

CIEH South West

March 2009

Chartered
Institute of
Environmental
Health



Pennington Report

As you will be aware, the final report of the Public Inquiry into the September 2005 Outbreak of E.coli O157 in South Wales has now been published.

You can access the report, and a summary of it, on the Welsh Assembly Government's special E.coli Inquiry website at

<http://wales.gov.uk/ecoliinquiry/?lang=en>

The CIEH has issued a press statement commenting on the report which can be found on the CIEH website at

http://www.cieh.org/media/ecoli_inquiry.html

Third Time Lucky!! Chief Executive Road Show- 30 March in Exeter

On 30 March, Graham Jukes, CIEH Chief Executive and key representatives from his management team will be hosting the Members Road Show at Exeter University Innovations Centre. This is your opportunity to shape the future of the CIEH nationally and for you, the members, to decide how you want your organisation to function in the South West.

To make the most of the day, we will be offering a morning of presentations with five full CPD hours accreditation for the whole day.

Presentations include:

- Statistics and damned lies- surveillance as a tool
- Strength in numbers- SWERF
- SW Regional public health workforce survey
- Contaminated land risk assessment

For more information and to book a place contact: mike.studden@hpa.org.uk

Special events for your diary

- **30 March** CPD event and CIEH Road show Exeter
- **2-3 April** LACORS Year Ahead, Stratford
- **3 June** SW Public Health Scientific Conference
- **9 July** CIEH AGM Chadwick Court London

Active Health@work Award

The Active Health@work project has gone from strength to strength and is helping to make health initiatives accessible to people who are not participating in any healthy activities outside of work. There are around 7000 businesses in South Gloucestershire and between them they employ almost 150,000 staff. This, coupled with the estimate that people spend around 60% of their waking hours at work makes the workplace an ideal setting in which to deliver health improvement interventions to a large number of local people at one location.

Over the past twelve months the project has worked with ten of South Gloucestershire's largest employers of routine and manual workers. The project has provided the employers with advice, guidance and practical assistance on maximising healthy activities in their workplace, including healthy menu options, support to stop smoking and opportunities for physical activity. Between them, the ten businesses employ around 12,000 and these staff are now benefiting from active support and encouragement to adopt a healthy lifestyle.



Cllr Heather Goddard and lead officer Lorraine Green present the Active Health@work and Healthy Choices Food Awards to staff at Oldbury Power Station

**For more information contact:
Lorraine Green, Smokefree
Coordinator. 01454 863702**

Healthy Eating Coordinator Joins Team



With many people wanting healthier choices, healthy eating is becoming more important for us all. With the need to reduce the amount of fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt we consume, many food businesses provide nutrition information and labelling, and healthier products. The Food Team in South Gloucestershire would like to encourage smaller food businesses to provide the same healthy choices and information; however, this can be difficult due to lack of expertise or time, and concerns that it may affect sales. Charlotte Musgrove has joined the team from the British Nutrition Foundation to lend her expertise in nutrition to food businesses in South Gloucestershire to help them provide healthier choices.

Night Time Economy Inspections

South Gloucestershire Council Environmental Health and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) joined forces to conduct a series of night-time visits between the hours of 19.00hrs and 01.00hrs over a period of three weeks in the month of October.

The inspections were designed to assess the conditions and gather information on the health and safety provisions for workers at these times. Information regarding management issues for migrant workers was also gathered. Other topics looked at during these visits included – transport, slips and trips, and working at height. Most of the inspections that were conducted were unannounced, and both local authority and HSE enforced premises were inspected. The premises in the main were of a warehouse nature.

The findings from the inspections were generally good and were better than expected, as the compliance levels were equivalent to what would be expected from daytime operations. Also the findings show that within the South Gloucestershire area, migrant workers are generally receiving high levels of health and safety training, with health and safety information being translated into various languages.

It was a mutually beneficial exercise for both the HSE and South Gloucestershire Council, as it tackled some of the health and safety concerns with regards to night-time economy workers and migrant workers. However, it has been recognised that further work will need to be conducted to address health, safety and welfare concerns with regards to migrant workers.

For more information contact Jo Forbes-Cooper, Environmental Health Officer, 01454 863555.

SW REGION
STRATEGIC PRIVATE
SECTOR HOUSING
FORUM

Following on from a regional housing seminar organised by the CIEH within the SW Region last year, I am planning on setting up a regional housing forum for private sector housing.

The forum will provide an opportunity to raise the profile of the work currently being undertaken in environmental health private sector housing and provide a regional voice for related housing policy and practice. It also offers the chance to link up with relevant partners and stakeholders to widen engagement and share expertise.

Bringing together action from across the Region can facilitate sharing of best practice, experience, learning from initiatives and enable more effective communication with regional agencies and national organisations.

A date for the inaugural meeting has not yet been set but if you are interested in taking part or have any ideas that may be incorporated within the initiative please contact me:

Sharon Smith Strategic Projects Director
s.smith@cieh.org Tel 0560 1712276

Better Regulation in Food (BReiF) Project

The South West Regulators' Forum (SWERF), a regional group of regulators who discuss matters of common interest, identified the food sector as one whose businesses receive the full impact of the range of regulatory demands. SWERF commissioned a project to look at how this burden on food sector business might be eased in the South West, while at the same time enabling the regulators to work more effectively and efficiently together.

