



FACULTY OF
PUBLIC HEALTH

Functions and standards of a Public Health System

The Faculty of Public Health

The UK Faculty of Public Health is the professional standards body for public health specialists and practitioners. We have around 4,000 members, in the four nations of the United Kingdom and overseas.

We define public health as the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health and wellbeing, through the organised efforts of society.



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1. Introduction

Public health is essential to all aspects of health and wellbeing and is crucial to reducing health inequalities and influencing the wider determinants of health. Public health's historic endeavours have led to enormous advances in the control of communicable disease, through immunisation, clean water and sanitation.

The UK has also seen successes in reducing smoking rates, accidental deaths and the burden of non-communicable disease. These advances are the result of successful lobbying for public health legislation, working with policymakers and partners to address the wider determinants of health and empowering local communities. As the needs of the population have become more complex, so too has our approach to improving the public's health. Public health training equips us to address current and new challenges, and public health works to ensure that resources are used wisely, represent value and contribute to reducing health inequalities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a light on public health as never before, and highlighted the critical importance of having a strong, well-resourced and well-trained workforce. The public health response to the pandemic has been nothing less than heroic, though many months, if not years, of painstaking work lie ahead in order to manage and control the virus.

However, public health is much wider than pandemics, critical though they are. The UK faces a huge range of challenges, with widening health inequalities between rich and poor and poverty and homelessness increasing. Infant deaths are rising, early years' health is worsening and life expectancy has stalled for the first time in a century. Public health approaches to knife crime, gambling and drug misuse have been gaining

recognition and should be embedded in all community strategies. There are unacceptably high levels of air pollution in many towns and cities and the serious adverse effects of this are now much better understood. We are seeing a fall in immunisation rates and screening uptake, which are vital for the prevention of disease and disability. And our health services do not take full advantage of preventing and controlling the premature onset of chronic and multiple diseases to the extent they should. We also need to protect the health of our planet, possibly the greatest challenge to human survival. Public health lies at the heart of all these issues and we must act now to secure the best possible health for future generations.

This document draws together a range of different papers that the Faculty of Public Health has produced in recent years to describe the essential functions of a public health system, and the standards and contribution of the specialist public health workforce that are crucial to a robust UK public health structure.

Whilst focusing on the role of public health specialists in this document, the Faculty of Public Health acknowledges the critical roles of practitioners and the wider public health workforce that underpin every function essential to a strong public health system (see FPH Practitioners document).¹

Professor Maggie Rae PrFPH, FRCP Hon, FRSPH, FRSM
President, Faculty of Public Health

1. Public Health Practitioners https://www.fph.org.uk/media/3029/fph_ph_practitioner_09_20-v2.pdf

2. Functions of the national, regional and local public health system²

Public health requires effective action by many different organisations and players. The balance of responsibility will vary from place to place, but the essential functions which must be assured in every locality remain constant. What is critical is that there is clarity with respect to each function as to who is accountable, who has responsibility for leading, and what contribution is required of different organisations and elements across the whole system.

The public health functions are presented here within the three domains of public health practice – health protection, health improvement and health services - plus the underpinning functions of public health intelligence, academic public health and workforce development that are integral to each of the three domains. They align and map onto frameworks such as the WHO Essential Public Health Operations.³

Health Protection

Action for clean air, water and food, infectious disease control, protection against environmental health hazards, chemical incidents and emergency response.

