



Faculty of Public Health

Of the Royal Colleges of Physicians of the United Kingdom

Working to improve the public's health

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FPH Workforce Strategy & Standards Document 2017

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

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Section 1. Introduction

Public health, the health care system and population health are undergoing radical transformation. A key question is what sort of public health system is required to most effectively protect and improve health and well-being.

There is a real potential for public health to make a major step change similar to that of the 19th century in sanitation and housing. **People could live healthy lives for longer, be less dependent on acute health and care services, and have a higher quality of life, while reducing the public services budget in the long term.**

The main focus of the Faculty of Public Health (FPH) is to improve and protect the health and wellbeing of the population as well as set standards for the Specialist Public Health workforce. Public health measures are known to improve health and well-being and prevention is recognized as key to delivering the aspirations of the NHS. Longevity of the population is increasing, chronic and lifestyle diseases are increasing, international disease threats (e.g. Ebola) and the health and social care sectors are under severe strain.

FPH as the professional body for public health needs to ensure that the workforce is able to address these issues, and to advocate and support policy changes that improve the wider determinants of health.

FPH recognises that there have been a number of recent reports and other literature that examine the current context for population health and public health workforce impacts. A summary of these is at appendix 2 [TO ADD].

FPH does not intend to duplicate this work by partners but to build on it, support and complement it with its own recent analyses and observations. In particular to build on the *Fit for The Future – Public Health People* (PHE May 2016) and seek to implement recommendations relevant to FPH.

This strategy has been in development since January 2017. Initial ideas and feedback were sought from the FPH membership through eBulletins, followed by a stakeholder workshop in March 2017 and extensive consultation through FPH committees, including the Workforce Standing Committee and FPH Board in May 2017. The strategy has now been refined, bearing in mind what is feasible for FPH to deliver, for further consultation with the membership and other stakeholders during Summer 2017; with a view to being approved by the Board in November 2017.

Section 2. This FPH workforce strategy

In developing this strategy we have considered some critical questions:

- What is our future vision and ambitions for the professional workforce?
- What sort of public health systems are required to most effectively protect and improve health and well-being in a decade's time?
- What skills are going to be required to meet the future public health challenges?
- What is 'the public' likely to want and need from public health in the future?
- What do the key commissioners and employers of public health want from public health in the future? And are they right?
- How do we capitalise on future opportunities and mitigate the current challenges and risks to a thriving core public health workforce?

This strategy is UK wide and:

- builds on extensive investigation by a small group of FPH members into the current issues as regards public health workforce
- takes into account new data from recent surveys undertaken by HEE/PHE, AACs and the revalidation data from PHE
- considers how FPH can implement *Fit for The Future*
- supports the implementation of the employer standards currently in production (See Section 5)
- recognises concerns expressed by members through Local Board Members, Faculty Advisors and direct contact with FPH

As part of this strategy FPH proposes that:

- The different public health systems currently in place across the UK offer an opportunity to examine what factors impact on improved public health capacity and improved population health and wellbeing.
- The Director of Public Health needs to be a statutory function across both Local Government and the NHS in order to deliver the improvements in population outcomes with limited and diminishing public sector resources.
- Strengthening local and regional public health systems is critical to capitalising on the many opportunities to improve public health outcomes.
- Public Health Specialists offer a unique contribution, particularly as systems leaders and need to refocus their skills here to influence system change and reduce focus on delivery.
- Flexibility and mobility between diverse employers needs to be made easier and mechanisms for transfers and for joint appointments need to be found in order to maximize the use of specialist expertise and offer attractive careers.
- Continuing the public health ring-fenced budget until 2019 is welcomed but ways to consolidate public health funding more robustly for the longer term would be beneficial

There is a justified growing concern about the capacity and employment of Public Health Specialists in all four countries. However it is most marked in England, although there is considerable variation with evidence that some areas have increased capacity [see APPENDIX 1 – TO ADD].

Specialists need the knowledge and skills appropriate to meet the challenges of forthcoming 21st century changes and to take the opportunities that these afford.

It is timely to develop a strategy on the specialist workforce with the scale of changes being implemented and to enable the public health workforce to address and utilise the forthcoming agendas for the benefit of population health and wellbeing.

Section 3. Vision

FPH's vision for the public health workforce is to ensure we have a UK multidisciplinary professional workforce that is fit for purpose to meet the future public health opportunities and challenges and which champions the public's health in all sectors of society. To support public health systems which improve health and wellbeing outcomes and reduce health inequalities

through its workforce. To further enhance system leadership provided by well-equipped Public Health Specialists with an in depth knowledge of population health science, skills to maximise the potential opportunities to improve the health and wellbeing of our communities and develop solutions to complex public health problems, and the ability to make improvements happen through mobilising efforts in all parts of the system.

