

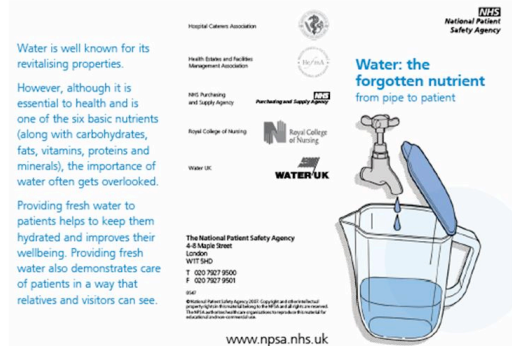
## **Water for Health Update and Briefing – May 2007**

- 1. National Water for Health Alliance Meeting, 28 June 2007, London** – Book your place at the fourth anniversary meeting of the Water for Health Alliance, which will be hosted by Alliance members UNISON at their headquarters in London. Attendees will meet delegates from across the health sector, and hear specific talks on water and good hydration in UK schools, care homes, hospitals, workplaces and for water availability in public areas. Representatives from the majority of UK water companies will attend. To register for your free place, simply e-mail Amy Evans [aevens@water.org.uk](mailto:aevens@water.org.uk)
- 2. The Patients Association joins Alliance** – The Patients Association has joined the Water for Health Alliance, bringing valued advice and energy from a charitable organisation providing patients with an opportunity to raise concerns and share experiences of healthcare. The team use the knowledge they gain directly from patients to work with the NHS, healthcare providers and a range of other organisations to improve services. The Patients Association believes that drinking enough water is vital to good health and patient recovery. They advise *“Unless medical conditions specifically prevent it, free, fresh, well presented water should be available to hospital patients, to staff and to visitors throughout their day. It should be presented with the same energy and enthusiasm as the other key components of nutrition, and be offered regularly”*.  
<http://www.patients-association.org.uk/>
- 3. Dementia Services Development Unit joins Alliance** – The Dementia Services Development Centre helps support people with dementia and their carers. They work to spread research and good practice about home and hospital care for people with any type of dementia including Alzheimer’s disease, multi-infarct dementia, Lewy body dementia, vascular dementia and alcohol-related dementia throughout the world. Promoting water is vital to their work. Many people with dementia do not get enough fluids because they may forget to drink or may no longer recognise the sensation of thirst. Regular drinks of water or other healthy fluids are essential to avoid dehydration.  
[www.dementia.stir.ac.uk](http://www.dementia.stir.ac.uk)
- 4. Alcohol Focus Scotland joins Alliance** – Alcohol Focus Scotland has joined the Water for Health Alliance and is committed to improving the quality of people’s lives by changing Scotland’s drinking culture – promoting responsible drinking behaviour and discouraging drinking to excess. Tap water has a

major role to play in ensuring that consumers have healthy alternatives to alcohol. Their work involves providing information and training on alcohol issues, raising awareness of alcohol-related problems, and working to influence national alcohol policy. They advise *“We believe that all pubs and clubs must offer free tap water on request, and customers should be encouraged to drink water or non-alcoholic drinks in between alcoholic drinks, to help pace themselves and prevent drunkenness”*. From 2009 it will be law in Scotland that free tap water is available in licensed premises. <http://www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk/>

5. **Workplace Water for Health initiative launched by UNISON** – UNISON General Secretary, Dave Prentis, launched a UK wide tap water initiative at the House of Commons to improve the hydration of employees in the workplace. He explains *“UNISON will be encouraging all its branches to take up this campaign. It provides a great opportunity for Trade Union reps to work with employers to review their existing drinking water provision and where necessary to improve it”*. The campaign, which is in partnership with health stakeholders and the water sector, has Government support from Minister for Environment, Ian Pearson, who advises *“Drinking water regularly while we are at work keeps us more alert and productive, as well as benefiting our health and well being.....I am pleased to have been asked to offer a few words in support of Unison and have no hesitation in joining with Water UK to commend the aims of the water@work campaign”*. <http://www.wateratwork.org/>
6. **Royal College of Nursing launch ‘Nutrition Now’** – Water for Health Alliance members, the RCN launched their new clinical campaign at National Congress to raise standards of hydration and nutrition in hospitals and in the community. RCN advises *“Food and water are essential elements of care - as vital as medication and other types of treatment.....they play an essential role in all of our lives in terms of our physical, psychological, spiritual, cultural and social well being and therefore sit easily with the nursing philosophy of holistic practice...This campaign gives nurses the practical tools, support and evidence they need to make nutrition a priority in the area where they work.”* As part of the initiative, RCN, other Water for Health Alliance members and partner stakeholders are already building a Hospital Hydration Best Practice toolkit and working to improve nurse’s access to hydration equipment and information. <http://www2.rcn.org.uk/campaigns/nutritionnow/principles>
7. **National Patient Safety Agency – Water: The Forgotten Nutrient** – The NPSA is a special Health Authority created to co-ordinate the efforts of all those involved in healthcare. Their work includes safety aspects of hospital design, cleanliness and food