Health Protection requires strong collaborative working between all levels of Public Health – National Regional and Local. It needs to work with the NHS, Local Authorities the Voluntary Sector as well as well as other partners e.g. Animal Health, Health & Safety Executive etc. It is vital that partners work together to deliver the functions listed and make sure the system is effective.		
Proactive prevention functions		Health Protection Functions
Outbreak prevention and control	Develop outbreak prevention and control plans	The development of plans and shared policies for the prevention and control of communicable disease, including disease-specific outbreak control plans including Tuberculosis and sexually transmitted infections. Analyse short and long-term risk in relation to actual or perceived major threats to health and wellbeing Establish close liaison with environmental health, microbiology and tropical diseases medicine Identify effective interventions and services to control major infections and diseases Provide expert advice and assistance to the NHS, Local Authorities and others on services to prevent and control communicable and environmental hazards

2. Functions of the Local Public Health System, Faculty of Public Health, originally published 2014
<https://www.fph.org.uk/media/2425/functions-of-the-local-ph-system-final-200514.pdf>
3. WHO Essential Public Health Operations
<https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/Health-systems/public-health-services/policy/the-10-essential-public-health-operations>

Proactive prevention functions		Health Protection Functions
Emergency Planning	Ensure emergency and major incident preparedness	Prepare for emergencies including pandemics Provide an active role in capability, contingency planning and resilience Be prepared for monitoring and responding to an increasing variety of infectious and environmental hazards and risk of deliberate harm to the public Co-ordinate and support planning, training and exercises across the NHS and other responding organisations Set standards for NHS preparedness Take a lead role in the local Health Resilience Partnership, supporting the development of comprehensive multi agency plans for the anticipated threats to public health
Reactive acute functions		
Risk management	Communicate advice on threats to health and act to reduce risks	Provide advice and challenge, especially advising on environmental threats including pollution, noise and contaminated land Communicate advice on risks (particularly with the public) on issues considered or perceived to be major threats to population health, wellbeing or safety Take on the role of Proper Officer within the local authority with a legal duty to remove health risks from the public Contribute to work on contact tracing Lead epidemiological investigations of priority problems affecting health, wellbeing and safety Provide answers to specific questions about health risks associated with exposure and the identification of causative agents of outbreaks and incidents
Infection control	Local infection control work	Plan, implement and review multi-agency or multi sectoral measures to prevent, ameliorate or control risks to population health, wellbeing and safety Local infection work including monitoring and providing advice on the containment of Health Care Acquired Infections (HCAI) Take an active role on the hospital infection control committee (HICC) Liaise closely with environmental health
Outbreak management	Outbreak and incident control	Provide an expert 24/7 public health response to incidents and outbreaks arising in the local area that place the health of the public at risk Chair the outbreak or incident control team
Both proactive and reactive		
Monitoring threats	Monitor and advise on risks to health	Provide advice on novel threats to health Proactively interpret data and use information systems to monitor disease and disease trends Identify current and emerging disease risks in the UK population and the impact of this locally
Immunisation	Advise on immunisation and vaccination	Implement and monitor immunisation and vaccination policies Provide evidence-based advice on immunisation and the benefit and risk of implementing new vaccine programmes

Health Improvement

Wide ranging action to improve health and wellbeing and to reduce health inequalities

Health Improvement Function		Quality Function
Needs assessment	Strategically assess the health and wellbeing needs of the local population	Advise the Health and Wellbeing Board on the development of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy based on the assessed needs of the population and proven interventions to improve health Lead the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment to set strategic direction; provide a vision for health and wellbeing; and communicate it effectively to a wide range of stakeholders including local communities Identify where new policies, strategies and initiatives are needed to improve the populations' health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities
Programme development	Commission appropriate and effective health and wellbeing initiatives	Lead on the development, implementation and evaluation of health improvement programmes across organisations, partnerships and communities to improve population health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities Work closely with council colleagues, including planning departments to identify areas which need a public health input Lead work to tackle specific issues based on local needs assessment such as childhood obesity and smoking, Secure, prioritise and allocate resources to achieve optimal impact on population health and wellbeing outcomes Create and sustain infrastructure and cultures that enable strategic direction and vision to be realised Lead the local implementation of national public health policy, making appropriate choices about the pace of implementation
Partnership working	Build strategic partnerships	Develop healthy, sustainable and cohesive communities through the Health and Wellbeing Board, the wider Council and partners Build and sustain strategic alliances and partnerships within a political environment Develop good relationships with councillors, senior council staff, council colleagues, members of the CCG, members of the Local Area Team and Public Health England, and members of both the voluntary and private sectors Maximise leadership and partnership working skills to improve population health and wellbeing, balancing the interests of organisational, political and multi-agency agendas and priorities Effectively use Health Impact Assessments to shape policies affecting the wider determinants of health Effectively use the powers of the local authority by-laws in improving health
Community Development	Enable and support communities	Ensure processes and infrastructure are in place to enable and support communities in the articulation of their views and concerns about health and wellbeing Utilise a range of community development approaches and techniques including surveys, focus groups, participatory appraisals and consultation processes to engage with communities on the health and wellbeing agenda

