ensure provision is made for the protection of public health in Scotland. In reality the responsibilities will rest with the health boards for people and with the local authorities for 'things' and premises and, in order to ensure there is a co-ordinated approach to the protection of public health, the Act requires co-operation between health boards and local authorities and the production of joint public health protection plans.

The Act provides an extensive framework to allow both the health boards and the local authorities to undertake thorough public health investigations led by their respective competent person. In order to protect the public from any significant risk, the health boards are able to detain individuals that have an infectious disease or are contaminated, and there are complementary powers for the local authority which allow them to deal with, by disinfection or destruction, premises and belongings that may be contaminated or infected.

In addition, the Act makes provision for the regulation for the use of sunbeds. This is the culmination of a great deal of lobbying by REHIS and partners to ensure adequate provision is in place to reduce the health risk to the community from these units. The key elements of this part of the Act are: the prohibition of the use, sale and hire of sunbeds to under 18s, the prohibition of unsupervised sunbeds, a requirement to provide users of sunbeds with information on the

effect to health and a requirement to display an information notice for users of sunbeds. The Act goes on to provide a number of enforcement powers, including the issue of fixed penalty notices.

Finally the opportunity was taken with the Act to improve the statutory nuisance regime. Part 9 of the Act introduces the concepts of insect nuisance, artificial light nuisance, statutory nuisance: land covered with water and sewerage nuisance. Further the Act goes on to improve the enforcement powers available to local authorities by providing for a framework of fixed penalty notices which can be served upon the authors of a nuisance. The legislation also enables Scottish Ministers to implement their obligations under the International Health Regulations. Although the Act has been passed, it is a very complex piece of legislation and the implementation will need to be very carefully planned and implemented. It is proposed that there will be a number of stakeholder meetings which will inform the implementation process and the development of associated guidance for the Act. Details to follow.

Precautions to reduce risk of *E. coli* O157 infection in the countryside

Health Protection Scotland (HPS) and the Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) have re-issued advice on precautions for reducing the risk of *E. coli* O157 infections in rural families. The advice, authored by Mary Locking of HPS and Chris Low of SAC, covers hand washing, children, clothing and footwear, working with animal waste, smoking, public access to grazing land, rural water supplies, sale and movement of animals and farm visits is published on the HPS website at www.documents.hps.scot.nhs.uk/giz/ecoli/simple-precautions-O157.pdf.

Food and drink champions

Membership of the Scottish Government's new Food and Drink Leadership Forum was announced earlier this month. The short-life forum, announced by Richard Lochhead, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, at the Royal Highland Show in June, will oversee the next stages of the national food and drink policy, and the forum's first meeting will take place in Edinburgh this month. The forum will include food champions for the following themes: the economy, health, environment and access and affordability.

Chaired by Richard Lochhead, membership of the forum is Ken Mackenzie (Chair of the Scottish Retail Consortium and retired Director of the Scottish Co-operative, champion for the economy), Professor Phil Hanlon (Professor of Public Health, University of Glasgow, champion for health), Professor Jan Bebbington (Sustainable Development Commission, champion for the environment), Dave Simmers (Strategic Co-ordinator, Community Food Initiatives North East, champion for access and affordability), Jim Mather (Minister for Enterprise, Energy and Tourism), Shona Robison (Minister for Public Health), Allan Burns (Chair of Scotland Food and Drink), Professor Annie Anderson (University of Dundee), Martin Wishart (chef and restaurateur), Robin Gourlay (Head of Catering, East Ayrshire Council), Reverend Professor David Atkinson (Chair of the Scottish Churches Rural Group) and Gavin Hewitt (Chief Executive of Scotch Whisky Association).

The National Food and Drink Policy for Scotland will be the first cross-cutting policy on food and drink developed in the UK and initial findings and recommendations are expected by early 2009. Further information can be found on the Scottish Government's website www.scotland.gov.uk.

REHIS Trainers' One Day Update Seminar

This year's seminar will be held on Wednesday 22 October and is part of the Institute's commitment to keeping its community of Training Centres up-to-date with developments, and has been provided following feedback from trainers. The event will be held at The Music Box,

Stevenson College, Edinburgh. The subjects covered during the day will include updates on food borne disease, food allergies and intolerances, *E.coli* O157, Noroviruses, HACCP and food safety training. Booking forms will be sent to Approved Training Centres in the near future. For further information please contact the REHIS office.

Scotland's push for 'Zero Waste'

A number of innovative proposals on how to further reduce waste and increase recycling in Scotland were published by the Scottish Government last month. Among the ideas being considered are increased recycling facilities at sports grounds, shopping centres, beaches and cinemas. The proposals form part of the Scottish Government's ambition for a 'Zero Waste' Scotland. The proposals, contained in a public consultation, cover the duties on public bodies and business to provide recycling facilities, packaging, specifying recycle, waste prevention plans, deposit and return, mandatory waste data returns from business and other measures to encourage waste prevention, including action on carrier bags.

The results from the consultation will form part of possible legislation to be included in the Climate Change Bill. The Scottish Government's key targets in relation to municipal waste are to stop the growth in municipal waste by 2010, to achieve 40 per cent recycling/composting of municipal waste by 2010; 50 per cent by 2013; 60 per cent by 2020 and 70 per cent by 2025, that no more than 25 per cent should be treated by energy from waste by 2025 and that no more than 5 per cent should be landfilled by 2025.

A commitment to recycle is one of the Scottish Government's ten Greener Pledges. Further information can be found on the Scottish Government's website www.scotland.gov.uk.