(transferred from NHS Estates). As part of its efforts to promote good hydration, they have now launched posters and information leaflets that begin to tackle the issues – from the water pipe right through to the stomach of the patient. For additional details and copies of the information, contact [caroline.lecko@npsa.nhs.uk](mailto:caroline.lecko@npsa.nhs.uk)



8. **Water for Health Alliance/NHS join forces to consult on the NHS Water Jug –** Ask many patients and nursing staff what they think about the water jug sat by the hospital bed side, and the chances are you will hear less than complimentary remarks. Part of that feedback will centre on the functionality of the water jug itself.....but who listens? Through the Alliance and thanks to help from the NHS, their procurement team (PASA), and the NPSA, there is now a consultation exercise running to take users feedback and directly influence the consumer experience and procurement standards of the jug. Have you a view you want to share? Then contact Nick Ellins as soon as possible with your ideas and suggestions [nellins@water.org.uk](mailto:nellins@water.org.uk)

9. **Hospital Hydration Best Practice Toolkit being built –** The Royal College of Nursing, Water UK, Hospital Caterers Association, National Patient Safety Agency, NHS Procurement, Health Care Commission and The Patients Association are working together to build a toolkit of hydration best practice for hospitals. Based on the idea used to build the successful care homes kit, the information will look to provide nurses and other healthcare professionals with all they will need to understand the issues and introduce appropriate solutions. [nellins@water.org.uk](mailto:nellins@water.org.uk)

10. **Care Homes Hydration Best Practice Toolkits still rushing out –** More than 4,000 of the Care Home hydration toolkits built by the Water for Health Alliance have now gone out to UK carers. They are still available to all as a free download from the website <http://www.water.org.uk/home/water-for-health/older-people> or at cost price directly from the printers <http://www.water.org.uk/home/water-for-health/resources> . In addition to the toolkit itself, new awareness posters which have been designed by carers are free to download by clicking on this link

(<http://www.water.org.uk/home/water-for-health/resources/hydration-posters> ).

- 11. Tap Water in National Obesity Awareness Week –**  
Alliance members TOAST (The Obesity Awareness and Solutions Trust) put UK tap water at the heart of the obesity agenda, when they launched their national awareness week at the House of Commons. Speaking on the importance of healthy nutrition for life long well being, they advised *“Incredible as it may seem, water is quite possibly the single most important catalyst in losing weight and keeping it off. Most of us take water for granted but it may be the only true “magic potion” for permanent weight loss. Water suppresses the appetite naturally and helps the body metabolise stored fat. Studies have shown that a decrease in water intake will cause fat deposits to increase, while an increase in water intake can reduce fat deposits. This is because the kidneys can’t function properly without enough water”* <http://www.toast-uk.org/index.php> .
- 12. Access to Tap Water in Government Buildings –** The Water for Health Alliance and supporting environmental charities have been challenging the continued promotion of expensive mineral water and less healthy beverages in Government buildings. Whilst the Home Office and Defra have switched to tap, a Parliamentary Question recently revealed that the Department of Health spent around £200,000 of public money on mineral water. The equivalent in tap water was £98.60. The Food Standards Agency has made half a switch, transferring to tap but explaining that they use filtration systems for their drinking water. The Parliamentary Estate still spends around £50,000 a year on mineral water. If we are to encourage the public to move across to good hydration, and to do it with the environment in mind, then they have a right to say “I will if you will”.  
<http://www.water.org.uk/home/water-for-health/parliamentary-questions>
- 13. Tap water in public spaces –** A number of Water for Health Alliance members and supporters are working to improve access to tap water in public spaces. Initiatives are underway to: build community recognition awards for retailers that provide fresh, well presented tap water; pilot commercial tap water vending machines installations in selected train stations, conference centre’s, Government offices, airports and shopping centre’s; gather written support from the larger retailer holding companies that they are happy to provide free tap water to their consumers; develop the licensed premises acts to ensure that tap water is available on request - by law. The developing work will be covered at the Water for Health Alliance meeting on 28 June 2007. [nellins@water.org.uk](mailto:nellins@water.org.uk)