Health Improvement Function		Quality Function
Advocacy	Act as advocates for health	Use a full range of communication tools including the media to communicate risks to health and wellbeing from lifestyle, physical, social and environmental factors Lead local, targeted campaigns to improve health Assure continuity and quality of communication of the key health messages to both the public and professionals (health and non-health)
Sustainability	Build sustainable capacity and resources	Lead on the sustainable development of capacity and capability to improve population health and wellbeing Plan and implement training programmes to build public health capacity across a wide range of professional groups and sectors
Evidence and Evaluation	Develop the evidence and evaluate the programmes	Use and develop the evidence-base for health improvement programmes Evaluate local health improvement programmes

Health Services

Action in service planning, commissioning and development, clinical effectiveness, clinical governance and efficiency working with Partners across the system in the NHS, Local Authorities and Voluntary Sector.

Health Services Public Health Function		Quality Function
Health service commissioning	Effective and cost effective health services commissioning	Support commissioning groups in their work with the Health Boards, NHS Commissioning Board and Local Authority Ensure that commissioning groups are able to contribute to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and to the agreement of overall priorities for health, health services, health improvement and social care Provide specialist public health advice to commissioners on priorities for health and social care spending and the appropriate configuration of services within and between local authorities Develop care pathways, policies and guidelines to improve health outcomes Assess health and social care need, utilisation, demand and outcomes Influence political and partnership decision-making to maximise the application and use of evidence to improve health outcomes Promote a population health prevention approach within health and social care services
Health and social care service prioritisation	Prioritisation of health and social care services	Provide Public Health strategic leadership to the integration of health and social care services Provide explicit, evidence-based advice to ensure commissioning groups are well informed Objectively balance needs and resources to ensure that the whole population gets the best value for money Evaluate clinical and cost effectiveness of health and social care interventions to inform decisions Produce high quality evidence summaries for exceptional treatment requests using ethical and legal principles Critically appraise business cases of proposals for new service developments or configurations

Health Services Public Health Function		Quality Function
Equity	Ensure equity of service provision	Support the commissioning of appropriate, effective and equitable health care from the NHS locally Monitor access and use of health and social care services Undertake health equity audits and equity impact assessments of services Plan services for vulnerable groups using the appropriate evidence base Address access issues and their impact on population health, wellbeing and inequalities
Quality	Ensure clinical governance and quality improvement	Set and maintain a culture of continuous evidence-based improvement Agree specifications and standards for services which clearly identify the clinical, quality and productivity outcomes Monitor and audit services to ensure delivery and to improve outcomes Monitor performance, identify underperforming providers and make recommendations Generate information to support quality assurance Benchmark variations in referrals and surgical procedures against NICE guidance Communicate and disseminate information that improves practices or services Provide impartial interpretation and advice on the performance of primary care and support commissioning groups to improve quality of primary care
Evaluation	Provide healthcare audit, evaluation and research	Provide independent evaluation of services against NICE and other guidance and utilising relevant process and outcome data, in collaboration with local higher educational institutions Based on the evaluation of evidence, recommend any changes including the discontinuation of services shown not to be cost-effective Address access issues and their impact on population health, wellbeing and inequalities Promote research where there are gaps in evidence or knowledge Share best practice through publication and dissemination Ensure patient safety in commissioned services
Safety	Ensure patient safety in any health-related services provided by the local authority	Participate in risk analysis and interpretation of data in incidents and serious untoward events Identify failures and implement procedures to address them Provide input into the management of incidents to reduce risks to the public Learn from events and improve systems to prevent them from occurring in future

