E-learning success for Kidzcare staff

Kidzcare Ltd is a well-established childcare organisation which runs a wide variety of childcare facilities in Edinburgh and the Borders for three months onwards mainstream children and also for children who have individual needs. They are all about fun and relaxation. The care of the children they look after and the ethos of their company is based on four key values: safety, service, development, and fairness. Looking for an effective way of complementing staff training Kidzcare Ltd decided to utilise the REHIS Elementary e-learning system for members of staff. The course was co-ordinated and tutored by Catherine Hall, a REHIS Course Presenter. The course was so successful that Kidzcare Ltd have registered more of their staff for the e-learning programme.

The photograph shows Catherine with some of the Kidzcare Ltd staff.

An increasing number of Approved Training Centres wish to offer e-learning as an alternative method of delivery. REHIS e-learning packs are now available at Introductory, Elementary and Intermediate Food Hygiene levels. Only REHIS Approved Training Centres can deliver the e-learning courses and they are required to provide a registered presenter as tutor support. The relevant e-learning pack must be used and candidates must sit the standard examination in order to gain the Certificate. Candidates must pass all the modules in the e-learning pack in order to obtain the examination permit at the end of the course. A copy of the examination permit must be sent to REHIS, along with an examination registration form, before the candidate can sit the examination. Centres are required to arrange the examination time and venue and the examination must be carried out under the same strict examination conditions as the taught courses. The e-learning course is available on CD ROM and/or on the web. Candidates have unlimited access to the programme for one year. For more information about REHIS e-learning please contact the REHIS office.

The MUSTER Model - A Novel Approach to Environmental Investigations

NHS Fife and the University of St Andrews are currently developing a new framework for environmental investigations which integrates the scientific, psychological and social issues arising from environmental hazards such as air pollution, contaminated land, noise and radiation. This process involves Meeting and interviewing individual complainants, Understanding individual and local concerns, reviewing Surveillance and Toxicological data, Evaluating findings, and Reporting on findings - the MUSTER model. The MUSTER model is currently the subject of a two year research programme by NHS Fife and the University of St Andrews. This will include liaising with Fife Council environmental health staff as part of the model development process. The potential benefits of the MUSTER model are already being explored within the context of the Fife Council Air Quality Action Plan produced for the Bonnygate Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in Cupar. On completion of this research, it is anticipated that the MUSTER model will provide a robust method of environmental investigation which can satisfy
complainants, enhance staff knowledge base and improve communication. For further information on the MUSTER model, please contact Dr Jackie Hyland, Department of Public Health, Cameron House, Cameron Bridge, Leven, Fife, KY8 5RG, jackie.hyland@nhs.net.


### Scotland’s Drinking Water Quality Regulator

Susan Petch has been appointed as the Drinking Water Quality Regulator for Scotland. Sue, a chemist by profession, previously held the posts of Asset Strategy Manager with Northumbrian Water PLC and Water Quality Manager with Northumbria Water.

### FSA Chief Scientist’s Annual Report

*from Dr Andrew Wadge, Chief Scientist*

I am writing to inform you of the publication of my fifth Annual Report as the Agency’s Chief Scientist. Science is at the heart of what we do at the Agency and we have achieved a great deal in the past year.

Having refreshed our 2010 to 2015 Science and Evidence Strategy following changes in the Food Standards Agency’s remit, the report aims to provide you with a high level overview of how the Agency uses science and evidence in practical ways to assess food risks, to understand people’s behaviours and to develop ways of managing risks in an effective, efficient and proportionate way. The report represents the dedicated work of many of the Agency’s staff.

To improve sustainability and to make resource savings, this year the report is only available as an online document. The report provides interactive links to all of the Agency’s research programmes and can be found at: [http://www.food.gov.uk/science/researchpolicy/chiefsci/csreps/](http://www.food.gov.uk/science/researchpolicy/chiefsci/csreps/).

### Response to Scottish healthy eating resource

The eatwell week, a new healthy eating resource commissioned by the Food Standards Agency Scotland (FSAS), has received positive responses during initial testing by consumers and health professionals. It illustrates what a healthy balanced diet looks like during the course of a week. It is based on the eatwell plate, which shows the types and amounts of foods needed for a balanced diet. The eatwell week highlights the importance of increasing consumption of starchy foods (such as bread, potatoes, pasta and rice) and consuming fewer high fat and/or sugary foods. When tested by consumers and health professionals, both groups reacted positively to the style and presentation. The content was considered realistic and consumers found the recipes simple to prepare. However, the research also found that some consumers did not understand the proportions of each food group required to maintain a healthy, balanced diet. The eatwell week was designed by a team from the Department of Life Course Nutrition and Health at the University of Glasgow, and will be further developed by the FSAS before it is made available to consumers and health professionals. Further information is available from the FSA website: [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk).

### Equally Well test sites: evaluation report published

NHS Health Scotland recently published an evaluation report on the eight Equally Well test sites established in 2008, intended to try out new ideas to redesign and refocus public services, with the aim of tackling health inequalities. The report found that all of the eight sites have made progress with short-term outcomes such as improved joint working. Less progress has been made with longer-term outcomes such as changes for service users. Those involved in the test sites had views about the changes in national policy that would help them to deliver local approaches to tackle health inequalities more successfully. These included: greater focus on early intervention; improved link up between Scottish Government approaches; full involvement of the appropriate part of the NHS; a reflection of the need to tackle health inequalities in national targets and outcomes for public sector
organisations; and, improved sharing of learning where appropriate. The test sites reported that they would like to continue to work flexibly and collaboratively and that it is important that local change continues to be locally determined rather than top down. The full report is available to download from the NHS Health Scotland website: www.healthscotland.com.