Through the standards we set, we will ensure that a new cadre Public Health Specialists and Public Health Practitioners are brilliantly equipped with insight about health and disease work in whole populations, to advise on policy, manage service and advocate for change:

- Through oversight of the quality of training
- Through the standards we set within the public health curriculum
- Through delivery of high quality examinations

We will represent, support and celebrate the public health profession:

- As a valued professional membership organization for Public Health Consultants, Directors of Public Health, Public Health Practitioners and the wider public health workforce;
- Through our annual scheme of Continuing Professional Development (CPD);
- Through our role in providing external assurance to senior public health appointments;
- Through our statutory role within revalidation for public health doctors, and our role in supporting all Public Health Specialists through the professional standards we set;
- As a successful advocating organisation on key issues of most importance to our membership;
- By developing policy in focused areas that will have impact on the profession;
- By facilitating a UK-wide network of public health professionals.

A priority for FPH is to work with partners to define characteristics and standards of effective, safe and resilient public health systems. The range of systems across the UK offers an opportunity to examine whether different systems prove more appropriate in terms of impact on population health. This will include standards for the necessary professional workforce required to enable transformations in health and wellbeing of the population to take place. (See Section 5)

Section 4. Strategic objectives

1 - FPH will champion the unique value of Public Health Specialists and work with employers, commissioners, decision-makers and other stakeholders to ensure the specialist role is understood, recognised, valued and deployed to best effect to meet employer needs, the needs of an efficient health system and the needs of the public

2 - FPH will ensure that a flexible Public Health Specialist workforce is trained, developed and strengthened to meet employer and the public's health needs in the future

3 - FPH will work with partners to ensure clear and appropriate data is available on the current workforce and to ensure that effective longer term workforce planning is undertaken

4 - FPH will work in partnership with the public health community to support the development of an effective public health practitioner workforce and enable the wider workforce to deliver improvements to the public's health

Objective 1: FPH will champion the unique value of Public Health Specialists and work with employers, commissioners, decision-makers and other stakeholders to ensure the specialist role is understood, recognised, valued and deployed to best effect to meet employer needs, the needs of an efficient health system and the needs of the public

	Objective	FPH Lead or Support	Action	Commencing
1.1	Work with the NHS to explore public health being a statutory function across both Local Government and the NHS	Lead	FPH Executive, FPH Policy & FPH Workforce Committees	Commencing September 2017
1.2	Ensure the required standards for senior public health appointments, recognise the needs of different employers, by ensuring the unique value of Public Health Specialists is understood and recognised, including Directors of Public Health and Consultants of Public Health	Lead	Faculty Advisers Committee	2017-2020 (annual review)
1.3	Continue to communicate equivalency of standards and advocate for parity of terms of employment through the established appointments process	Lead	Faculty Advisers Committee	2017 - 2020
1.4	Support the NHS to increase the number of Public Health Specialists in in NHS settings including Accountable Care Systems	Lead (using existing NHS Leads)	Workforce Committee	2017-2020 (Initial report September 2018)
1.5	Develop academic public health enabling collaborative relationships between public health academic departments and local public health teams	Lead	Academic & Research Committees	September 2017-2020 (Update report July 2018)
1.6	Implement a professional appraisal scheme for Public Health Specialists from backgrounds other than medicine	Lead	Workforce Committee	2018
1.7	Work with partners across the UK to adopt and implement standards for effective, safe and resilient public health systems at local, regional and national levels based on best practice in the four countries (See Section 5)	Support (LGA & ADPH)	Workforce Committee	2017
1.8	Work with NHS Employers, the NHS Staff Council, the LGA, DH and relevant union bodies to develop a plan for addressing continuity of service <i>*This could entail direct mechanisms of recognition across different organisations ('passport') or alternative schemes for a 'single' employer mechanism.</i>	Support	Workforce Committee (through Standing Group on Public Health Teams)	September 2017 - 2020

Objective 2: FPH will ensure that a flexible Public Health Specialist workforce is trained, developed and strengthened to meet employer and the public's health needs in the future