Health Services Public Health Function		Quality Function
Healthcare development	Contribute to healthcare development and planning	Lead the development of population healthcare, influencing local systems to increase uptake of screening and immunisation programmes and integrate prevention in to healthcare pathways Review new healthcare developments for effectiveness and affordability Analyse costs, benefits and risks of new services, technology and processes Engage relevant communities in the development of services Contribute to service frameworks, specifications and models of care with reference to need and evidence, including treatment thresholds Plan and develop services across programme areas and specialities Provide input into the planning of services for vulnerable groups, ensuring fair access and addressing inequalities
Leadership	Leadership for healthcare	Lead through the development of pro-active and collaborative relationships with clinicians, social services, local authority colleagues, the voluntary sector and the private sector Provide input to the development of solutions and innovations to address challenges faced by the local health economy Provide input to commissioning, prescribing, ad hoc enquiries and working groups on health care Provide a strategic view of future development in health care Lead and facilitate changes in services Lead across organisations, ensuring that they work together to take on the challenge of priorities, applying and sharing good practice

Public Health Intelligence

Surveillance, monitoring and assessment of health and the determinants of health, plus the development of the public health evidence base and knowledge

Public Health Intelligence Function		Quality Function
Health needs	Assess the health and health needs of the local population	Assess and disseminate the health needs of the local population by carrying out Health Needs Assessments Identify the causes and distribution of ill health and interpret the results, reporting on their implications Produce a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment that provides a comprehensive analysis of the local area, drawing on a wide range of data sources, including qualitative information Produce the DPH Annual Report, an independent report on the health of the population, progress on improving health and reducing inequalities, with recommendations Map health needs against health indicators
Health outcomes	Interpret intelligence about health outcomes	Provide robust, quality assured intelligence about outcomes using both quantitative and qualitative data
Analysis	Carry out Health Equity Audits and Health Impact Assessments	Translate the findings of health needs assessments into appropriate: recommendations for action policy decisions and service commissioning and delivery Draw valid inferences from HIAs to influence the setting of policy and priorities, and the performance of health systems Develop and apply robust prioritisation frameworks
Information sharing	Ensure access to health intelligence	Ensure a document library that includes both national and local sources of policy, is made accessible across the public sector Ensure best evidence and evidence of effectiveness are made available to all decision makers Develop tools and frameworks to help people analyse information robustly and consistently
Quality	Improve quality of health data	Ensure intelligence gathering is based on quality standards and clinical governance Continually review the health data and intelligence systems to ensure fitness for purpose

Academic Public Health

Protect and promote evidence/knowledge base, evaluation, research

Academic Public Health Function		Quality Function
Advocacy	Advocacy to uphold evidence-based public health programmes	Advocacy/ speaking out to protect evidence-base when actions are being taken that are counter to the evidence base. Making sure that decision makers are aware of the (health related) evidence base Research advocacy role outside “health” to other professionals in local authorities (for e.g. in social care and education)
Research	Collaborate on public health research and development with local higher educational institutions	Identify priorities for public health research Identify new areas for research into innovative solutions to health problems in collaboration with local higher educational institutions Make recommendations on how the evidence base can be improved through research and development Work with local higher educational institutions to create possibilities for relevant high quality research
Application of public health evidence	Application/ translation of public health information and research (evidence-base)	Translate complex contemporary research results into local information and knowledge that can improve population health and wellbeing Draw appropriate conclusions and make recommendations from research findings
Evaluation	Evaluate health services and public health interventions	To seek rigorous and independent evaluation when new approaches are being implemented Apply a population perspective to evidence so that issues can be set in a context of incidence, prevalence and marginal utility Use one or more research methods to support work undertaken in a service or research setting, disseminating findings appropriately Identify research needs based on patient or population needs and in collaboration with relevant partners (such as local higher educational institutions)
Teaching	Promote public health teaching and training	Ensure all members of the public health team are able to critically appraise evidence, apply research findings to the local population and evaluate local public health interventions Contribute to the education and training of other staff, medical students and colleagues Close working with relevant local higher education institutions Supervise junior colleagues in a one-to-one project mentorship Conduct group tutorials on research and academic topics Develop teaching materials and contribute to the development of the public health curriculum

