

NHS Core curriculum – a joint response from the Association of Directors of Public Health, the Faculty of Public Health and the Royal Institute of Public Health

Association of Directors of Public Health

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Its role involves:

- facilitating a support network for DsPH to share ideas and support problem solving;
- collating and presenting the views of DsPH on public health policy to national governments, the Faculty of Public Health, the media and other organisations;
- facilitating the sharing of good practice through seminars and to develop good practice guidelines;
- identifying and fulfilling the development needs of DsPH where appropriate.

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Faculty of Public Health

The Faculty of Public Health is the standard setting body for public health in the UK. It aims to advance the health of the population through three key areas of work: health improvement; service improvement and health protection. In addition to maintaining professional and educational standards, the Faculty advocates on key public health issues and provides practical information and guidance for public health professionals. The Faculty also works at the European and international levels to promote high standards of public health practice.

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**FACULTY OF
PUBLIC HEALTH**

Royal Institute of Public Health

The Royal Institute of Public Health is a leading independent body with an international reputation dedicated to the promotion, practise and protection of the highest standards of public health. Our aim is to protect and promote public health through education, training and policy development.

We will deliver our vision by building our brand internationally and by using our skills and those of our members in education, accreditation, policy development and advocacy.

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Summary

We welcome the concept of a core curriculum which aims to give basic knowledge and understanding to all staff within the NHS. However, we are surprised and concerned that there is very little in the suggested curriculum which covers public health: ie the systematic protection and promotion of health and prevention of ill-health.

Since the reports by Derek Wanless for the Treasury* it is widely accepted that a public health approach is essential for managing the future of health-care and the NHS. To achieve this we need to increase knowledge and understanding of public health issues at all levels and in all health settings. It would therefore be a lost opportunity to implement a core curriculum across the NHS which did not include a Public Health module.

We recognise that some quality topics and infection control are included in your draft and are extremely important but these are very specific and may well not cover the more general issues.

Within a Public Health module, as a minimum we would like to see the following issues considered.

- An understanding of the wider determinants of health and the impact of all our actions on health and health inequalities.
- The value of supporting health promoting activities at every opportunity.
- The advantages of partnership and collaborative working in achieving good outcomes for health and a reduction in health inequalities.
- The importance of an evidence-based approach to all healthcare interventions.

Below there is a list of suggested topics for a Public Health module to be included in the core curriculum which would enable staff to understand the importance of their actions on health.

We have also included some suggestions for the curriculum as a whole.

***References**

Wanless D. *Securing our future health: taking a long-term view*. Final report. London: HM Treasury, 2002
Wanless D. *Securing good health for the whole population*. London: HM Treasury 2004

Public health module for induction – suggested content

The following is the suggested content for a Public Health module to be included in induction.

- Wider determinants of health (eg using the Dahlgren & Whitehead diagram)
- A definition of public health (eg from Wanless) stressing the population approach
- An explanation of working upstream with an emphasis on supporting health promoting activities (eg smoking cessation) and promoting mental health and well-being
- A history of public health (eg from the broad street pump to post-war) stressing the move from infectious disease to chronic conditions
- The what why and how of the three domains of public health: health protection; health improvement; health and care services
- What public health people do: monitoring and protecting health; tackling health inequalities; quality and evidence base (including clinical and cost effectiveness); using Public Health skills to support clinicians and managers in maximising health gain within limited resources
- The role of organisations involved in public health: NHS; Local authorities; voluntary sector and community groups; academics and researchers; DH and other national organisations
- National public health priorities (eg choosing health topics; hospital acquired infection; emergency planning; joint needs assessments etc)

Comments on the whole curriculum

In addition, we would like to see explicit mention in the curriculum of the following two important governance issues that feature across all health and healthcare work.

- Confidentiality is a key principle that should be emphasised at every opportunity across the curriculum.
- Health and healthcare workers have a duty to care and support but equally they must have self management. An early message should be that staff should 'know what they know' and not offer information and opinion outside their expertise or act beyond their competence.

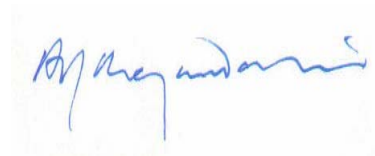
We hope that these comments are useful and look forward to your response.



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