REHIS 2016 Manifesto for Environmental Health

The Manifesto will be launched shortly and all prospective MSP’s will receive a copy. All political parties have been invited to comment and any comments received will be available in the next newsletter. The full Manifesto is available on the REHIS website at www.rehis.com/document/2016/03/environmental-health-manifesto-scotland.

REHIS Annual Environmental Health Forum 2016

This year’s Annual Environmental Health Forum will be presented at Glasgow Caledonian University, Glasgow on 27 and 28 April this year. The Institute’s President, Professor Kofi Aidoo, will host the event at the University where he has been an active teaching and research academic for many years. The Forum programme can be downloaded from the REHIS website and booking for one or both days are welcome. Book your delegate place without delay!

REHIS Briefing Notes

Five Briefing Notes have been added to the REHIS website. They cover Skin Piercing and Tattooing, National Local Authority Enforcement Code – Health and Safety, Health and Safety at Work, Antisocial Behaviour Noise and Residential Landlord Registration.

REHIS supports Scottish Government move for tighter e-cigarette regulation

While the Scottish Government established the legal age limit to buy tobacco products at 18 years old, this age limit has not yet been expanded to e-cigarette purchases in Scotland. Consequentially, some young people have tried or become regular consumers of e-cigarettes as these devices gained popularity.

REHIS has endorsed Scotland’s Charter for a Tobacco-free Generation and voiced their support of Scottish Government initiatives to grant young people the same protection from e-cigarettes as from tobacco calling for:

- Age restrictions and proposed offences for proxy sales
- Crack down on e-cig accessories and advertising
- Prohibit use of e-cigs in enclosed public spaces and vehicles.
The Charter was signed by on behalf of REHIS by its President, Professor Kofi Aidoo.

Appointments

John Sleith formerly of Falkirk Council has been appointed as REHIS Director of Professional Development and takes up his post on 18 April 2016. John is a “well kent face” in REHIS and the wider environmental health/public health field in Scotland. Our best wishes go to John on his appointment.

Bernard Forteath has been invited to join the ASH Scotland Board as a co-opted member with a view to becoming a full Board member at their AGM in September.

Bernard said “I am delighted to be invited to join the ASH Board and look forward to participating and supporting the work of ASH Scotland. For many the fact that we have now achieved 10 years of smoke-free success is job done but sadly that is not the case. Every year in Scotland there are around 10,000 deaths attributable to smoking and 128,000 smoking related hospital admissions. So smoking is still a major Public and Environmental Health issue and one which EHOs are well placed to raise awareness of the goal in Scotland of creating a tobacco-free generation of Scots by 2034”.

World Environmental Health Day 2016

This year’s World Environmental Health Day will be celebrated on 26 September. The agreed theme, proposed by Bernard Forteath, will be ‘Tobacco Control…a response to the global tobacco pandemic’. Full information is available on the REHIS website at www.rehis.com/event/world-environmental-health-day-2016.

Restrictions on the sale of e-cigarettes in Scotland

The Scottish Government’s Health Bill bans under-18s from buying the devices and limits their advertising.

The wide-ranging legislation also strengthens the ban on smoking tobacco in NHS hospital grounds. And it will create specific criminal offences for health and social care workers found to be deliberately mistreating those in their care.

The Health (Tobacco, Nicotine etc, and Care) Bill was passed unanimously by the Scottish Parliament on 3 March 2016.

Amongst other measures, the law will ban sales of electronic cigarettes to under-18s and ban proxy purchase and vending machine sales of e-cigarettes, will create a national register of e-cigarette retailers, give new powers to the Scottish Government to regulate “domestic” e-cigarette advertising, such as billboards, bus shelter and point of sale advertising, and make smoking in parts of hospital grounds an offence.

Revised LAQM Guidance

A revised Local Air Quality Management policy guidance PG(S) 16 has been published and is available on the Scottish Government website www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/3/9717 and Technical guidance will follow later in April.

Zika virus - a WHO update

Zika virus is a mild disease and most people with the virus do not have symptoms. However, the recent rise in the spread of Zika virus in Brazil has been accompanied by an unprecedented rise in the number of children being born with unusually small heads—identified as microcephaly. In addition, several countries, including Brazil, reported a steep increase in Guillain-Barré syndrome—a neurological disorder that could lead to paralysis and death. Evidence is growing that Zika virus causes both microcephaly and Guillain-Barré syndrome. WHO have published a list of common questions and answers which is available on the WHO website www.who.int.

