



The Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland NEWSLETTER

PROTECTING & IMPROVING PUBLIC HEALTH

May/June 2010

REHIS Conference 2010

This year's Annual Conference was held in the Glynhill Hotel, Renfrew on 19 and 20 May and was very well received by the Institute's delegates and guests. The conference programme, under the theme 'Environmental Health – 135 Years Protecting the People of Scotland', was organised by Rod House, the Institute's President. The topics covered included health protection and improvement, competency-based approaches to education and training, carbon monoxide, cryptosporidia, Influenza H1N1, tattooing and cosmetic body piercing, international environmental health, food safety and food policy. A full report will appear in the forthcoming Summer edition of the REHIS Journal *Environmental Health Scotland*.

Ayr Hospital Inspection

An inspection report into Ayr Hospital published last month by the Healthcare Environment Inspectorate found that the overall standard of cleanliness at the hospital was 'generally good', although there was room for improvement. The report commended NHS Ayrshire and Arran for its work in preventing infection, in particular good compliance with the NHS dress code and hand hygiene procedures. It also commended the health board for its good isolation practices. However, the report found that the general consistency of cleaning could be improved, and inspectors underlined the importance of clarity with regard to ultimate responsibility for infection control. The report called for a number of improvements, which include the correct use of sharps bins, the tightening up of the handling and disposal of linen and the availability of clinical waste bins in wards. The inspection at Ayr Hospital took place on February 24 and 25 this year.

Annual Environmental Health Review – 2009

The Annual Environmental Health Review of REHIS and its Scottish partners for 2009, collated and published by the Institute, can now be accessed at the REHIS website www.rehis.com.

More homes to get insulation

More Scottish homes are to be offered free or discounted insulation this year. A further 90,000 homes will be offered loft and cavity wall insulation in 10 council areas across Scotland covering the islands, cities, rural towns and surrounding villages. This initiative will almost double the number of homes which will be visited by energy assessors to 190,000 homes during the first year of the Scottish Government's Home Insulation Scheme. It includes the rural parts of Stirling now being done in addition to the original plan for the whole city, the whole of the Orkney Isles and the remaining parts of the Western Isles. The measures will cut average energy bills by £61 a year and by £2,445 over the 40 year lifetime of the insulation. Top-ups will be offered free to everyone who already has loft insulation that is not up to the recognised standard. A third of all the heat lost in an uninsulated home is through the walls. Typically, a quarter of the heat in an uninsulated home is lost through the roof. The Scottish Government's Home Insulation Scheme will be expanded and in the next few weeks and months all homes will be visited by doorstep energy assessors and offered a free energy audit to establish insulation needs. Further advice and guidance is available from the Scottish Government website www.scotland.gov.uk.

All Africa Congress

Bernard Forteath (representing the International Federation of Environmental Health) and Tom Bell attended the 2nd All Africa Environmental Health Congress in Lilongwe, Malawi last month. Following the official welcome, Keynote Addresses were delivered by Bernard Forteath (President of the IFEH) and by Jerry Chaka (Chairman of IFEH Africa Group). The Official Handover of the African Academy for Environmental Health curriculum document to the British Council in Malawi took place and this was followed by the Malawi Environmental Health Association (MEHA) announcing its re-launch. To mark this occasion Malawi's Minister of Health, the Honourable Professor Moses Chirambo, MP presented certificates conferring Honorary Membership to individuals who were deemed to have made valuable contributions to MEHA and to Environmental Health in Malawi. Dr Tony Grimason (formerly Head of Environmental Health at The University of Strathclyde, Glasgow) and Tom Bell were among six individuals to receive this honour. The four day Congress consisted of four plenary sessions with twelve presentations, eighteen parallel sessions with seventy five presentations, several poster sessions and field trips. Plenary and parallel sessions covered diarrhoea control and treatment, climate change and disaster risk management, training and professional development, water and sanitation, community health, curriculum development and quality assurance for the Africa Academy for Environmental Health, drinking water safety plans, primary school water sanitation and hygiene, community led total sanitation, food safety hygiene, waste management, policy development and decision making, pollution control and occupational health and safety. I take this opportunity to thank the Africa Academy of Environmental Health, WASHTED, MEHA, and The University of Malawi for making my trip to the Congress possible and for inviting me to be a delegate at this hugely successful event.

HSE Recent Prosecutions

A family farm in East Lothian has been fined £20,000 after one of its workers was crushed to death by a one-tonne concrete panel. On 3 June 2008, a farm worker at Hamilton Farmers (East Lothian), was helping to build a perimeter wall at an open hay shed, when the pre-cast concrete panel toppled over and crushed him. He died from his injuries at the scene.

The UK's largest confectionery firm has been fined a total of £300,000 after an employee was crushed to death in one of its sweet-making machines. HSE prosecuted Tangerine Confectionery Limited, of Vicarage Lane, Blackpool, following the death of employee Martin Pejril at its Poole factory.

A Bradford farming company has been prosecuted by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) after one of its employees was seriously injured after slipping into a manure machine. Bradford Magistrates Court heard that on 21 January 2009, an employee of CK Hanson and Son Ltd lost his big toe and part of the heel of his left foot, broke all his toes and severely damaged the ankle of his right foot when he fell into a manure auger. The HSE investigation found that the auger, a screw conveyor that takes the manure out of a battery hen house, had not been sufficiently guarded, when the worker slipped in, trapping both feet. The court also heard that the doctor attending the incident became so concerned for the worker's welfare that firefighters seriously considered removing his foot as the only means of getting him out of the machine. The worker is currently still off work and recovering from his injuries. CK Hanson & Son Ltd of Scholebrook Farm, Scholebrook Lane, Tong, Bradford, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 11(1) of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998. The firm was fined £2,000 and ordered to pay £1,395 in costs.

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

FSA says 'Give food bugs the red card this summer'

This is Food Safety Week and with many people likely to have barbecues or be eating outdoors for World Cup matches, the Food Standards Agency is reminding everyone that food bugs can cause more misery than a penalty shoot-out. Good food hygiene is even more important than usual over the next few months, say the Agency's food safety experts. Every year the levels of food poisoning soar during summer. Germs can grow faster if food is left out in the warmer temperatures, while eating food at barbecues and picnics can present additional risks such as cross-contamination between raw and cooked foods. Together, these lead to about 120,000 extra cases of illness across the UK from June to August, affecting enough people to fill some World Cup stadiums twice over. The food bug campylobacter, often present on raw chicken, is being highlighted as a particular concern. A recent Food Standards Agency survey showed that two thirds of raw chicken bought in shops had traces of campylobacter. It is the most common cause of food poisoning in the UK, making more than 320,000 people ill a year. The Food Standards Agency also has some top food safety tips for people planning barbecues this summer: always make sure chicken, pork, burgers, sausages and kebabs are cooked until steaming hot all the way through, none of the meat should be pink and any juices must run clear; wait until the charcoal is glowing red, with a powdery grey surface, before you start to cook - otherwise you risk over-charring the outside of the meat while the inside stays raw; if barbecuing lots of meat, it can be cooked in the oven first and then finished off on the barbecue for added flavor; wash your hands regularly and always after handling raw meat; when reheating food on the barbecue, always make sure it's steaming hot all the way through before serving; and, don't add sauce or marinade to cooked food if it has already been used with raw meat. Further information is available from the FSA website www.food.gov.uk.

Compliance with Hand Hygiene - Audit Report

Health Protection Scotland has published the seventh bi-monthly *Compliance with Hand Hygiene - Audit Report* as part of the National NHS Hand Hygiene Campaign. This is the seventh bi-monthly report to present hand hygiene compliance data at a country level by HPS which continues to aid understanding of compliance throughout NHS Scotland. Previously data were reported quarterly. An audit tool and supporting protocol developed by HPS are used by all NHS boards to facilitate a standardised approach to compliance monitoring across Scotland. For further information please refer to the National Hand Hygiene Campaign page within the Infection Control pages of the HPS website www.hps.scot.nhs.uk or the dedicated National Hand Hygiene Campaign website www.washyourhandsofthem.com.

Zero Waste Plan

Scotland's first Zero Waste Plan has just been published. The plan sets out key actions, including new targets, to tackle the near 20 million tonnes of waste produced by Scotland every year. It aims to drive change and inspire households, businesses, community groups, local authorities and the wider public sector to change the way they view and deal with waste. It contains a broader approach to tackle all waste, not just waste collected by councils. The plan proposes a new way of looking at the materials Scotland produces - recognising everything designed, produced and used is a resource which has a value. It will introduce 'radical' new measures, including: landfill bans for specific waste types, aiming to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and capturing their value; separate collections of specific waste types, including food (to avoid contaminating other materials), to increase reuse and recycling opportunities and contributing to the Scottish Government's renewable energy targets; two new targets that will apply to all waste: 70 per cent target recycled, and maximum five per cent sent to landfill, both by 2025; restrictions on the input to all energy from waste facilities, in the past only applicable to municipal waste; and, encouraging local authorities and the resource management sector to establish good practice commitments and work together to

create consistent waste management services, benefitting businesses and the public. Further advice and guidance is available from the Scottish Government website www.scotland.gov.uk.

Sustainable Scotland Summit

Creating a sustainable low carbon economy presents 'enormous opportunities for investment and growth that Scottish businesses must seize', First Minister Alex Salmond said at the Duke of Rothesay's Sustainable Scotland Summit at Holyrood Palace held recently in Edinburgh, which aims to promote sustainable development as the driver for future economic success. The Scottish Business in the Community (SBC) event brought together business leaders, local and national government and community partners to examine and debate how sustainability can help business and communities. The event also celebrated the work of the Prince's Mayday Network which helps businesses address climate change issues and works to create a sustainable future. Further advice and guidance is available from the Scottish Government website www.scotland.gov.uk.

Forthcoming events

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

REHIS Public Health and Housing Update, 7 and 8 September 2010, Stirling

Visit the REHIS stand at Health and Safety 10, 15 and 16 September 2010 at the Royal Highland Centre, Edinburgh

REHIS Trainers' Seminar, 20 October 2010, Glasgow

4th International Swimming Pool and Spa Conference, 15 to 18 March 2011, Porto, Portugal

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