	Objective	FPH Lead or Support	Action	Commencing
2.1	Ensure that Public Health Specialists, through the specialty training programme and continuing professional development, have the skills required for the future, including systems leadership, personal effectiveness and impact, ability to speak independently in political contexts, public health expertise and initiative and commitment to public health principles and values in line with the 2015 curriculum and for 21 st century challenges	Lead	Education Committee	2017 -2020 (with annual report)
2.2	Explore the potential of credentialing schemes as a means of supporting sub-specialties as appropriate, building on core competences (potential new objective in 2018 depending on outcome)	Lead	Education Committee	2017
2.3	Review the public health curriculum to ensure specialists have the skills required for the future	Lead	Education Committee	2019
2.4	Explore the feasibility of developing a consistent approach to supporting Public Health Specialists in the first 5 years after their initial appointment with suitable mentoring from senior / experienced colleagues, and peer to peer support	Lead	Specialty Registrars Committee	Report in September 2018
2.6	Ensure, within training programmes, that all three domains of public health (health improvement, health protection and healthcare public health) and academic public health are appropriately covered and that there are adequate opportunities for experience and placements in all three (plus academic public health), including within the NHS, for all Registrars at each stage of training	Support (TPDs & Heads of School)	Education Committee	2017 – 2020 Regular reports on implementation

Objective 3: FPH will work with partners to ensure clear and appropriate data is available on the current workforce and to ensure that effective longer term workforce planning is undertaken

	Objective	FPH Lead or Support	Action	When
3.1	Develop early warning systems to identify risks to the public through weakening of public health systems and lack of Public Health Specialist skills	Lead	Faculty Advisers Committee and Local & Country Board Members	September 2018
3.2	Monitor and review the effectiveness of the specialist appointment processes to ensure the required standards are being met	Lead	Faculty Advisers Committee	September 2018
3.3	Work with HEE and PHE, the Standing Group on Local Public Health Teams and UKPHR (and equivalent bodies in all UK countries) to ensure that clear and appropriate data is available on the current public health (specialist) workforce	Support	Faculty Advisers Committee (through Standing Group on Local Public Health Teams)	2017 – 2020 (Regular report to FA Committee)
3.4	Work with education partners to ensure Public Health Specialist training numbers align with workforce strategic targets (national, regional and local), which take into account future needs, the employment market and the potential that could be achieved with more capacity	Support (HEE & PHE)	Faculty Advisers Committee, HEE & PHE	2017 – 2020 Regular reports

Objective 4: FPH will support the development of an effective public health practitioner workforce and enable the wider workforce to deliver improvements to the public's health

	Objective	FPH Lead or Support	Action	When
4.1	Develop an effective public health practitioner and wider workforce and community; by increasing the FPH membership in line with FPH strategic objectives, including developing the FPH offers	Lead	Workforce Committee (Membership Committee), HEE, PHE, UKPHR	2017 - 2020
4.2	Work with employers and partners to develop model practitioner job descriptions and service specifications	Lead	Faculty Advisers Committee	May 2018
4.3	Develop public health training through eLearning to support the wider UK and international public health workforce and to ensure others	Lead	Education Committee	2017 - 2020

	involved in making public health decisions, such as clinical leaders, have the required knowledge and skills			
4.4	Work with partners to further enhance public health career pathways for professionals such as school nurses, health visitors, PHE staff in scientific roles and Environmental Health Officers, including through supporting the implementation of the Public Health Skills & Knowledge Framework	Support	Workforce Committee	2017 - 2020

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Section 5. Standards

The Local Government Association, with partners including FPH through the National Group for Public Health Teams, is currently leading on the development of Standards for Employers of Public health Teams.

These Standards set out the aspiration in terms of how good employers should support their public health people to develop and maintain their skills and knowledge and to retain their professional skills and registration to enable them to provide an effective service to the public, deliver public health functions, at all grades and professions and in all employment settings, and to work effectively. These expectations are in line with regulatory and improvement frameworks for public services and used by service and professional regulators.

Though written for employers in England, FPH expect these standards to have direct relevance and applicability across the UK.

The Standards for Employers at a glance

1. **Clear Accountability Framework:** Employers should have in place a clear accountability framework informed by knowledge of good public health professional practice (at all levels) and the experience and expertise of service users (populations, communities and individuals) and practitioners.
2. **Effective Workforce Planning:** Employers should use effective workforce planning systems to make sure that a workforce, with the right level of skills and experience, is available to deliver public health outcomes.
3. **Education and Training:** Employers should support the creation and maintenance of a qualified workforce, ensuring that public health teams have regular and appropriate opportunities for professional education and training
4. **Continuing Professional Development:** Employers should provide opportunities for effective continuing professional development, as well as access to up to date research and relevant knowledge.
5. **Professional Registration:** Employers should ensure Public Health Specialists and Practitioners, nurses and other staff groups can maintain their professional registration and undergo professional revalidation.
6. **Effective Partnerships:** Employers should establish effective partnerships with higher education institutions and other organisations to support the delivery of public health work education and continuing professional development.

NOTE: these standards are currently in draft and are subject to change. When final FPH will update this section accordingly.

APPENDIX 1 HEE/PHE Survey data

2 References & Bibliography

TO BE ADDED

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