‘Toilet Twinning’

An interesting initiative has been highlighted by Graham Pollock from West Dunbartonshire “toilet twinning”. What is it? “Toilet Twinning provides people in the poorest communities on the planet with a decent toilet, clean water and all the information they need to stay healthy. It’s the key to helping whole communities break free of the poverty trap.” Further information on this initiative is available at www.toilettwinning.org.
**Folic acid in flour**

The Scottish Public Health Minister has written to Food Standards Scotland (FSS) for advice on how Scotland could fortify flour with folic acid.

The advice will be used to help ministers decide how to pursue the policy on a Scotland-only basis. The Scottish Government’s preference is for a UK-wide solution, but the UK Government has so far failed to commit to the measure. The Welsh and Northern Irish governments have also publicly backed the fortification of flour.

The Scottish Government believes mandatory fortification of flour with folic acid is the best way to reduce neural tube defects like spina bifida in unborn babies. Folate levels are low across the UK by international standards - particularly so in Scotland. Further information is available on the Scottish Government website [www.scotland.gov](http://www.scotland.gov).

**FSS News**

**Sugar Tax Announcement**

Food Standards Scotland (FSS) has welcomed Chancellor George Osborne’s announcement of a sugar tax on soft drinks at yesterday’s 2016 Budget.

The move to introduce levies in 2018 follows an array of suggested measures from Scotland’s public sector food body in January 2016 towards meeting Scotland’s Dietary Goals in which considering sugar tax was recommended.

FSS Board evidence indicated that sugar taxation would lead to a reduction in purchases proportionate to the level of tax applied, and that a tax of 10% to 20% would be necessary to have a significant impact on purchases, consumption, and ultimately population health.

*FSS Chief Executive Geoff Ogle said:* “We welcome the news from Westminster on a future soft drinks sugar tax as a first step and look forward to the detail of the announcement to comment further.

“By 2030 obesity levels for Scotland are currently projected at 40% of the total population so tackling our diet is an urgent priority.

“Whilst this positive step can make a significant contribution to improving Scotland’s diet and has proved itself successful in other countries such as Mexico, it alone will not address the immense challenge in front of us, and as outlined at the beginning of the year, other actions will be required.”

In addition to a potential sugar tax, the recommended actions from the 20 January FSS Board meeting included reformulation and control over portion sizes as well as price promotions.

Mr. Ogle continued: “As we approach the end of our first year it’s good to see movement towards a fiscal measure that appears to fit within our Board’s earlier recommendations on what has become an entrenched problem.

“While this is a first step in the right direction there is still a lot more to do to improve Scotland’s diet and that will require collaboration across government, industry and other stakeholders. FSS will continue to offer leadership and coordination to bring about real change for Scotland.”

**Launch of Eatwell Guide**

Food Standards Scotland (FSS) launched, on 17 March 2016, the new Eatwell Guide, which replaces the eatwell plate and shows people in Scotland how they can achieve a healthy balanced diet.

The proportions of food groups that constitute a healthy diet were amended to reflect new guidelines for sugar and fibre that were published by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition in 2015, and accepted by Scottish Ministers on the advice of Food Standards Scotland. The new Guide contains additional advice on calorie information, front of pack labelling and messaging on key dietary recommendations.

The biggest change in the new Guide is that food and drink high in fats, salt and sugars are treated separately from other foods and the Guide includes a clear message that they should
be eaten less often and in smaller amounts. That includes foods such as cakes, biscuits, sweets, chocolate and ice cream. The Guide also now includes a recommendation to drink 6-8 glasses of water, milk and sugar-free drinks each day.

The new Guide provides FSS with a strong evidence base for dietary advice in Scotland, where the FSS, as the body with statutory responsibility for diet and nutrition in Scotland, has already within its first year proposed wide-ranging measures designed to improve the diet of the Scottish public. These recommendations have been accepted by Scottish Government Ministers to tackle head-on the growing obesity crisis in Scotland. See more at www.foodstandards.gov.scot.

Salt intakes reducing in Scotland – good progress but still more to do

A Food Standards Scotland (FSS) survey published on 23 March, 2016 finds that salt intakes in Scotland have reduced by 13% since 2006. We welcome this reduction and the progress made towards the Scottish Dietary Goal for salt. We recognise the effort made by the food industry to achieve this through reformulation of their products.

However, intakes are still 30% higher than the recommended 6g per day, with two-thirds of adults in Scotland still eating too much salt which can cause significant risk of developing high blood pressure, which in turn can increase the risk of heart disease and stroke.

75% of the salt we eat is already in manufactured foods such as bread, meat products, cereals and convenience foods. Work by manufacturers and retailers, who have reformulated many of their own brands, has been important in achieving this reduction. Continued effort is required to reach the 6g per day Scottish Dietary Goal.