Workforce Development

Training and development for public health professionals, registrars and colleagues

Workforce Development Function		Quality Function
Leadership	Provide leadership for the professional development of the public health team	Realise the full potential of the leadership role of the Director of Public Health Recognise the Public Health Leadership role of those working in NHS and other National Agencies. Provide strategic leadership for improving health and tackling health inequalities Maximise potential of staff to use their skills and knowledge to best effect Ensure that those who work in the field develop and maintain the necessary knowledge, skills and attributes to practise effectively and work towards improving the health of the population
Capacity building	Ensure access to learning opportunities for all public health staff	Ensure access to training and education opportunities in various public health settings Provide opportunities for learning outcomes in key areas of public health Support the revalidation of public health professionals, meeting the minimum requirements of the statutory regulators Support all public health staff in the completion of their continuing professional development Ensure comprehensive processes are in place for the professional appraisal of all public health professionals
Specialty Training	Support the training of specialty registrars	Ensure that the local authority has achieved and maintains accreditation as a training location Ensure that the organisation meets the standards required for specialty training as sought through the annual reporting mechanism and Quality Panels Provide a rich and diverse training experience for registrars

4. Public health specialists

What are public health specialists?

Public health specialists work as system leaders at strategic or management level or executive level across a wide range of organisations. They come from a variety of professional backgrounds and are trained and developed to cover all aspects of Public and Population Health. To work in the UK they have to be registered specialists and are required to maintain registration throughout their careers through appraisal and revalidation.

These are underpinned by specialist skills such as health intelligence, developing an evidence base, epidemiology, health economics, audit and research, and interpersonal skills such as communication, collaborative working, management and leadership.

Currently in England there are about 1,000 public health specialists (directors of public health or PH consultants) in England. They are employed by local authorities (~45%), Public Health England (~31%), universities (~15%) and the NHS (~9%).⁴

Across Northern Ireland there are 29 public health specialists, though this number has been boosted recently with several retired specialists returning to support the pandemic work. Of the 29 staff members, 3 work with the Department of Health (NI), 3 work in academic posts, 3 have joint service and academic commitments and the remaining 20 (including one DPH) working in service development and health protection.

In Wales there are currently around 79 consultants. They work centrally within Public Health Wales (around 42%), within Health Protection (around 13%), Local Public Health Teams (around 38%), with the others in Health Boards, academia and the Welsh Government.

In Scotland, before COVID-19, there were around 102 consultants, excluding those within the Scottish Government and academic appointments. According to a 2015 workforce report, there were approximately 125 (wte) public health consultant posts in total, including specialists and Directors of Public Health. These posts were distributed across the NHS and local government.⁵

Specialist numbers

If it is the UK governments' wish to aspire to a world class system then we recommend aiming for **30 whole time equivalent Public Health consultants per million population**. This figure is felt to be feasible, desirable and affordable.

This recommendation addresses the need of both service and academic at Local, Regional and National levels. The configuration of posts is for each of the four nations to decide.