HSE’s new reporting arrangements

From Monday 12 September 2011, statutory reporting to HSE of work-related injuries and incidents under RIDDOR (the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995) will move to a predominantly online system. Revised online forms will make the reporting process quick and easy. Fatal and major injuries and incidents can still be reported to HSE’s Incident Contact Centre by telephone. In addition, HSE’s Infoline telephone information service will end on 30 September 2011. Businesses seeking information on health and safety can refer to HSE’s website: www.hse.gov.uk which has been enhanced with new resources including: an interactive risk assessment tool for low-risk businesses; Health and safety made simple – straightforward step-by-step guidance on what small and low risk businesses need to do to achieve a basic level of compliance; and, an expanded Frequently Asked Questions to answer common queries service. Comprehensive health and safety information is also available via Business Link, the Government’s website for business.

SEPA CEO to stand down

The Chief Executive of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Dr Campbell Gemmell, is to step down later this year to take on a new role, in Australia. Dr Gemmell, who joined SEPA as Director of Strategic Planning in 2001, has been CEO for the past eight years. He is to remain at SEPA until the end of the year, and will take up the post of Chief Executive of the Environment Protection Authority South Australia, in Adelaide, in the New Year. Further information is available from the SEPA website: www.sepa.org.uk.

Review of food safety in the home

The Food Standards Agency www.food.gov.uk has published a review of existing studies that explore how people manage food safety in their homes and what implications these behaviours could have on their health. The report found that, although they are often aware of good food hygiene practices, many people are failing to chill foods properly, aren’t following advice on food labels and aren’t sticking to simple hygiene practices that would help them avoid spreading harmful bacteria around their kitchens. People often know what they should be doing, but they don’t put this knowledge into practice, believing they are not vulnerable to food poisoning. The results of this research will be used to develop targeted advice to help reduce levels of food poisoning in the UK. The final report can be found at the link: www.foodbase.org.uk// admintools/reportdocuments/700-1-1185_X04009_FINAL.pdf.

Upset stomachs cost UK 11 million working days

Nearly 17 million people suffer from stomach upsets in the UK every year, leading to about 11 million lost working days, new research published recently by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) has found. The study, which is the biggest of its kind for more than ten years, looked at the impact of all cases of infectious intestinal disease (IID), not just those linked to food, on the UK population. IID is typically vomiting or diarrhoea, or a combination of the two. The research was carried out by a group of organisations led by the University of Manchester. Further information is available from the FSA website: www.food.gov.uk.

Monitoring the implementation of Parma Conference commitments

The Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health (Parma, Italy, 2010) adopted the Declaration and the Commitment to Act, containing the first time-bound set of targets for the environment and health process. The Declaration also reaffirmed the need to maintain and develop the European Environment and Health Information System (ENHIS) as a key tool. A consultation held in November 2010 identified a minimum set of new ENHIS indicators for monitoring the
implementation of commitments from Parma and determined the time schedule for pilot testing and implementation of these indicators. A follow-up technical meeting in April 2011 specified approaches to new data collection for a subset of the proposed indicators, focusing on the indoor environment in children’s facilities. On 29 and 30 September 2011, participants from Member States, representatives of international organisations and selected experts will meet in Bonn, Germany to: review progress towards the implementation of the set specified in November 2010; agree on the steps for synchronisation and harmonisation of data collection in Member States feeding ENHIS indicators that rely on existing data collection programs; review and agree on methodologies of new ENHIS indicators that require new data; agree on information to be presented at the first meeting of the newly formed Environmental Health Task Force, the European body for the coordination of the implementation of Environment and Health process; and review the status of ENHIS and determine future directions for its development to improve the communication of results from environment and health monitoring. Further information is available from the WHO Europe website: www.euro.who.int/en.

Alcohol sales at all time high
Alcohol sales are now 23 per cent higher in Scotland than in England and Wales, the biggest difference ever recorded during the 17 years measured since 1994. The new figure is contained in a report published recently by NHS Health Scotland. The publication shows that on average 2.2 more litres of pure alcohol per adult were sold in Scotland than in England in 2010 - 11.8 litres versus 9.6 litres. This equates to 22.8 units of alcohol per adult per week in Scotland, above the recommended upper weekly limit of 21 units for men. In addition almost 2.5 times more vodka was sold per adult in Scotland through off-sales than in England and Wales. Further information is available from the Scottish Government website: www.scotland.gov.uk.

OSHCR Update
As at 28 September 2,637 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
REHIS Professional Examination, 1 to 3 November 2011, Edinburgh
FPH Annual Scottish Conference, 10 & 11 November 2011, Aviemore
REHIS Annual Awards Ceremony, 17 November 2011, Edinburgh - evening event
REHIS Environmental Health Update event, 18 November 2011 - morning event
REHIS Annual General Meeting, 18 November 2011, Edinburgh - 2.00pm
International Radiological Protection Association Congress, 13 to 18 May 2012, Glasgow
IFEH World Congress on Environmental Health, 21 to 27 May 2012, Vilnius, Lithuania