Further information including the report are available on the FSS website www.foodstandards.gov.scot.

A National Food Crime Strategic Assessment

Food Standards Scotland published, on 23 March 2016, the first assessment of food crime activities in the UK in collaboration with the Food Standards Agency. The Food Crime Annual Strategic Assessment examines the scale and nature of food crime threats to the UK’s £200 billion food industry, and will help inform the Scottish Food Crime & Incidents Unit (SFCIU)’s priorities over the next year.

While there has been good progress there is still a lot of work to be done. This report suggests the chances of food crime detection still remains relatively low so there may be a risk to Scottish consumers and business from serious food fraud. Information sharing remains critical to unearthing and dealing with food fraud, and the SFCIU continues to work closely with their partners in Scotland, across the UK and abroad, including Police Scotland, the Food Standards Agency and the food industry itself.

These assessments will be carried out annually, and will help keep Scottish consumers and businesses informed of the risks from food crime. See more on the FSS website www.foodstandards.gov.scot.

Final countdown to compulsory microchipping of dogs

Scotland’s top vet has urged dog owners not to leave it to the last minute to get their animal microchipped, ahead of new laws coming into force next month.

From April 6, it will be compulsory for all dogs in Scotland to have a chip with their owners’ details registered and kept up to date in a database complying with certain conditions.

The change in legislation was highlighted by Chief Veterinary Officer Sheila Voas on 2 March 2016 at a free Dogs Trust microchipping drop-in session in Perth. She said:

“In just over a month’s time, it will be compulsory for all dogs to have a microchip and for owner details to be registered and kept up to date. This will reduce the number of lost and abandoned
dogs in Scotland – helping to safeguard animal welfare and promote responsible ownership.

“The microchipping procedure is very quick and largely painless, and can be done for free at Dogs Trust mobile drop-in events such as this one. In addition, many veterinary practices are offering special deals. The clock is ticking, and so I urge dog owners not to delay or leave it until the last minute to get their animal chipped and ensure their contact details are up-to-date.”

Community planning to plug the gap between expectation and delivery

In its third update on community planning for the Auditor General and the Accounts Commission, Audit Scotland states that local and national progress has been made since its last report in 2014.

Progress on community planning has not yet achieved the major change needed to fulfil its potential to reduce inequalities and put communities at the heart of delivering public services.

Community planning involves councils and other public bodies working with communities, businesses and voluntary groups to plan and deliver services that improve the lives of local people. Established in 2003, the process is led by 32 Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs), covering each council area.

It recognises that CPPs have improved leadership and scrutiny, and the way they use data to set clearer priorities. However, more effort is needed to shift resources on a larger scale towards long-term goals and to involve communities fully in making decisions that affect their lives, so CPPs can improve outcomes and address inequalities, particularly in more disadvantaged areas.

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 sets out new statutory duties for CPPs, and reforms such as health and social care integration aim to promote prevention and outcomes. But stronger national leadership and support from the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) is needed for community planning to meet its full potential.

The Scottish Government is improving its understanding of individual CPPs, but should be clear on what role it expects CPPs and partners to play in reforming public services.

The report, published on 3 March 2016, also states that some short-term performance targets make it difficult to advance reform and shift the focus of public bodies to long-term outcomes for services and the people who use them.

Further information is available on the Audit Scotland website www.audit-scotland.gov.uk.

SEPA News

Appointment of Deputy Chair

Scottish Government, on 10 April 2016, announced the appointment of a new Deputy Chair to the Board of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA).

The new Deputy Chair is Dr Lesley Sawers, who has been a member of SEPA’s Board since 2012. Lesley brings a wide experience of executive and non-executive appointments from across the public, private, and voluntary sectors to the role. She also has wide strategic experience, strengths in communication, and excellent stakeholder management.

Glasgow food manufacturer fined for failing to comply with Packaging Waste regulations

A Glasgow food manufacturer was fined £8,000 at Glasgow Sherriff Court on 7 March for failing to comply with regulations designed to reduce the impact of packaging and packaging waste on the environment. The company has also paid £28,538 as a Confiscation Order under the Proceeds of Crime Act.

Walter Black Foods Limited of Drumhead Road, Cambuslang Investment Park, Glasgow, pled guilty to failing to register in accordance with the regulations, failing to take reasonable steps to recover and recycle packaging waste and failing to provide a certificate of compliance in respect of recovery and recycling obligations. Further details are available on the SEPA website www.sepa.org.uk.
Personality Profile: Jackie McCabe

Jackie has a varied background, after completing an HND in Hotel Catering and Institutional Management at Queen Margaret College in Edinburgh, Jackie started her career in the Health Service as a manager of support services and undertook further studies within the Health Service Graduate Management Scheme. During her time in the Health Service, Jackie worked in various hospitals in Edinburgh, Ayrshire, Fife and Tayside. Then, after re-training in Human Resources specialising in learning and development, she spent a number of years with the food wholesalers, C.J. Lang in Dundee as their Training Manager. She was also a REHIS Food Hygiene, HACCP and Health and Safety Presenter since the late 1990’s until she gained the position of Director of Training with the Institute.