4. Public Health Capacity review, 2019 (HEE): <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/public-health-specialist-capacity>

5. 2015 Review of Public Health in Scotland: Strengthening the Function and re-focusing action for a healthier Scotland <https://www.gov.scot/publications/2015-review-public-health-scotland-strengthening-function-re-focusing-action-healthier-scotland/pages/3/>

What is the unique contribution PH specialists make?⁶

The combination of leadership and managerial skills together with high level of technical skills and knowledge gives public health specialists a unique skill set essential for improving the health and wellbeing of populations. They can:

- Interpret complex information from a wide range of sources and present to a wide range of audiences.
- Ensure decisions are based on best evidence available (research, intelligence), as well as a full range of views and perspectives (community, political, expert).
- Provide resilience: they can cover any current public health problem and move quickly to deal with new threats to health.
- Work as system leaders across organisations – they have existing networks to draw on for expertise and have the credibility and are trained to develop new networks as needed.

- Work effectively with the NHS including clinical staff such as doctors and nurses understanding the context and language of both healthcare and social care.
- Provide teaching and training to the public health workforce – particularly specialists in training who are the DPH pipeline.
- Shape and drive action and interventions that improve and protect the public's health.

Within the core public health team, public health specialists have an extensive role across the whole spectrum of protection and prevention. These include promotion of health and wellbeing and addressing inequalities within the population as part of the wider determinants-of-health agenda. Specialists also have knowledge and experience of a range of health-protection issues such as infectious disease outbreaks and emergency preparedness.

What roles can be done by others?

Specialists are much more effective when supported by colleagues who make their own distinctive contribution to improving and protecting the public's health. For example:

- Health protection specialists work effectively with environmental health officers, microbiologists and others.
- Staff who are skilled at data collection and analysis allow the specialist to focus on interpretation and decision-making.
- Staff who are experienced at procuring and contracting allow the specialist to focus on strategic commissioning.

What is the added value of a strong specialist workforce?

A strong public health specialist workforce provides leadership, capability and capacity that can:

- Ensure the delivery of public health functions.
- Provide a source of expert advice to political leaders and other policy makers.
- Provide high quality decision-making: the ability to bring in research and intelligence and integrate with community and other views.
- Improve health and social outcomes, ensuring the best use of scarce resources.
- Provide resilience: to lead in major events such as outbreaks and flooding.
- Anticipate changing environments and new hazards and threats.
- Reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases on health and social care.
- Ensure succession planning, including future DPHs and other key roles.

6. The unique contribution of public health specialists, published by the National Standing Group on Local PH Teams <https://www.fph.org.uk/media/3022/the-unique-contribution-of-public-health-specialists-sept16.pdf>

5. Standards in public health

Who sets the standards?

FPH is unique in setting the standards for the specialist public health workforce to improve and protect the public's health and wellbeing. The Faculty does this by:

- Review and approval of consultant level job descriptions
- External, impartial assessors on consultant and DPH interview panels
- Maintaining a continuous professional development (CPD) scheme with 1,600 participants⁷
- Good Public Health Practice, providing the basis for good professional practice in public health⁸

Standards for consultant posts

FPH works to maintain standards in public health by reviewing and approving consultant job level appointments. This assures employers and the public that individuals are being recruited to the highest standard required to protect the population's health and enables us to contribute to the planning of an efficient, high quality public health workforce. As an illustration, a consultant in health protection on appointment, in addition to being appropriately qualified and registered with a regulatory body, would be expected to have:⁹

- Understanding of laboratory microbiology services
- Understanding of clinical infectious diseases services
- Understanding of clinical toxicology services
- Understanding of the principles of radiological protection
- Experience of budget management and financial processes
- Experience in dealing with environmental hazards / chemical incidents
- Ability to undertake prophylaxis, diagnosis and treatment of infectious diseases of public health importance
- Strategic thinking and leadership skills

7. FPH CPD scheme for consultants: <https://www.fph.org.uk/professional-development/cpd/>

8. Good Public Health Practice: <https://www.fph.org.uk/professional-development/good-public-health-practice/>

9. Job description templates available at: <https://www.fph.org.uk/professional-development/public-health-appointments/public-health-appointments-useful-documents/>

6. Training tomorrow's public health specialists

Public health is a multi-disciplinary medical specialty – meaning the specialty allows people from medical and non-medical backgrounds to undertake equivalent training – with a five year formal training programme. Approximately 80 places are available each year and entry on to the training programme is extremely competitive; in 2019, there were 12 applicants for each training post, and as a speciality public health seeks to attract, train and nurture the very best available talent.

