



The Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland NEWSLETTER

PROTECTING & IMPROVING PUBLIC HEALTH

February 2012

Court rules against tobacco company

One of the world's largest tobacco firms has lost its latest legal challenge to plans for a ban on the open display of cigarettes in shops. Imperial Tobacco's appeal was unanimously dismissed by three senior judges at the Court of Session in Edinburgh. The company's civil action, which also opposed a ban on tobacco vending machines, delayed the implementation of the Scottish Government's measures which are aimed at stopping young people from taking up smoking. Sheila Duffy, Chief Executive of leading anti-tobacco charity ASH Scotland says, "We are delighted that the courts have unanimously rejected Imperial Tobacco's legal challenge. This was a typically cynical attempt to undermine our democratically elected Scottish Parliament, years of accumulated research evidence and the well-being of the Scottish people, purely to protect their own profits. Tobacco is not a normal product. It kills half of those who use it and damages the health of those who are exposed to it through no choice of their own. Scotland as a nation is recognising this and the need to protect our children and young people from the hooks of the multi-billion pound tobacco industry trying to sell its deadly and addictive substance."

REHIS Conference 2012

Have you booked your place? The REHIS Annual Conference is on 18th and 19th April 2012, at the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh. A wide and varied programme makes it a must attend event. With many challenges to protecting and improving the health of the Scottish people in front of us, there will be specific sessions on the Public Health Stocktake and the future delivery of food safety. Whether you are attending for the whole conference or particular sessions Paul Bradley, REHIS President, looks forward to welcoming you to the event. To register please contact Helen Black by e-mail at contact@rehis.com.

Latest from the Northern Centre

In May 2010 the Northern Centre trialled their spring seminar using video conferencing. The Northern Centre Management Committee felt there was a need to try and offer training to members without the financial constraint of travel/time costs, which was particularly relevant to our colleagues working on the islands. Members in Shetland, Orkney, Western Isles, Inverness and Moray were all offered the opportunity to tune in.



To replicate the host venue, each video conferencing site was e-mailed with a copy of the speakers' presentations and notes in advance. We also found that speakers had more flexibility in that they had a choice of venues to attend, or even the option of providing their presentation from the comfort of their own office. Feedback was very positive and the Northern Centre did not hesitate to offer the same facilities at its future training events and the latest seminar was considered a success with approximately 45 members in attendance. The Northern Centre has now held five training sessions by video conferencing link. At the latest Health and Safety Update Course in January, the Northern Centre was able to provide 35 members and 16 non-members with CPD training which can assist members to attain Chartered status. Seminars through video conferencing are a cost-effective way of keeping in touch with the latest developments in Environmental Health and are becoming very popular.

VC - video conferencing or is it vital connections?

by Elaina Leach, EHO, Shetland Islands Council

I have used video conference facilities many times and there are meetings on the mainland that it simply wouldn't be possible for staff from Shetland to attend. This is not only because of the cost of travel but also the time it can take travelling to and from the mainland. As an example, I could be away from work for the most of three days at a cost of



several hundred pounds for a half-day meeting. This just isn't practicable. Being able to attend meetings by VC means that resources can be targeted at travelling to events and training that must be attended in person - for example where there is a practical element. It also means that location is not a barrier for staff to contribute to issues being discussed. VC can also be effective at larger events with the speaker appearing on screen. It is important that the speaker or session chair remembers about the participants in the satellite locations. I have found it easier if any slide show is shown on a laptop locally, rather than switching between the slideshow and speaker on the screen. There are of course the times when technology fails us. Sometimes the connection cannot be made at all or the sound quality is poor. And remember that if you don't want everyone to hear what you are saying - mute the microphone. Even with the occasional problem, VC provides a vital connection to groups, meetings and seminars. I am really pleased that the Northern Centre and some liaison groups have been using VC facilities where possible as this allows me to attend. I hope that this could also be considered for national REHIS events.