Describe yourself

I’d like to think I’m a people person. I try to motivate others, and get the very best from everyone. I hope my friends would say that I’m loyal. I am very determined but I concede that I can occasionally be stubborn!

What’s your first, worst and best professional memory

First: I joined the NHS as what was then called an Assistant Domestic Manager at the Western General Hospital in Edinburgh. It was incredibly daunting, because I was newly-qualified and suddenly in charge of about 200 staff. I was full of enthusiasm, suggesting improvements to cherished ways of working. I had a supervisor there who very quietly, and correctly, put me in my place. It taught me to value experience in others.

Worst: Again in the NHS whilst working Ayrshire, there was a flood and we had to organise the evacuation of the basement. Unfortunately, this was where the mortuary was, and it meant the deceased had to be moved.

Best: I have so many great memories. Working in training is such a privileged position, helping people to realise their true potential.

Proudest moment

When I was with C.J. Lang in Dundee, the Management Training Development Programme that I developed and then implemented within the company was recognised when the company was crowned Supreme Winner at the National Industry Training Awards. I am especially proud of that award – the “gold standard” in the industry. It was such a confidence booster because it showed that what we were doing for our staff had been recognised throughout the industry.

Most embarrassing moment

Thankfully I don’t have any one that stands out, but I do have a terrible memory for names and am often embarrassed by not remembering who people are.

Who influenced you most in your career?

A woman called Ann Williamson, who I worked with years ago in the hospitals, she was my district manager. She supported me through some particular tricky times within the competitive tendering era and also encouraged me to become a trainer and do my REHIS diploma. I am very grateful for her guidance and support.

Greatest achievement

Getting my Chartered status with the CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development), because it involved studying
while also working full-time. It was very hard work, and I would have to say that’s my greatest professional achievement.

What do you do to relax?

I enjoy skiing, curling and cycling with my husband and son, and we like to take our dog for long walks near our home based in Perth. I also like cooking and socialising with friends at weekends.

What is your vision for the future of public health in Scotland?

I really believe that healthy eating and education is the key. I would like to see a better awareness of how a safe and healthy diet impacts on health, and more education for those who need it. As an employee and member of the Institute, I see education, training and qualifications in Environmental Health instrumental to improve and protect the health and well being of Scotland’s people. The REHIS Elementary Cooking Skills Course focuses on food safety, how to cook, and healthy eating. We’ve seen participants go from being completely unable to cook, to being able to provide fresh, healthy meals for their families. People who have benefited include young mums, widowers, the disadvantaged, and addiction groups. For many, it’s the first qualification they have ever gained in their lives. My role has been to expand the qualification, communicating its benefits and spreading the message. Seeing how it has transformed lives has been hugely rewarding.

OSHCR Update

As at 3 April, 2016, 1774 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 Southern Centre Private Housing Repair and Enforcement Course, 13 & 14 April 2016, Paisley.

Specialist in Land Condition (SiLC) Annual Forum 2016, 19 April, London.

REHIS Northern Centre Electrical Safety Training Courses, Aberdeen 19 April and Inverness 20 April 2016.

IOA ‘The acoustics of unconventional oil and gas’ event, 21 April 2016, Glasgow.

REHIS Annual Environmental Health Forum, 27 & 28 April 2016, Glasgow.

REHIS Southern Centre Environmental Health Walking Tour of Glasgow, 28 April 2016. (2.00pm to 4.00pm – pre-booking essential).

IFEH World Congress on Environmental Health, 3 to 6 May 2016, Lilongwe, Malawi.

REHIS Food & Health and Cooking Skills Courses Annual Presenters’ Update, 12 May 2016, Stirling.

REHIS Southern Centre Course – Electrical Safety in Housing Assessments (Tolerable Standard), 16 May 2016, Stirling.

REHIS Train the Presenter Course, 26 & 27 May 2016, Edinburgh.


REHIS Food Update, 22 September 2016, Edinburgh.

REHIS Advanced HACCP Course, 6 to 8 September 2016, venue to be confirmed.

REHIS Professional Examination, 21/22/23 March 2017 (TBC) and 24/25/26 October 2017 (TBC)

Note: Always check the REHIS website events portal for up to date information on training events.

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.