- 14. Care Homes - South Staffordshire Water want you! –**  
Midlands water company South Staffordshire Water is working closely with care homes in their supply area, to promote good hydration and wellbeing to older people and staff. South Staffs advise us that they currently have vacancies to partner with local care homes and will provide water coolers and hydration best practice advice as part of the initiative. Are you in their area of supply (click here to view [http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk/about\\_us/supply\\_area.asp](http://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk/about_us/supply_area.asp) ) and prepared to ensure your residents are hydrated? E mail [nellins@water.org.uk](mailto:nellins@water.org.uk) for more information.
- 15. Health Education Trust helping bring water to the Schools –** Alliance members, The Health Education Trust, are leading an initiative to develop hydration best practice across primary and secondary schools. Working in partnership with the UK water companies, the European water cooler representative body and public health professionals, the charity are looking to ensure that all schools are able to start providing free fresh water – preferably chilled – throughout the school day. Joe Harvey of the Trust will speak at the Water for Health Alliance meeting on 28 June 2007. <http://www.healthedtrust.com/>
- 16. Anglian Water develop school hydration further –**  
Anglian Water have further increased their water for health commitment to their region, running comprehensive hydration campaigns in primary schools and secondary schools, with an additional care homes hydration pilot initiative and now the launch of a new education centre in Bedfordshire. Hear Anglian Waters view on 28 June 2007 at the Water for Health Alliance Meeting in London or View the new ‘Captain Splosh’ hydration website at <http://www.captainsplosh.co.uk/>
- 17. Poor hydration in 6th Form and FE Colleges -** In a survey of 34 institutions and over 5000 students, Alliance members ‘The Schools Health Education Unit’ found that as many as 11% had drunk no water the day before, with 56% considering their to be ‘no’ opportunity to get water from ‘water bottles/coolers in rooms’ or from a ‘water fountain’ (61%). The survey can be seen by clicking on this link  
(<http://www.sheu.org.uk/publications/FE%20&%2016+%20Survey%202006-07.pdf>)
- 18. South East Water give ‘Thirst Aid’ to their schools –**  
Know of a school in the South East Water region that is looking to hydrate their pupils with fresh, chilled tap water? South East Water is working with their community schools to improve the standard of drinking water equipment and to increase children’s access to tap water. Providing everything from water audits to

educational information, South East has teamed up with water cooler suppliers Greencare H2O to provide free installation on cooler rentals. Sports drinking bottles are also available to schools at subsidised prices with the first ten being free.

<http://www.southeastwater.co.uk/thirstaid.asp>

**19. School Drinking Water and Toilet Design - Drinking water legend and tough campaigner, Nickie Brander of ERIC, informs us that the DfES has announced guidance on school toilet design and maintenance, which finally includes specific and useful references to drinking water provision. In addition to publishing the guidance, the 'Toilets in Schools' work has been highlighted extensively through Partnerships for Schools. Partnerships for Schools (PfS) are the delivery agency for Building Schools for the Future. PfS was established in April 2004 as a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB), and is operated and funded under a joint venture between DfES and Partnerships UK. Well done to Nickie and all the people who put effort in to achieving this.**

<http://www.eric.org.uk/>

**20. Northumbrian Water – Hydration The Top Job**



To make tap water more available for local consumers at events, Northumbrian Water has taken the step of bottling their tap water, and branding it '97'. Officially named after the number of tests it goes through to ensure its high quality, the magic number became the ideal partner to commemorate Tony Blair's constituency announcement, as he gave up his seat after ten years in power as Prime Minister. Seen all across the TV media on the day, their tap water even received a direct mention in the 'Times'.

<http://www.sheu.org.uk/publications/FE%20&%2016+%20Survey%202006-07.pdf>

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