New CPD Record Card available on Members' Website by Kevin Freeman, Director of Professional Development

An updated version of the electronic CPD record card is now available on the members' only area of the REHIS website. After taking note of recent

feedback, we were able to improve the functionality of the card and incorporate some additional features.

The electronic card now automatically adds up your total hours of CPD for the year, allows you to print a CPD record for a selected year, prints more than one event on a sheet, specifies the core subject areas and allows a free text space to describe supplementary activities. Please note that the software does have some small idiosyncrasies and members need to be aware: that dates must be entered using numbers in the format shown under the field descriptor (that is dd-mm-yyyy, not dd/mm/yyyy or dd.mm.yyyy or even dd-mm-yy. If you do not use the correct format it will default to the date you are making the entry. The same rule applies for times which should be entered as hh:mm) and that the card does not make the calculation for supplementary activity, so you have to enter the time claimed at the appropriate reduced rate (50%).

I hope you find the improvements make the facility more useful. Please note that for those of you who prefer to use pen and paper it is now possible to download a blank CPD card from the members CPD page on the website or, if you prefer, we can send one from our stock in the office. Please remember that all CPD activity must now be corroborated by documentary evidence which supports the knowledge, skills and competencies which have been developed by the activity. But remember, CPD does not just mean courses, you can engage in self development in a number of ways including personal study or preparing for a new area of work, preparing a training session on new guidance or even by documented reflection on particularly good or bad events in your day-to-day work. Finally, please ensure that all submitted CPD cards are signed.

Top priority for fighting killer diseases

Last month the Scottish Government launched a consultation on tackling two of Scotland's biggest killer diseases. Coronary heart disease (CHD) and stroke still claim the lives of thousands of Scots every year, despite significant progress to cut death rates in recent years. During the launch, Public Health Minister Shona Robison said fresh focus was needed to further reduce

CHD and stroke deaths. Ms Robison reported that between 1997 and 2006, CHD deaths fell by 32 per cent from 14,012 to 9,532, while stroke deaths fell by 45 per cent, from 9,959 to 5,479. Ms Robison expressed concern that progress among younger age groups and in the most deprived parts of Scotland has been less rapid, prompting the need for renewed action. The consultation will focus on the following key issues: how the range and quality of CHD and stroke services can be improved (with an emphasis on securing earlier diagnosis and better care), reducing health inequalities that mean people in Scotland's most deprived communities are more likely to die from CHD and stroke than those in more affluent areas, how new technology can be used to improve the infrastructure to support CHD and stroke services and tackling inherited cardiac conditions, including the development of a free heart screening service for amateur athletes. The consultation will run until October. Further information can be found on the Scottish Government's website www.scotland.gov.uk.

REHIS Advanced HACCP Course

The Institute ran an Advanced HACCP Course for Trainers and persons responsible for the implementation and maintenance of food safety management systems in March. The course proved to be very popular and was over-subscribed. The Institute will be running the course again on 11, 12 and 13 November 2008 at Edinburgh's Telford College. After three days of tuition, course participants will undertake a HACCP assignment which will form part of the assessment. Successful completion of the assignment will allow course participants to sit the course examination and those who pass the examination will receive the REHIS/Campden and Chorleywood Certificate. Places on the course are limited to a maximum number of 15 and the cost of the course will be £540. Whilst there are no formal entry requirements for the course, course participants will require a knowledge and understanding of Codex HACCP to at least the standard of our existing Intermediate HACCP Practices course. For further information please contact the REHIS office.

Vacuum packed chilled foods guidance

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has produced guidance and a factsheet to help minimise the risk of *Clostridium botulinum* in vacuum and modified atmosphere packed chilled foods. The guidance is designed to assist small businesses and local authority Environmental Health Officers and Food Safety Officers to assess the risks. For further information visit the FSA's website www.food.gov.uk/foodindustry/guidancenotes/foodguid/vpguide.

Health and Safety in Catering and Hospitality

The Health and Safety Executive's website contains updated advice and information for those involved in the catering and hospitality sector. This sector covers people working in hotels, restaurants, cafes, fast food outlets, pubs and clubs and those working as contract caterers to other industries. The dedicated web pages (see below for link address) advise that accident statistics show that the main risk areas for this industry are caused by slips and trips and manual handling accidents and that the main cause of occupational ill health is from work related contact dermatitis. Themed links provide information and advice on the 'stopping slips in kitchens campaign', on risk assessment and on preventing dermatitis. Links to a series of case studies and

to an A to Z of free guidance are also provided along with access to an online Hospitality Industry Forum. For further information visit the HSE website www.hse.gov.uk/catering/index.htm.

Dates for your diary

NHS/HPS Health Protection Network 1st Biennial Conference - 8 September 2008, Glasgow. Further information from HPS (tel: 0141 300 1100).

REHIS Northern Centre Meeting and AGM - 11 September 2008. Further information to follow.

REHIS Trainers' One Day Update Seminar - 22 October 2008, Edinburgh (see above).

REHIS Advanced HACCP Course - 11, 12 and 13 November 2008, Edinburgh (see above).

NHS Public Health in Scotland - Annual Conference 'Forging New Collaborations' - 13-14 November 2008, Aviemore. Further information from NHS Convention Management Service (tel: 0131 275 7748).

REHIS Annual Awards Ceremony - 19 November 2008, Edinburgh (evening).

REHIS Annual Free to Members CPD event - 20 November 2008, Edinburgh (am).

REHIS Annual General Meeting - 20 November 2008, Edinburgh (pm).

**If you wish to feature any
Environmental Health or Public
Health initiative, event or activity in
the REHIS Newsletter, please
contact Tom Bell, Chief Executive,
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