Dates for your diary

The REHIS Annual Awards Ceremony will take place on the evening of Thursday 20 November 2014. On the morning of the following day the annual Environmental Health Update event, a free to members CPD event, will presented. This will be followed by the Institute’s Annual General Meeting which starts at 2.00pm. All three events will be held at the Apex International Hotel, Edinburgh.

Electronic Cigarettes and Tobacco

The Scottish Government is seeking views on a number of potential changes to the regulation of electronic cigarettes and strengthening tobacco control in Scotland.

Members of the public and other interested parties are invited to give their views on a number of measures. The consultation responses will inform the development of any future legislation.

Respondents will be asked whether they think sale of e-cigarettes should be banned for those under 18. Currently there is no legal age limit for the devices. This would also include making it an offence for an adult to buy e-cigarettes for someone under age, so called proxy purchase.

The consultation will look at the establishment of restrictions on domestic advertising, which could include billboards, leafleting, brand-sharing, free distribution, nominal pricing, point of sale and events sponsorship.

The consultation includes the proposal that it should be illegal to smoke in a car if there is a child on board. This would apply if anyone under 18 was in the vehicle. The paper will also ask whether local authorities should be able to set up smoke-free zones around outdoor children’s play parks to protect children from second-hand smoke.

Another option on the table is to make it a statutory obligation for all NHS grounds to be smoke free. The Scottish Government has asked boards to do this by April 2015, but only on a voluntary basis.

The document can be viewed at www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/10/5471 and the consultation will close on 2 January 2015.

Over two thirds back calorie labelling for alcohol

New research shows vast majority are unaware a glass of wine has same calories as a doughnut

The Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) is calling on the drinks industry and newly appointed EU Health Commissioner to introduce calorie labelling for alcoholic drinks. The call follows newly released research from the RSPH which shows strong public backing for the move, and a general lack of awareness among consumers about the calories contained in alcoholic drinks.
The European Commission has already publicly committed to make a decision by December 2014 on extending nutrition labelling (including calorie labelling) on alcoholic products. Alcoholic beverages are currently not recognised as food and are therefore exempted, under existing European legislation, from normal food labelling.

Shirley Cramer CBE, Chief Executive of RSPH said: Calorie labelling has been successfully introduced for a wide range of food products and there is now a clear public appetite for this information to be extended to alcohol to help individuals make informed choices. With 2 in 3 adults overweight or obese and given that adults who drink get approximately 10 percent of their calories from alcohol, this move could make a major difference to waistlines of the nation.

**IFEH Response to Ebola Outbreak**

The Africa Group of the IFEH calls upon all Environmental Health Professionals on the African continent to play an active role in the combating and spread of this virus.

The IFEH has pledged their full support to all their Members who are involved with the control of Ebola in their countries of origin.

**Pest Control Examiners**

I have been contacted by REHIS member Andrew Denholm highlighting a recent call by RSPH for experienced pest control examiners to join its pool of examiners. Duties will include writing and reviewing examination questions, compiling examination papers from question banks, reviewing examination papers and marking candidate scripts. If you are interested in becoming an examiner please contact Richard Burton Head of Qualifications Development with RSPH at rburton@rsph.org.uk.

**Fife launches new green recognition scheme**

The ECO Stars Fleet recognition scheme encourages commercial operators of lorries, buses, coaches and vans to run their vehicles in the most efficient way. The free scheme helps fleet operators, of all sizes to:

- improve efficiency,
- reduce fuel consumption, and
- reduce emissions.

Councillor Pat Callaghan, Fife Council Executive Spokesperson for Environment and Transportation said: We’re working very hard with our partners to improve Fife’s air quality. Signing up to ECO stars provides tools and support to fleet operators, helping reduce their costs and environmental impact. Taking part in the scheme also helps the Council on its way to reducing its carbon emissions by 42% before 2020. At the launch, 19 inaugural members were already signed up to ECO stars. It’s great to see so many local fleet operators committed to improving the efficiency of their fleet and environmental impact. I am positive ECO stars will continue to grow in Fife and many more local fleet operators will see the benefits of joining.

The Fife launch of ECO stars was held on Thursday, 16 October at Town House, Kirkcaldy. Further information is available on the Fife Council website www.fifedirect.org.uk.

**Eat Better. Feel Better**

The Scottish Government’s ‘Eat Better Feel Better’ campaign is due to launch in January 2015 to inspire and support parents and families to make healthy changes to how they shop, cook and eat, with the aim of improving their health.