The Faculty of Public Health is responsible for the training and standard setting of public health trainees. The training curriculum is produced by the Faculty and agreed and regulated by the General Medical Council (GMC) and the United Kingdom Public Health Register (UKPHR). The curriculum evolves with changes in public health practice and challenges; it was last revised in 2015 and is currently going through further changes which will include the impact of COVID-19.¹⁰

Knowledge

Public health skills during training are built on a knowledge base which includes:

- Basic and clinical sciences including research method, epidemiological and statistical method, health needs assessment and evaluative technique
- Disease causation and prevention including health promotion, screening, communicable disease and environmental hazard control and social politics
- Organisation and delivery of health care including health intelligence
- Knowledge of the law as it affects the population's health
- Leadership and management skills including change management and health economics

Skills and behaviour

The public health specialty training curriculum develops ten key areas of public health practice:

- Use of public health intelligence to survey and assess a population's health and wellbeing
- Assessing the evidence of effectiveness of interventions, programmes and services intended to improve health or wellbeing of individuals or populations
- Policy and strategy development and implementation
- Strategic leadership and collaborative working for health
- Health promotion, determinants of health and health communication
- Health protection
- Health and care public health
- Academic public health
- Professional personal and ethical development
- Integration and application of competences for consultant practice

A trainee moving into a consultant role will be able to demonstrate a consistent use of sound judgment to select from a range of advanced public health expertise and skills, and the ability to use them effectively, working at senior organisational levels, to deliver improved population health in complex and unpredictable environments.

10. Public Health Specialty Training Curriculum 2015: https://www.fph.org.uk/media/2621/public-health-specialty-training-curriculum_final2019.pdf

Public health around the globe

The events of 2020 have starkly demonstrated the global nature of many of the public health challenges, needing an understanding of the global dimensions of health and its influences. In an increasingly interconnected and globalised world, public health professionals need to have an understanding of the global influences on health to be able to improve the health of the population.

Global disparities in health represent the most stark health inequalities of all and an appreciation of this global burden on health and the strategies to tackle these at a global and local level also need to be understood by the public health workforce. Public health consultants should also have knowledge of the many national and international policies and institutions within which global health operates its governance structures and how the global health community responds to public health threats and emergencies.

In recognition of this, the speciality training curriculum is designed to highlight the importance of the contextual links between local and global health and the context in which public health practice is undertaken. It would be expected that by the end of their training, registrars would have been equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to make a positive impact on population health in order that they can be effective public health leaders in a wide variety of locations.

For further information on the knowledge, skills and learning required to be a consultant in public health, please refer to the FPH Public Health Specialty Training Curriculum 2015.

7. Areas of practice for public health specialists

Public health is vast. Specialists entering the profession can expect to find themselves working in a myriad of settings. While the recent focus has inevitably been on the COVID-19 pandemic and the public health community's response to it, pandemics and disease control is only a part of the world of public health.

- Alcohol Misuse
- Cancer
- Cardiovascular disease
- Child and maternal health
- Comparison, practice and performance
- Dementia
- Disease control, including pandemics
- Drug Misuse
- Environmental health and climate change
- Emergency Planning
- Health Needs Assessments – Health Profiles
- Health economics and return on investment
- Health impact assessment
- Health inequalities
- Health protection
- Healthy ageing
- Injuries and violence
- Learning disabilities
- Public Mental health
- Neurological conditions
- Obesity, diet and physical activity
- Oral public health
- Palliative and end of life care
- Screening
- Sexual health
- Smoking cessation



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