



The Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland NEWSLETTER

PROTECTING & IMPROVING PUBLIC HEALTH

April 2010

Influenza A (H1N1) Update

A strategic and independent review of the UK-wide response to the swine flu pandemic was announced at the end of March. The review, which will cover the four nations of the UK, will be conducted as part of the normal procedure following a major emergency response. The findings will be used to inform any future planning for pandemics and help ensure that plans remain robust. In a press release Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing Nicola Sturgeon stated that *'Reviewing the response to swine flu is a crucial step to ensuring that we remain prepared to deal with potentially more virulent pandemics in the future. Having planned for the event of a pandemic for a number of years, Scotland was widely recognised as one of the most prepared countries in the world. Although swine flu continues to be present in Scotland, it's at the lowest level since the disease first appeared. It is now an appropriate time to begin this independent review, which will be crucial in examining how response was managed.'*

'While it is recognised that the H1N1 pandemic was much less severe than anticipated, it has, undoubtedly, placed significant pressures on health services and has tragically claimed a number of lives. I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to all involved in the response, especially to staff in the NHS who have dealt with millions of patients and families affected. I would also like to express my sympathies to those families who have lost loved ones.' The review team will conduct a strategic review of all the key elements of the response including interviews with key individuals involved. Globally, the World Health Organisation estimates that there have been at least 16,813 deaths from swine flu. There have been 69 reported and confirmed swine flu related deaths in Scotland to date. Further advice and guidance is available from the Scottish Government website www.scotland.gov.uk.

REHIS Annual Conference 2010

This year's Conference will be held at the Glynhill Hotel, Renfrew on 19 and 20 May and the programme features presentations by Dr Harry Burns, Scotland's Chief Medical Officer, and Professor Hugh Pennington. Topics to be covered include food safety, Influenza A (H1N1), carbon monoxide, protecting our armed forces in combat zones, international environmental health, The Public Health (Scotland) Act 2008, cryptosporidium and the education and training of environmental health professionals. For further information please contact the REHIS office.

Scottish homes go greener

New Scottish homes are set to be greener, quieter and safer under new rules confirmed earlier this month. From October, new build homes must be more energy efficient, have greater sound insulation and better levels of home security. The revised building standards will reduce emissions, create new jobs in small scale renewables and could save many householders money. Further information is available from the Scottish Government website www.scotland.gov.uk

36,547 EFHC Certificates Issued in 2009

The Institute is delighted to announce another excellent year for the delivery of the REHIS Elementary Food Hygiene Course. In 2009 36,547 elementary certificates were issued to successful candidates. The Institute takes this opportunity to offer its thanks to its Approved Training Centres and their Course Presenters for their important contribution in promoting the safe handling of food. On behalf of the Institute I offer my thanks to all the staff at the REHIS office for the excellent support provided to the centres and especially to Graham Walker, Ian McGruther, Jane Bunting, Margaret O'Hare and Marlene Wood.

Tick prevention week

As peak tick season approaches again, Lyme disease charity BADA-UK (Borreliosis and Associated Diseases Awareness-UK) is warning field workers to be aware of tick-borne disease and to take precautions against being bitten. Ticks carrying Borreliosis (also known as Lyme disease) are found throughout the UK. Lyme disease is transmitted via the bite of an infected tick and can lead to serious complications including damage to the nervous system, joints, heart and other tissues. Figures released by Health Protection Scotland have shown a dramatic rise in infection rates from 28 confirmed cases in 2001 to 285 cases in 2008. Tick Prevention Week, organised by BADA-UK, runs from 12 to 18 April and aims to provide information to help prevent ticks from biting people and pets. It also gives advice on what to do if ticks do attach. This year's theme of 'DO ONE THING to raise awareness' provides lots of ideas and schools, activity clubs and specialist interest groups are encouraged to do their bit to raise awareness. Leaflets, posters and much more can be found at www.tickpreventionweek.org.

New fish labelling rules

New UK rules for fish labelling have come into force. The Fish Labelling Regulations 2010 replace the previous Regulations, add new commercial designations (the names of fish) for species of fish that have recently come onto the market and give extra options for some others that were already listed. The purpose of the Regulations is to ensure that fish are labelled correctly and consistently at the point of sale, so that purchasers know exactly what they are buying, whether it was caught at sea, in inland waters or was farmed and, if caught at sea, in what sea area. Further information is available from the FSA website www.food.gov.uk.

Smoke-free Scotland – 4th Anniversary

26 March marked the 4th anniversary of Scotland's public places becoming smoke-free. The Smoking, Health and Social Care (Scotland) Bill was approved by MSPs on 30 June 2005 and received Royal Assent on 5 August 2005. The Act came into force at 6.00am on Sunday 26 March 2006.

First for REHIS member

Val Cameron has become the first Chartered EHO to achieve Public Health Specialist registration with the UK Public Health Register. Val said: "I am delighted to have achieved Generalist Specialist registration. This has taken about five years so I am pleased to have completed the process. I started this journey when Generalist registration was the only option for registration by portfolio assessment. Now 'defined specialist' registration has been introduced and I think this route would be better suited to EHOs."



Val is currently working as Director of Environmental Health and Pollution Regulation in Guernsey, where she also deputises for the Medical Officer of Health/Director of Public Health.

HSE Recent Prosecutions

A Hayle based company has been fined £3,000 for repeated safety offences, leaving workers at risk of serious injury at its factory. Specialist boring equipment manufacturer, Rigibore Ltd pled guilty to breaching Regulation 11(1) of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998, for failing to prevent access to dangerous parts of machinery.

A rubber manufacturer has been fined £10,000 after a Manchester worker narrowly escaped being killed in a factory explosion. Dave Lomas, 56 from Ancoats, was returning from a coffee break when he saw a five-foot iron girder fly through the factory, smashing his workstation into pieces. The worker would normally have been at his desk at the time of the explosion but had left it earlier than usual to make a drink.

Nearly one in four of the construction sites visited by HSE during March failed safety checks.

Inspectors from HSE carried out checks at 2,014 construction sites across Great Britain as part of an intensive inspection campaign aimed at reducing death and injury in one of Britain's most dangerous industries.

Further information on these prosecutions is available from the HSE website www.hse.gov.uk.

National Spring Clean

Thousands of people across Scotland are taking part in the National Spring Clean 2010 a campaign to tidy up Scotland's streets, parks, beaches and open spaces. The National Spring Clean is taking place throughout Scotland from April 1 to 30, 2010 and is organised by Keep Scotland Beautiful. Keep Scotland Beautiful is an environmental charity which aims to protect, preserve and enhance the environment of town and country in Scotland for the benefit of the public. Further information is available from the Keep Scotland Beautiful website www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org.

Forthcoming events

All Ireland Environmental Health Forum, 13 and 14 May 2010, Athlone, Ireland

REHIS Annual Conference, 19 and 20 May 2010, Renfrew

2nd All Africa Conference on Environmental Health, 24 to 28 May 2010, Lilongwe, Malawi

11th World Congress on Environmental Health, 5 to 10 September 2010, Vancouver, Canada

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, on 0131 229 2968 or tb@rehis.com