The BReiF project started in January 2009 and will run for 15 months. The Project Manager, Sarah Knife, an Environmental Health Officer, has been seconded to the project from Sedgemoor District Council and is working with Karen Goodwin, an administrator from HSE in Bristol.

The objectives for the project are to:

- Build on best practice amongst regulators in the SW and beyond.
- Take account of the views, interests and best practices of SW and other businesses.
- Explore how a joined-up approach can enhance both regulatory outcomes and reduce regulatory burdens on business.
- Make recommendations as to how regulators in the South West can work more effectively in the food sector.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of the Better Regulation in Food Project, please contact:

Sarah Knife, Project Manager, 0117 9886025, sarah.knife@hse.gsi.gov.uk
Karen Goodwin, Project Officer, 0117 9886011, karen.goodwin@hse.gsi.gov.uk

The Climate Connection

The Climate Connection is a partnership for public health action on climate change. It is an initiative supported by the UKPHA, the Faculty of Public Health, HPA and the CIEH to help create a new vision of the role of public health in tackling climate change, and equipping the public health workforce to take action on both reducing emissions and on preparing for climate change.

"Public health leaders at all levels should say: climate change and resource disparity are the key issues. Solutions must be integrated, preventive and implemented with the urgency commensurate with the seriousness of the issues. Make it corporate."

Message from The Climate Connection launch event, 2 December 2008

The South West is one of the pioneer regions setting up a regional task group to lead and develop a programme of initiatives across the region. This is spear headed by Dr Gabriel Scally, Regional Director of Public Health South West.

The national website is a resource for the public health community, enabling sharing of knowledge, experience and ideas on climate change and health. Sharon Smith is working with the RPH team to support EH initiatives in the region.

Further information on the Climate Connection can be found on www.theclimateconnection.org.

CarbonAddict

Medical management of Carbon Dependence Syndrome

Carbon Dependence Syndrome

It has come to the attention of the health profession that common usage patterns of carbon-based fuels bear all the hallmarks of a substance dependence syndrome. Once recognised as a medical condition, its enormous clinical impact is producing shock waves in the health community. However, although extremely serious, carbon dependence has been found to be eminently treatable, and evidence-based guidance on its diagnosis and management is now available

Overview

The Carbon Dependence Syndrome (CDS) can be defined in accordance with ICD-10* as "a cluster of physiological, behavioural, and cognitive phenomena in which the use of *carbon-based fuels* takes on a much higher priority for a given individual than other behaviours that once had greater value".

Early case reports have been found dating back to the 19th century, with prevalence rising exponentially in the last 50 years. Profoundly under-diagnosed, the condition has now reached epidemic proportions in the UK – affecting almost 100% of the population. A particularly severe variety is found in affluent pockets of society.

Building a Bridge between Public Health and Environmental Health

Claire Turbutt

Plymouth City Council

I've been in Plymouth for nearly three years and since arriving I have been finding more and more of my work crosses over with the work of the public health profession. Through attending public health events I have made many interesting and useful contacts. One of my proudest pieces of work has been my part in the work to bring the CIEH and PTPHN together for some excellent joint working.

Working with the PTPHN

Environmental health as a profession has to raise its profile locally, regionally and nationally. Since moving to the South West from London in 2004 I have seen how well respected the EH profession is by other public health workers. One thing I've found is that public health workers and EHPs have more common ground than I realised. The current Government agenda is focused on effective working and especially inter agency/profession working. Through personal relationships between people working in all aspects of public health including environmental health we can fit in with this agenda and maybe make a difference to the people we are trying to help. To slip into some jargon (sorry) we're all quite comfortable in our own silos but we don't really know what anyone else is doing in theirs. Throughout my career in environmental health I've seen how knowing the right person to call about a situation has a massive impact on how well that situation is eventually dealt with.

Working within the NHS, I've been told, it's difficult for Health Practitioners and home visitors to find the names of an EHP to refer a problem to. I also found that quite often public health workers within the NHS had very little understanding of how EHPs work or what they could do to help.

Making contact

In 2008 after being in Plymouth for nearly two years working as an EHO in the Council's Food Safety and Standards team, I had come across only a handful of the hundreds of public health workers based in Devon and Cornwall. It wasn't until I attended a PTPHN training day at Plymouth University however, that I discovered

how wide a range of public health workers there are just in Plymouth. I also discovered that many of them are fascinated to find out what EHOs do and what it's like working to improve health from outside the NHS.

Lucky for me I was in the right place at the right time and Kevin Elliston, Chairman of the PTPHN steering committee, knowing that I was the Plymouth rep for the CIEH asked me whether the CIEH would be interested in providing some joint training with the PTPHN. We agreed that there are many areas of environmental health which cross over with public health work, for example emergency planning, tobacco control, the obesogenic environment.