The Scottish Government team would be pleased to hear from you if you have ideas about how you might support the campaign or can provide case studies that could be used for PR. You can contact campaign manager, Claire Prentice, if you have any questions.

**European Week for Waste Reduction**

European Week for Waste Reduction, taking place this year from 22nd until 30th November.

This year the event is all about Local Authorities, community groups, businesses, schools and
universities across Europe raising awareness of what people can do to reduce waste by making changes to their everyday behaviour. It’s the biggest waste campaign of its kind in the world with countries from all over Europe taking part. Last year over 12,000 events and actions took place in 23 countries. In Scotland, the week is coordinated by Zero Waste Scotland. Further information is available at www.zerowastescotland.org.uk.

Decision on dog consultation

The vast majority of people who responded to a consultation on responsible dog ownership in Scotland have said they are not in favour of compulsory muzzling of all dogs in public places. The consultation, Responsible Dog Ownership in Scotland, asked members of the public for their views on how to improve public safety in Scotland.

Over 97 per cent of those who responded were against the proposal for muzzling.

Other measures, including compulsory microchipping, were also consulted on and the Scottish Government published the full responses on 31 October 2014.

The majority of respondents were also in favour of a system of compulsory microchipping and the Scottish Government is now considering the practicalities of introducing this across the country. Full details of the responses to the consultation are available on the Scottish Government website www.scotland.gov.uk.

Foodborne Illness in Scotland – Annual Report

Health Protection Scotland has worked in conjunction with the Food Standards Agency in Scotland to produce the second joint annual report on infectious intestinal disease associated with foodborne illness in Scotland.

The aim of the publication is to produce a comprehensive account of infectious intestinal disease in Scotland in 2013 caused by Campylobacter, Listeria, E. coli, Norovirus and Salmonella. In addition, the report details the initiatives, both planned and already underway, to reduce foodborne disease in Scotland. The report can be viewed on the HPS website www.hps.scot.nhs.uk.

FSA News

FSA publishes local authority food law enforcement information

The Food Standards Agency published on 24 October official statistics on food law enforcement by local authorities across the UK for the year 2013/14.

The information is compiled by the FSA from returns by local authorities and it gives the FSA a detailed breakdown of enforcement activity across the country. The figures show an increase in a number of areas of local authority enforcement activity, and levels of hygiene compliance in food business, in spite of reported staffing reductions. Further information is available on the FSA website www.food.gov.uk.

Survey on ‘May contain’ labelling

The Food Standards Agency published, on 4 November, a nationwide snap-shot survey on a cross-section of pre-packed processed foods both with and without allergen advisory labeling.

The survey aimed to provide an improved understanding of the type of allergen advisory labelling used on pre-packed processed foods in the UK and whether the labelling was related to the level of allergen present as a result of cross-contamination.

The survey examined the level of milk, gluten, peanut and hazelnut in products that were labelled with phrases including ‘may contain X’ or ‘not suitable for someone with X allergy.’ It also sampled products without this type of advisory labelling. In total, the survey sampled 1,016 samples across 12 different product categories.

FSA Food Allergy Research Manager, Sarah Hardy, said: Results from the survey suggest
that cross contamination for all four allergens, is well controlled by manufacturers. In fact, undeclared allergen cross-contamination in the UK is lower than found in other countries. However, manufacturers need to regularly review their risk assessment and the application of precautionary allergen labelling to ensure that people with allergies are protected without unnecessarily restricting choice. We recommend that consumers should continue to recognise the importance of precautionary allergen labelling and should not put themselves at risk by ignoring it. The number of samples with advisory labelling but no detectable hazelnut or peanut was just below 50%. Only gluten and milk were present as cross-contamination without advisory labelling. However, the levels found in the products were low so the FSA did not consider it to be a risk for people with allergies.

A wide variety of different statements were used across the product categories. The most frequently used advisory label was ‘may contain traces’ in 38% of products. While the survey found a wide variety of allergen advisory labelling, only 28% of products followed FSA advice in the use of specific phraseology that advises using ‘may contain X’ or ‘not suitable for someone with an X allergy.’ These two statements were found on 20.6% and 7.2% of products, respectively.

Full details of the survey can be found on the FSA website www.food.gov.uk.

HSE News

New HSE Chief Executive

Dr Richard Judge has been appointed chief executive of Britain’s workplace health and safety regulator. He will start at the Health and Safety Executive in November 2014.

