

THE NET

Welcome to the North East Teaching Public Health Network's (NETPHN) eighth newsletter
News, views & updates for those in public health education, learning & capacity building

NETPHN NEWS

Successful 2nd NETPHN conference

NETPHN's second annual conference, held in Newcastle on 15 January, provided the over 100 participants both with greater awareness of health issues as well as invaluable networking opportunities.

Delegates reported having enjoyed discussions with a range of professionals, learning about current health-promoting activities, and particularly how "everyone can be a public health practitioner". They agreed that it was everyone's business to consider what they were doing about public health, and that health inequalities needed to be addressed. Discussions on healthy universities and colleges were another conference highlight, they said.

The event was also a useful forum for participants to voice their concerns about public health, including agreement on the definitions of public health, and the need for all health professionals to be engaged in public health issues.

Outcomes from the event included:

- A working group to develop the academic strand of public health capacity, including the use of self-assessment tools for educators
- Broad commitment to developing a local healthy university framework, the working group of which is due to meet this month
- A focus for curriculum development on educators and on the wider workforce at Levels 1-4

Speakers at the conference, titled NETPHN: Building Public Health Capacity across the North East Region, included Prof Stephen Singleton – Regional Director, Public Health; Prof Ann Crosland – Strategic Lead, NETPHN; Dr Alyson Learmonth – Chair, School for Public Health Board; Dr Mark Dooris – Director, Health Development Unit University of Central Lancashire; Vicky Waterson – Settings Lead, NHS Durham & Darlington; Annie Wallace – Project Director, NETPHN; and Prof Geoff Hammond.

NETPHN strives to:

- **increase the profile of public health across the region**
- **embed public health in curricula**
- **develop and enhance public health teaching capacity and capability**
- **co-ordinate the sharing of existing good practice with regard to public health teaching and learning**

FEATURE

Cels for healthy development

THE Centre of Excellence for Life Sciences Ltd (Cels) works closely with universities, their associated research institutes, healthcare and life science companies, and public sector organisations in the North East in order to grow the region's healthcare and life sciences economy.

Cels aims to support and bring together the region's expertise in these sectors in the areas of research, healthcare delivery and technology commercialisation. Areas supported by Cels include regenerative medicine, aging and health, drug discovery, medical devices, health informatics, health and social care.

Funded by One North East, the organisation supports the region's healthcare and life sciences companies, while attracting inward investment and new healthcare companies to the region. It also helps companies diversify into healthcare markets. It manages regional networks for R&D (BioNet) and inter-company collaboration (Cels Healthcare Network), develops and operates business incubator and bio-park facilities, and provides a range of commercial foresighting and business support services. Cels builds and manages first-class business and research infrastructure; places the region on the world stage through internationally recognised networks; manages emerging technology and stimulates the formation of new business ventures; and offers business start-ups management and financial assistance.

For details on Cels, visit <http://www.celsatlife.com/>



north east teaching public health network

www.TPHN.org.uk

NEWS

A workforce to be reckoned with

A SKILLS for Health Conference held in Birmingham in November 2008 proved the importance of forging partnerships in order to embed a culture of work-based learning in the health sector.

The conference – Designing Education for Service Needs – was attended by education providers, NHS workforce development such as PCTs and NHS Trusts, education and training managers and commissioners, workforce modernisation leads, and health and social care development workers and practitioners. The event focused on the 14 Higher Education Demonstration Sites set up as pathfinders by the NHS' Skills for Health organisation.

The sites aim to create an interface between employers and educators and develop a strong work-based culture, and each focuses on a different area of service provision, sharing their learning regarding what works and why.

One site in North Wales created a community approach to workforce development for chronic-disease management. Each member of the organisation – and not just the human resources department – was responsible for workforce planning, and was involved throughout the entire process.

The organisation used the Skills for Health Competency Training Needs Analysis Tool in its workshops, and identified 131 routine and 132 complex competencies required by the locality team. Using this information, the team was able to develop a diploma in health-care studies. One staff member said the programme “enabled me to really focus on the purpose and function of the locality team”.

In a second example, the Liverpool Heart and Chest Hospital gained from developing the quality of its multidisciplinary working method. A process of skills review, competence mapping and accreditation led to the development of a flexible menu of modules for learning about cardiothoracic diagnostics and care which avoided duplication of learning and was better targeted. All modules were linked to NOS or competencies.

This planning resulted in more efficient diagnostic testing and improvements in practice-based assessment. The pilot for the modules was run over a conference-style weekend in Spring 2008 and was delivered and accessed on a multi-professional basis. Strong communication throughout, as well as staff involvement in identifying issues and solving problems, was essential.

The Skills for Health Conference demonstrated the benefits of sticking to – and not short-cutting – competency-based training needs assessment, and then basing learning provision on the needs identified through this systematic process.

For details on the other demonstration sites and the tools used for this work, visit www.skillsforhealth.org.uk

Information supplied by Gwen Ellison, North East Health Trainers Hub Lead, Newcastle PCT, gwen.ellison@newcastle-pct.nhs.uk

To become a NETPHN member go to www.tphn.org.uk and fill in the registration form.

NEWS

Third Quarterly Meeting for CTRPH

THE THIRD Quarterly Research Meeting of the Centre for Translational Research in Public Health (CTRPH) culminated in what is becoming a mantra for such workshops: so many issues, so little time.

The event – entitled Researching New Professional Roles in Public Health – was held on Tuesday, 31 March in Middlesbrough, and included presentations from School of Public Health Head and Gateshead Director of Public Health Alyson Learmonth, North East Teaching Public Health Network Strategic Lead (Sunderland University) Prof Ann Crosland, and CTRPH Director Martin White. Lively discussions were led by Shelina Visram (Northumbria University), Chris Scorer (County Durham PCT), Annie Wallace (NETPHN), Janet Shucksmith (Teesside University), and April Dickens (Sunderland University). April Dickens and Shelina Visram are currently conducting research into topics around new professional roles.

Common threads running through the day included the crossover of health workers doing similar jobs under different titles, definitions of the phrase “new professional roles”, tensions between academically trained and untrained workers, experience versus qualifications, accreditation processes, discrepancies between bands and levels, capacity challenges, and evaluation limitations.

While tackling capacity building over a region as large as the North East was a challenge, Alyson Learmonth defended the brief, saying: “Starting with a few pilot programmes that we follow for five or six years wouldn't be as useful as the results we can get from tackling the issue on a large scale – like the useful dialogue we have (at this workshop).”

She added: “Of course some well-designed research studies would be useful, in addition to the current activity taking place on the ground from first principles.”

Delegates, who travelled from universities, NHS, PCT and other health organisations region-wide, continued discussions as they left the MTLTLC – a sure sign that the subjects raised at the meeting were far from closed.

Meet the NETPHN team

- ▶ Prof Ann Crosland – Strategic Lead, University of Sunderland
- ▶ Annie Wallace – Project Director for Curriculum Development
- ▶ Andrea Jonker-Bryce – Project Officer/Research Assistant
- ▶ Jean Craister – Administrator

To contact a team member, call or email Jean Craister on 0191 515 3066 or jean.craister@sunderland.ac.uk



north east teaching public health network

www.TPHN.org.uk