The Devon Branch of the CIEH had already organised an environmental protection training day to be held in Tavistock in October 2008. At the same time PTPHN had organised a training day on Emergency Planning to be held in December 2008 in Plymouth. We agreed that these two training days fit together very easily and that we would look at holding them both in Plymouth advertised as a two day course jointly sponsored by the CIEH and PTPHN.

I consulted with the secretary for Cornwall Branch CIEH who also agreed to the joint events and asked to be kept informed.

The First Joint Events

In the end PTPHN provided the venue, food and administrative support for both days as well as the expenses for the speakers' attendance at the first day. The CIEH Devon Branch supplied the speakers' expenses for the second day and facilitated that day. Both events were Webcast live, which was a new experience for the CIEH speakers.

The first day attracted 35 attendees and was focused mainly on the regional structures in place to meet emergency planning responsibilities within Devon and Cornwall. The second day attracted 45 attendees and gave more focused information about specific environmental protection work within the two counties.

The future of the Project

At the regional CIEH members forum in December the SWRMB offered to give £1,500 to the PTPHN to cement the relationship. This will enable the PTPHN to continue with a full work

programme after its central government funding is reduced in 2009. The CIEH will also be able to give their input into public health training provision within Devon and Cornwall, without the work and expenses coming from branch funds.

In 2009 we are already planning two more joint training days with the PTPHN and CIEH members have been invited to take part in the PTPHN learning event in March. The CIEH still provide low cost training to EH staff on separate issues and the PTPHN also give training days on issues not so relevant to EHPs like sexual health. However we are hoping that where we cross over we can share the workload.

It's still early days but having made it through the first two events unscathed I believe there is huge potential in this relationship.

For more information please contact:
Claire Turbutt
Email: claire.turbutt@plymouth.gov.uk

Kerrier District Council Radon Rollout Programme

Lee Wagland

Kerrier DC

For those of you who do not know where Kerrier District Council is, we are the most southerly district council in England. There are three main towns, which are Camborne, Redruth and Helston. The district has a long and proud mining heritage.

The rollout programme had been used in Kerrier between 2003-05. The idea was that we would target those domestic properties in the district which were in the greater than 5% risk area and where they had never had a radon test, they were to be offered a free one. The National Radiological Protection Board (Now part of the Health Protection Agency) had already tested 13,000 of these premises and found 5,200 to be above the 200 Bq^{-3m} action level. This left us with 27,000 untested properties and at least 25,000 of these were to be included in the free test offer. This meant that we would be looking at virtually the whole district. In view of the fact that the scheme was so widespread it was understood to be the last large scale free test offer for the district.

We were very surprised and delighted when the HPA approached us to see whether Kerrier would be interested in more free testing to address those properties who missed out previously or where a new occupier had moved into a known high testing property. The new mapping has also included some areas on the Lizard peninsula for the first time in the lower risk bands. As a result of this the free testing has been extended to include them.

Those properties outside the free test offer area, second homes, rented properties and those householders who wanted more than one test kit will be able to have a reduced price test kit.

The programme will be kicking off with a series of solution road shows to target existing high testing properties in April. These solution days will be repeated for the new high testers in July.

The local authority provides help and support in the form of a dedicated e-mail (radon@kerrier.gov.uk) and telephone number. We then provide information and advice as well as a pack of information on background issues and solutions. This scheme will extend beyond the life of the existing district councils in Cornwall. Before the onset of the scheme outline permission was gained for it and support after the merger to the unitary council.

For more information please contact:
Lee Wagland
Email: lee.wagland@kerrier.gov.uk

Further suggestions,
comments and contributions
to:

Sharon Smith

Strategic Projects Director

E-Mail:

s.smith@cieh.org

Web Site:

www.cieh.org

Forthcoming events

SOUTH WEST PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE 2009

You are invited to submit abstracts for oral presentation and/or poster presentation at the regional Public Health Scientific Conference to be held on 3 June 2009.

The aim of the conference is to showcase both service and university based public health research and evaluation from across the South West. Contact: Claire Turbutt,
claire.turbutt@plymouth.gov.uk

Commercial Gas Safety Awareness Course

**Date to be agreed. If
interested please
contact: John Pegg**
(fowey@cieh.org.uk)

Local authority grants scheme 2009-10 launched

Applications are now invited for grants of up to £10,000 to support new projects to start from mid-July 2009 and ending by 30 November 2010.

The closing date for completed applications is Friday 24 April 2009.

The scheme is now open to applications from local authorities, district councils, food liaison groups or trading standards regional groups in all UK countries.

As in previous years, we will particularly welcome proposals for initiatives that focus on improving food hygiene in the home and promote healthy eating by working disadvantaged groups.

This year we will particularly welcome proposals for initiatives that focus on the following themes:

- **Promoting good food hygiene among older people**
- **Collaborative local action to deliver Agency priorities on saturated fat or salt**

Promoting good food hygiene among older people

Jackie Spencer tel: 020 7276 8900, email: jackie.spencer@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk).

Collaborative local action to deliver Agency priorities on saturated fat or salt,

Jackie Jewett tel: 020 7276 8932, email: jackie.jewett@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk