

Scottish Public Health Ethics Forum Study Day, February 1st 2018 Edinburgh



Contents

1. Foreword by Dr Farhang Tahzib, Consultant in Public Health.	1
On behalf of Organisers: Dr Lorna Watson, Chris Littlejohn and Vikki Entwistle.	1
2. Study day aims, objectives and programme of activities	1
3. Summary of Activities, Learning, Outcomes.....	2
4. Conclusions	3
5. Looking Ahead.....	4
Appendix 1 Scottish Public Health Ethics Forum Study Day Draft Programme	5

1. Foreword by organisers: Dr Farhang Tahzib, Dr Lorna Watson, Chris Littlejohn and Professor Vikki Entwistle.

The practice of public health is governed by professional codes, however the underlying values and ethical perspectives are seldom made explicit. Many public health issues involve a tension between individual rights and the health of a larger population, and we need tools to articulate and frame these tensions in order to accommodate or resolve them. The Faculty of Public Health as a professional body is encouraged that this is seen as an area of interest for many of different backgrounds in the public health community and it is hoped that those in Scotland can shape discussion around public health ethics for the future.

We are very grateful to all those who contributed to the success of the day, expert input and active participation on the day, and the Committee of the Faculty of Public Health in Scotland for supporting the meeting financially.

2. Study day aims, objectives and programme of activities

This was the second meeting of the Scottish Public Health Forum. The event was held at the Royal college of Physicians in Edinburgh and attended by 35 people working in Public Health across Scotland.

The objectives of the day were to:

1. review development of public health ethics and some useful principles
2. consider implications of equality/human rights/ proposed code of practice for public health
3. discuss application of principles and other considerations in relation to relevant case studies
4. consider how to take forward public health ethics forum in Scotland

3. Summary of Activities, Learning, Outcomes

Public Health Ethics: a brief review

Professor Vikki Entwistle from University of Aberdeen opened the day with a refresh of key differences between medical ethics and public health ethics. She reviewed ethical principles, ethical theories and ethical frameworks with particular reference to public health. She noted that one of the challenges of applying textbook ethics approaches to complex decision making is that no one single approach deals well with the multiple conflicting perspectives present in practice.



Development of PH ethics and draft code of practice

Farhang Tahzib, Chair, Public Health Ethics Committee, UK Faculty of Public Health reported on the round table discussion organised by UKFPH, EUPHA (ETH) and the basis for the Moral Mandate of Public Health. To support this the public health workforce needs a clearly defined PH ethics competency, secured within public health education and ongoing professional training. He introduced a revised version of the AHPAs Public Health Code of Ethics, outlining ethical standards and obligations for public health personnel and institutions, for the purpose of guiding individual and collective decision making, especially in ethically challenging situations.

Human Rights, equality and health

Dr Lorna Watson challenged us to think about the relationship between competing Human Rights. Underpinning values in PH ethical practice uphold the right to health. She asked us to consider how questions of justice impact public health practice, and how position power should be shaped if we are to achieve a sustainably fairer society. Legally Equality duties apply to professional bodies with public functions, as well as duties of public bodies, and are highly relevant to valuing and improving health of specific groups.



Case Studies

During the study day, the group considered two case studies.

Colwyn Jones Fortification of Flour in with folate	Dr Lorna Watson Prenatal screening for Down's Syndrome
-------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------

These case studies used the Schroeder-Back principles of public health ethics as a tool to identify and debate ethical tensions and perspectives, using seven principles:

- Non maleficence
- Beneficence
- Health maximisation
- Efficiency
- Respect for autonomy
- Justice
- Proportionality

Ref: Schröder-Bäck et al. BMC Medical Ethics 2014, 15:73 <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6939/15/73>

4. Conclusions

The core mission of Public Health is to protect and promote health through the organized efforts of society. Public health has a moral mandate both in terms of obligation and power, to achieve public health goals, improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities, which should be balanced with respecting rights. The 'WE' collectively makes us better decision makers - at the heart of decision making are the individual, community values we bring on board. Public Health Ethics isn't about projects, but about how we do business, how we create value in our everyday work.

We are all interconnected and interdependent. The world has changed and in order for us to respond most appropriately we will need to think differently. Until recently PH ethics has been implicit rather than explicit and now is the time for PH ethics to be upfront and present in Public Health practice. This requires co creating on underlying guiding principles, values and skills to guide practice.

Additional resources:

Here are some additional resources referenced during the day

BRUCE JENNINGS

<https://www.humansandnature.org/ethical-aspects-of-sustainability>

ANGUS DAWSON

<https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2F978-3-319-23847-0.pdf>

MAKING DIFFICULT DECISIONS IN NHS BOARDS IN SCOTLAND

http://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/previous_resources/policy_and_strategy/making_difficult_decisions_in.aspx

5. Looking Ahead

Vision:

As a group of professionals working across Public Health in Scotland we would like to support development of an active Scottish Public Health Ethics Network (SPHEN) which works collaboratively with others to lead and promote the practice of Public Health Ethics in Scotland in a way that maximizes our organized efforts to improve health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities, while promoting and respecting human rights.

Aims:

- a forum for sharing information between individuals and organisations across Scotland;
 - to promote the development of ethics support in public health practice in the Scotland
 - to promote a high level of ethical debate in public health practice
- opportunities to encourage and coordinate good/innovative practice; and
- opportunities to highlight the role Public Health has to play in the field of moral philosophy.
- to identify key tasks, resources, means and mechanisms to fulfil its remit, evaluating, disseminating and generating a continuous programme of activity to fulfil its ultimate objective

Key Skills:

The key skills required to support the remit of the network are summarised in Figure 1 below.



Next steps:

The next steps are for a working group to lead on the development of a strategy and route map for taking forward the Scottish Public Health Ethics Network. This group will report to the Committee of the Faculty of Public Health in Scotland by autumn 2018.

SCOTTISH PUBLIC HEALTH ETHICS FORUM

Study Day, February 1st 2018

Royal College of Physicians Edinburgh, 9 Queen Street, Edinburgh, EH2 1JQ

Objectives:

1. review development of public health ethics and some useful principles
2. consider implications of equality/human rights/ proposed code of practice for public health
3. discuss application of principles and other considerations in relation to relevant case studies
4. consider how to take forward public health ethics forum in Scotland

Draft Programme

9.45	Coffee, registration	
10.15	Welcome	Dr Lorna Watson, NHS Fife
10.20	Public health ethics: a brief review of some useful principles	Prof Vikki Entwistle, University of Aberdeen
11.20	Development of public health ethics and draft code of practice	Dr Farhang Tahzib, FPH
11.50	Comfort Break	
11.55	Case study 1 Folate in flour	Colwyn Jones NHS Health Scotland
12.15	Discussion case study 1	
12.45	<i>Lunch</i>	
13.20	Human rights, Equality and health	Dr Lorna Watson
13.35	Case study 2 Prenatal screening	Dr Lorna Watson
13.55	Discussion case study 2	
14.25	Moving forward in Scotland with Public health ethics, small groups	Chris Littlejohn NHS Grampian
15.10	Sum up and next steps	

Funding for event: Committee of Faculty of Public Health in Scotland, Royal College of Physicians Edinburgh