Commenting on the appointment, Judith Hackitt, HSE Chair, said: I am delighted to welcome Richard as our new chief executive and look forward to working with him. His valuable, considerable experience in both the public and private sector is a perfect fit for HSE, enabling us to take forward our commercial agenda whilst also ensuring we can build on our standing as a world-class regulator of workplace health and safety.

Commenting on his appointment Richard Judge said: This is a great opportunity to lead the executive of a renowned and respected regulator that will soon celebrate its 40th year. I look forward to working with my new HSE colleagues, and with everyone who has a stake in delivering further improvements in Britain’s health and safety performance.

Richard is currently chief executive of the Insolvency Service. Prior to this he had a varied career in science and technology organisations spanning the nuclear, rail and environmental sectors. Richard has a professional background as a Chartered Engineer (Fellow of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers), and is qualified as a Chartered Director. He will take over from Kevin Myers, who has been acting chief executive since August 2013, when Geoffrey Podger stepped down after eight years in the role.

Recycling firm in court after worker loses arm

An Ayrshire waste recycling firm has been fined for serious safety failings after an agency worker severed his left arm at the shoulder while clearing a conveyor belt blockage.

Steven Dawson, then aged 28, was working as a line supervisor for Lowmac Alloys Ltd at its premises on the Oldhall West Industrial Estate in Irvine, when the incident happened on 8 February 2011.

Kilmarnock Sheriff Court was told on 6 October 2014 that Mr Dawson was separating plastic and paper by hand on the conveyor belt when he was alerted to a problem with the conveyor belt and noticed a metal container had caught on the edge of the conveyor belts pulley.

He opened an unsecured hinged guard to access the blockage, but when he attempted to remove the container his left hand and arm came into contact with the moving belt and the bottom of the pulley – resulting in his arm being severed at the shoulder.
Lowmac Alloys was prosecuted after a Health and Safety Executive investigation found that more could and should have been done to prevent access to dangerous moving machinery parts.

The HSE investigation concluded that the company:
- failed to provide interlocking guarding to stop dangerous parts moving before a worker entered the danger zones,
- failed to provide effective supervision in order to prevent its employees from entering danger zones while dangerous parts were moving,
- failed to provide a safe system of work to clear blockages, ensuring mains isolators were locked off to prevent electrical power being supplied to the machinery while employees were in close proximity, and failed to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to the health and safety of employees when exposed to dangerous parts of conveyor belt machinery.

The court was told that the company had been served with a ‘Deferred Prohibition Notice’ in 2003 by HSE in relation to the lack of guarding on another conveyor belt at the Irvine premises. Lowmac Alloys Ltd, of Green Street Lane, Ayr, was fined £118,000 after pleading guilty to breaching Sections 2(1) and 2(2)(a) and (c) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

Further details are available on the HSE website www.hse.gov.uk.

SEPA News

SEPA Annual Report Published

SEPA have recently published their Annual Report and Accounts 2013-2014 which highlights some of the achievements and improvements that they have made to help protect Scotland’s environment. The Agency is pleased to report another very positive performance this year, in which it achieved 25 out of our 27 performance targets.

Contributors from across SEPA have used the report to showcase some of SEPA’s key activities and services. Articles include the publication of flood maps and the work of flooding teams over the winter which quickly tested the accuracy of our flood mapping; the development of our waste crime team and their adoption of the Proceeds of Crime legislation; detailed case studies illustrating our problem-solving projects approach; our role in combatting air pollution; and new map-based services we have introduced on Scotland’s Environment website. Full details are available on the SEPA website www.sepa.gov.uk.

Company director given community payback order for environmental crime

Gary Doonin, the director of Doonin Plant Limited, has been sentenced to a community payback order of 250 hours today after being found guilty in 2012 of keeping hundreds of tonnes of controlled waste at a site within the former Woodend Colliery near Armadale in West Lothian - one of the most significant environmental crimes in Scotland.

Mr Doonin and his company Doonin Plant Limited were both found guilty in September 2012 of keeping controlled waste in a manner likely to cause pollution of the environment or harm to human health and of keeping waste otherwise than in accordance with a Waste Management Licence (WML). The charge resulted in a record fine of £200,000 for the company, Doonin Plant Limited, with sentencing for Mr Doonin being deferred until 23 October 2014.

The sentence handed down on 23 October 2014 will require Mr Doonin to undertake the 250 hours of community payback within one year. Further details are available on the SEPA website www.sepa.gov.uk.
Personality Profile - Tracy Morse

Dr Tracy Morse is an Environmental Heath Officer and Research Fellow with the University of Strathclyde who has been based at the University of Malawi (Polytechnic), Blantyre since 2000. Tracy is currently Project Manager of the Scotland Chikwawa Health Initiative and coordinates University of Strathclyde activities in Malawi. Tracy has extensive experience of both field research and project management in Malawi. She has been Project Manager for the Scotland Chikwawa Health Initiative since 2006. During this time she has overseen the implementation, development, monitoring and evaluation of four Scottish Government International Development Grants (2006 - 2016: £959, 228), which have addressed preventive health with specific focus on child and maternal health. These programmes are based at community level and address the social, behavioural, economic and environmental determinants of health.

Tracy was the recipient of the REHIS Meritorious Endeavours in Environmental Health Award in 2009 for her work in Malawi.

What’s your first, worst and best memory?

First: My first memory of EH was when I was looking for a school work placement. It was suggested by a friend’s dad that I may like environmental health and should come to the department for the week. After the week I had made my decision – I would study environmental health! Thanks George Niblock for the inspiration!

Worst: As an EHO in Scotland my worst memory would be dealing with dirty house complaint. Although the house was in a terrible state, the hardest part was dealing with the personal situation for the individual in question. Particularly helping him go through 2 years of mail from friends and family. In Malawi, the hardest part is dealing with the day-to-day poverty and struggles of households, and in particularly the neglect of vulnerable and disabled people we find in the villages. In one case we had to support a disabled girl who was living in a small kitchen hut (2m x 2m) with her new baby. The hut had no roof and no door and the rains were about to arrive. Her father had kicked her out of the house as she had been raped by a married man in the village, which led to the pregnancy. Man’s inhumanity to man can sometimes be hard to comprehend.

Best: The best memories are those when you see a change in behaviour for the better despite every day challenges households face. It can be as simple getting a village head to build and use a pit latrine for the first time in 60 years, to finishing a new health facility that allows women to deliver their babies safely.

Proudest moment

There are many personal and professional moments but one of the things I was most proud of being involved with was the successful IFEH Africa Group All Africa Environmental Health Congress which took place in Malawi in 2010. I hope we can do the same for the World Congress in 2016!
Most embarrassing moment

Probably not the answer you are looking for but probably being named Strathclyder of the Year. I was very flattered, but there are many many people behind the scenes who helped and managed the work we do here and the award really belonged to all of them as well.

Who influenced you most in your career?

There are a number of people in this category so to be brief. In developing my passion for environmental health and food safety I would have to say George Niblock, Colin Houston and Jim Thomson. In driving my work in Malawi I would have to single out Tony Grimason, Kafwe Tembo and Paul Chunga who all had a strong impact on me when I first arrived in Malawi and since.

Greatest achievement

By the time I finally finished my PhD that felt like an incredible achievement! Otherwise any small impact and change we make in day to day lives in the projects in Malawi.

What do you do to relax?

I have 2 girls (aged 7 and 10) who keep me very busy outside of work, but our main relaxation as a family is camping, whether it be in a game park, at Lake Malawi or on one of our African road trips. We’re incredibly lucky to have amazing and beautiful places to go close to home.

What is your vision for the future of Public Health in Scotland?

As I have been out of public health in Scotland for some time it’s hard for me to comment on this. I think it is sad globally to see environmental health being side-lined by other professions however I still think EH is the key to having a holistic overview of preventive health across any country.

In Malawi we are very much firefighting primary public health issues such as communicable disease control, whether it be Cholera, Malaria or the looming threat of Ebola. Nevertheless, there is now the move towards ensuring not only the physical wellness of the population but also the well-being so I think there are a number of similarities in how Public Health will move forward in both countries.

More info on the project: http://www.strath.ac.uk/malawi/projects/chikwawaproject/.

OSHCR Update

As at 4 November 2014, 1984 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 Annual Awards Ceremony, 20 November 2014 (evening), Edinburgh

REHIS Environmental Health Update, 21 November 2014 (morning), Edinburgh

REHIS Annual General Meeting, 21 November 2014 (afternoon), Edinburgh

Sustainable Scotland Network’s Annual Conference 2014, 25 November, Edinburgh

ASH Scotland Conference “Towards a generation free from tobacco: turning the vision into reality” 18/19 June 2015, Edinburgh

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