

HUSH NEWSLETTER

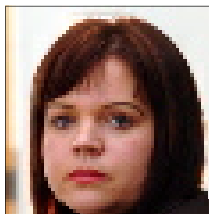
LEADING THE FIGHT AGAINST FOOD BORN

Consumer Focus Wales Aims to Build Trust in Food Safety

Following the publication of Prof Hugh Pennington's report on the E.coli O157 Outbreak in South Wales during 2005, the Welsh Assembly Government compiled a list of responses from relevant organisations in a document called "**Responsibilities For Actions On Recommendations Of Final Report**".**

It has been agreed that a group of key organisations and representative bodies, led by the independent **Consumer Focus Wales**, will monitor progress and publish an update by the anniversary of the Pennington review in March 2010.

Along with representatives from the Welsh Assembly Government, Welsh Local Government Association, Directors of Public Protection Wales, Local Better Regulation Office, Food Standards Agency, National Public Health Service for Wales, Federation of Small Businesses and the Association of Independent Meat Suppliers, HUSH has been invited onto this group to represent the views of families affected by the bacterium. HUSH member Sharon Mills (*mother of Mason Jones, the 5 year old who died during the outbreak*) gave a very moving presentation at the opening of the first group meeting in November. Sharon emphasised the responsibility that the group members have in making sure that the recommendations are implemented, thus ensuring that consumers throughout the country can have confidence that their food is safe to eat.



Sharon Mills

The group's main aim will be to rebuild public trust in food safety in Wales by promoting transparency in the post-Pennington Inquiry process. This will be done by producing regular reports reviewing and publicising progress made in implementing the recommendations. Consumer Focus Wales will facilitate information sharing between all organisations who are undertaking work to implement the recommendations and will also provide a platform for discussing ways of building public trust in food safety management by food business operators and enforcement by regulators in Wales.

The minutes of all meetings will be available from HUSH or can be found online at:

– <http://www.consumerfocus.org.uk/wales/publications>

** Copies of "*Responsibilities for Actions on Recommendations of Final Report*" can be obtained from HUSH. However it should be noted that this is a 'live' document and is subject to changes by the various organisations concerned.

Investigation into Godstone Farm Outbreak

George Griffin, Professor of Infectious Diseases and Medicine at St George's University of London and Chair of the Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens, is leading the investigation into the outbreak of E.coli O157 at Godstone Farm. There were 94 identified cases linked to the popular open farm in Surrey.

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) was called to Godstone Farm on 8th August 2009 and immediately suspected children were getting sick from visiting its 'pet zoo' attractions. Approximately 2,000 visitors were going through the farm's attractions each day, yet the HPA did not shut it down until the 12th September. Parents of children who became sick in the later stages of the outbreak are highly critical of the HPA's slow action in closing the farm.

The HPA has agreed the 'Terms of Reference' for the investigation and Chief Executive, Justine McCracken said: "*Our aim in setting up this investigation is to make recommendations to reduce the risk of contracting E.coli O157 in those who visit open farms and improve the health protection response to future outbreaks of this organism*".

The independent external investigation will look at the factors that contributed to the outbreak and its subsequent handling. It will look into the factors which contributed to the cause of the outbreak and into its subsequent handling by the HPA and others.

A representative from HUSH will shortly be making a presentation to the investigating committee, who are keen to learn more about the charity and its work.



The final report of the investigation will be made openly available to the public. However, pending the final report, any interim recommendations requiring urgent action to protect public health will be published as soon as possible.

“Mission: Possible!” - a success

Way back in December 2004 HUSH reported on a new scheme that had been devised and was being run in schools within the boundaries of Wyre Borough Council. Using a ‘secret agent’ theme and targeting children in the 8-10 age group, it provided a series of fun and interactive tasks, which took place in the classroom and at home. Based on the ‘4Cs’ of food hygiene—cooking, chilling, cleaning and cross-contamination—it provided important food safety and hygiene messages. By encouraging parental involvement, it also aimed to extend the knowledge and have a positive impact on food safety in the home.



At that time HUSH sponsored a competition in Wyre, where the schoolchildren were asked to design a new logo for the charity and the one to the left was selected as the winning entry. This now appears on our correspondence and fridge magnets.

Following the success of the scheme in Wyre, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) arranged to conduct a nationwide pilot involving 41 local authorities from across the UK. From March 2007 until October 2008, 220 schools and 8,135 pupils took part in the pilot. Evaluation forms were received from 34 authorities and the FSA reported that the feedback was excellent with the pilot being a great success with the children, their teachers, parents and the officers of the Local Authorities who managed the pilots.

“The secret agent theme captured the imagination of the children, which made them more receptive to the messages being taught. The agent case and contents were extremely well received by the children, who were enthusiastic and loved taking the case home for the weekend. This aspect of the project was considered key to making the project successful.”

The FSA is now considering options for the future development of the project, which will depend on how well it can be integrated into the school science curriculum.

THANK YOU ...

HUSH founding member, Steve Nash, was recently interviewed for the Radio 4 programme “**Law in Action**”. Outlining the difficulties experienced by the charity in obtaining information from the Food Standards Agency using the Freedom of Information Act, Steve commented that it had taken HUSH over 3½ years to obtain the information requested and without legal advice it was almost impossible for most people to make use of the Act.

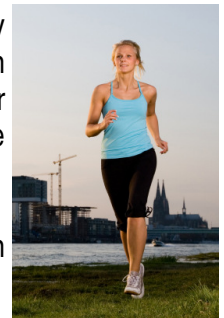
Throughout this time Steve was advised and assisted by Sean Humber of Leigh Day and Company, Solicitors, who very kindly donated his time free of charge. We would like to pass on our thanks to Sean and the other partners and staff at Leigh Day and Company for all the support and assistance they have given to HUSH over the years.

VOLUNTEER WANTED!

HUSH has purchased a charity place in the Virgin London Marathon and is looking for someone to run and raise sponsorship for the charity.

The event takes place on Sunday 25th April.

It’s probably too short notice for the unfit—but if any member, family or friend would be interested please contact co-ordinator Ishbel Mackinnon on 01261 842314 or e-mail: hush@ecoli-uk.com



HUSH AGM—Advance notice

The AGM will take place on Saturday 6th March at Guy’s Thatched Hamlet, Bilsborrow, near Garstang, Preston at 1.30 pm

For further information please contact HUSH on 0800 731 4679 or if you would like to book overnight accommodation contact Guy’s direct on 01995 640849 - www.guysthatchedhamlet.co.uk

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