Scottish Green Apple Awards

The Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland is supporting a new initiative to recognise, reward and promote environmental best practice by companies, councils and communities in Scotland. There is no entry fee and winners will be given free tickets for the glittering presentation ceremony at the Scottish Parliament, Holyrood, Edinburgh in September. The closing date for entries is 30 April. The UK Green Apple Awards began in 1994, but the organisers are responding to the requests of numerous Scottish contenders by arranging a stand-alone event for Scotland. National Organiser Roger Wolens said: "We have always had a lot of interest from Scotland, with an increasing number of entries and winners. But with the onset of the recession, winners are finding it increasingly difficult to justify a visit to London to collect their awards and network with other winners. It is a shame if they win and then cannot maximise the PR and photo opportunities presented by the House of Commons event, so we are solving the problem for them, with the help of the Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland. We have always aimed to make the Green Apple Awards totally accessible to anyone doing anything for the environment, so we will do everything we can to make it as easy as possible for everyone to get the recognition they deserve for their environmental endeavours." With categories for every type of commerce and industry, local authorities and even individuals, free entries are invited from anyone trying to help the environment.



Entry forms and full information can be found at www.thegreenorganisation.info.

Scottish Food Advisory Committee

At its meeting on 17 January members of SFAC discussed a European proposal to allow the use of lactic acid on carcasses of cattle to reduce the levels of microbiological contamination. Following discussion the Committee was split on the issue which was subsequently considered by the Food

Standards Agency Board on 24 January. The Board agreed to broadly support the proposal. Further information is available at www.food.gov.uk.

Meat plants audit reports published

The Food Standards Agency has started the regular publication of audit reports of approved meat plants in England, Scotland and Wales. This marks the beginning of routine publication of these reports, in line with the FSA's commitment to transparency. More than 200 audit reports were published on 16 January 2012. These cover all audits that have been completed since 1 November 2011. From now on, audit reports will be issued at the end of each month (about 200 each month). FSA approval is required before a meat plant can operate (this includes slaughterhouses, cutting plants and game handling establishments). There are 1,200 FSA-approved meat plants in Great Britain, and 60 in Northern Ireland. The FSA is currently reviewing audit arrangements with the aim of making them easier to understand, both for the food business operator and for people not involved in the meat industry. Once this review is complete, the Agency will publish audits for all approved meat plants across the UK, including Northern Ireland. These reports are available at www.food.gov.uk.

FSA publishes list of meat plants considered 'cause for concern'

The FSA now routinely publishes a full list of meat plants that, on the basis of their audit reports, are considered a 'cause for concern'. 'Cause for concern' is a process developed in response to Professor Pennington's report on the 2005 E.coli outbreak in Wales, which recommended that there needed to be improved management oversight of poorer performing meat plants. The process makes it clear which plants need to improve their standards to ensure risks to the public are kept to a minimum. The list is available on www.food.gov.uk.

Food hygiene is concern when eating out

The FSA's latest public attitudes tracker shows that the main food safety issue people continue to be concerned about is food hygiene when eating out.

Other issues include food poisoning and the use of additives in food. The latest wave of research was undertaken in November 2011, with a total number of 2,076 respondents interviewed via the TNS consumer face-to-face omnibus survey. Read more about the survey at www.food.gov.uk.

Hub Grub Community Café in Edinburgh

Tom Bell, REHIS Chief Executive and Graham Walker, Director of Training were privileged to be asked to present Elementary Food Hygiene Certificates to a group of volunteers helping with food handling at The Ripple Project in Edinburgh.

The Ripple Project is a small community organisation and registered charity delivering a wide range of projects in the Restalrig, Lochend and Craightinny area of Edinburgh. The Hub Grub Community Café is one of their projects providing a range of freshly made soups, salads and home baking with an emphasis on healthy options, as well as a community social space and an information point where people can find out what is available to them in the area, build links with organisations and become actively involved in their community. The volunteers received their REHIS training from Edinburgh Community Food, an Approved REHIS Training Centre.



The photo shows the volunteers with Tom and Graham and Lesley Halliday, Ripple Project Community Development, and Jane Scott, REHIS Presenter from Edinburgh Community Food.

Research calls for official controls review

On 12 January the Food Standards Agency (FSA) invited suppliers to tender for work gathering evidence on current official controls delivery. The research project will provide an overview of the current structures in place for delivering food and feed official controls by local authorities, indicate how this is changing, and identify the interactions between delivery and other areas of activity. The review of official controls delivery will evaluate the effectiveness of the current delivery model in the UK, and consider the scope for making changes. A copy of the research specification and information on the frameworks can be found at www.food.gov.uk.

Future of aquaculture and fisheries

The Scottish Government has launched a consultation to support a sustainable future for aquaculture and fisheries, and the effective management of interactions between these two sectors. The consultation also includes proposals to update enforcement provisions for aquaculture and fisheries, and a review of the approach to cost sharing and charges. The consultation will inform the development of a new Aquaculture and Fisheries Bill, which will build on existing legislation, strategic frameworks and good practice. The consultation will run until 2 March 2012. Details of the consultation are available on www.Scotland.gov.uk.

Go greener together

The Scottish Government has issued an invitation to 'Help create a Greener Scotland! Be a founding member of a brand new national campaign, working together to make Scotland a healthier, cleaner, greener place to live'. Further information is available at www.greenerScotland.org/welcome.

Port health in focus

The Association of Port Health Authorities has launched a quarterly online magazine 'In Focus' for Port Health professionals and industry partners, see the home page of the APHA website www.porthhealth.co.uk.

Tony Morris, Chief Executive of APHA gave his thoughts on the launch of 'In Focus'. "We have some really important pieces of work happening within Port Health, it is so important to keep all members and stakeholders fully aware and involved. 'In Focus' has a serious part to play in raising the profile of Port Health and of APHA in particular and as an investment demonstrates a real confidence for the future."

If you'd like to receive a link to 'In Focus' in your own inbox every quarter, please send your e-mail details to marketing@porthhealth.co.uk.

The current Chairman of the APHA Board is Dr John Curnow, a past President of REHIS.

Infection Prevention and Control Manual for NHSScotland

On 13 January, the Scottish Chief Nursing Officer announced the publication of the inaugural chapter of a National Infection Prevention and Control Manual for NHSScotland. This chapter consists of Standard Infection Control Precautions (SICPs) policy which replaces Health Protection Scotland (HPS) Model Policies. SICPs are intended for use by all healthcare staff in all healthcare settings at all times whether infection is known to be present or not to ensure the safety of patients, staff and visitors to the healthcare environment. They represent the basic infection prevention and control measures necessary to reduce the risk of transmission of microorganisms from both recognised and unrecognised sources of infection. It is expected that all Health Boards will adopt the National Infection Prevention Control Manual and maintain local assurance through continuous monitoring in all care areas in hospital and community settings by 30 June 2012. Further details available at www.hps.scot.nhs.uk.

Outbreak of *Salmonella* Newport

Health Protection Scotland (HPS) is investigating five cases of *Salmonella* Newport infection in Scotland as part of the investigation of a UK-wide outbreak. HPS is co-ordinating investigations with the Food Standards Agency and Health Protection Agency, which has seen an additional 30 cases across the rest of the UK since December 2011. Cases of *Salmonella* Newport infection caused

by the same strain have also been found in the Republic of Ireland and Germany. Infection with *Salmonella* Newport causes a similar illness to other forms of *Salmonella* infection and symptoms include diarrhoea, vomiting, abdominal pain and fever. As with other strains, most cases resolve within four to seven days. Four of the five cases in Scotland were in patients aged less than six years old, with the fifth case occurring in an adult. None of the Scottish cases have reported needing hospital treatment. No new cases have been reported in Scotland since the first week in January. Investigations into the source of the infections are continuing. Full details are available at www.hps.scot.nhs.uk.

Companies fined for waste offences

Following SEPA investigations action has been taken against two waste companies.

A Giffnock firm has been fined £1,350 for falsifying records required in terms of waste management licencing. Mitchell Thomson Limited pled guilty at Paisley Sheriff Court to intentionally making false entries in records required to be kept under the conditions of their waste management licence, in that they signed 16 waste transfer notices for waste they did not believe they had received at their site in Robslee Drive, Giffnock and created false invoices to accompany these transfer notes.

A Loanhead company was fined £1,650 at Edinburgh Sheriff Court on 12 January 2012 for burning waste at its site. Caledonian Industrial Limited trading as Caleco Waste, admitted disposal of controlled waste by burning waste wood, including wooden pallets and wooden fencing, and contravening a condition of their waste management licence at their site at Eldin Industrial Estate, Edgefield Road, Loanhead.

Further information is available on the SEPA website www.sepa.org.uk.

Three companies fined after worker falls from roof

Three Dundee companies have been fined a total of £336,000 after a worker fell six and a half metres through a roof light onto a concrete floor. Crockett and Partners had been contracted by Electroguard

Security Systems to fit a lighting system as part of a larger project at Dundee Cold Stores Ltd, Kingsway West, Dundee. Dundee Sheriff Court heard that on 3 October 2008, an electrician's labourer was attaching cables to the wall of a building in order to install a new security system. One of the cables he needed was on the roof of the building so he decided to use a mobile platform to get to the roof level and then walk across the roof to retrieve it. Once on the roof he realised he needed some clips, and as he was returning to the platform he stood on a roof light and fell through it, hitting machinery below, before landing on the concrete floor. At Dundee Sheriff Court on 24 January 2012, Robert A S Crockett and Partners Ltd of Scott Street, Dundee were fined £66,000 after pleading guilty to breaching Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. Electroguard Security Systems of Strathmore Avenue, Dundee was fined £135,000, and Dundee Cold Stores of Whittle Place, Gourdie Industrial Estate, Dundee was fined £135,000 after they both pled guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. Further details of the event and HSE investigation are available at www.hse.gov.uk.

HSE update - Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) Selector Tool

RPE is used in many workplaces to protect workers when working with hazardous substances, such as gases, solvents, powdered chemicals and sprays. RPE comes with various forms of facepiece, such as helmets, visors, hoods or masks. The Selector Tool was developed jointly by the Health and Safety Executive, NHS Scotland and Scottish Healthy Working Lives. It is based on the underpinning principles in the Technical Basis for COSHH Essentials and HSG53 (Respiratory protective equipment). It takes less than five minutes to identify RPE for a given situation. It has boundary limits for use and is explained in the step-by-step tool. For more information please visit this link: <http://www.healthyworkinglives.com/advice/minimising-workplace-risks/respiratory-protective-equipment/rpe.aspx>.

Myjobscotland wins major national award

At the Guildhall in London, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) was awarded a prestigious UK Public Sector Digital Award, 'Best example of Shared Services in practice', beating off stiff competition from leading public sector competitors such as the NHS, UK Cabinet Office Welsh Government. The UK Public Sector Digital Awards, formerly known as the e-Government National Awards, celebrate excellence in ICT enabled service delivery across all sectors of Government. Further information is available at info@cosla.gov.uk and myjobscotland.gov.uk.

OSHCR update

As at 9 February 2012, 2,777 consultants have been approved onto the Occupational Safety and Health Consultants' Register (OSHCR) and this figure includes a number of Chartered EHO members of the Institute. Further information on the Register is available from the OSHCR website www.oshcr.org.



Forthcoming events

Food Safety and Nutrition Live 2012, 14 March 2012, Glasgow Royal Concert Hall

REHIS/SFSORB Professional Examination, 20/21/22 March 2012, Edinburgh

REHIS Annual Conference, 18/19 April 2012, Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh

Certificate of Competence in Environmental Noise Measurement course, 23/27 April 2012, The University of the West of Scotland

Sun, Sunbeds and Lasers, 9 May 2012, Glasgow, Health Protection Agency, CRCE Scotland

International Radiological Protection Association Congress, 13/18 May 2012, Glasgow

IFEH World Congress on Environmental Health, 21/27 May 2012, Vilnius, Lithuania

Health Protection 2012, 11/12 September 2012 Warwick University: www.healthprotectionconferences.org.uk

REHIS/SFSORB Professional Examination, 30/31 October and 1 November 2012, Edinburgh



IFEH 12th World Congress
on Environmental Health
Vilnius, Lithuania
21st–27th May, 2012

If you wish to feature any Environmental Health or Public Health initiative, event or activity in the REHIS Newsletter, please contact Jim Thomson, Policy/Professional Development Officer, The Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland, 19 Torphichen Street, Edinburgh, tel: 0131 229 2968 or jt@rehis.com