



**FACULTY OF
PUBLIC HEALTH**

Public Health Research

A Position statement by the Academic and Research Committee

1. Action to improve the health of the public should be informed by high quality research evidence. FPH is committed to promoting and facilitating the highest quality science relevant to its remit, both within academia and within public health practice.
2. Population interventions are needed in order to achieve important impacts on the major public health issues of our time. Such approaches intervene on whole populations irrespective of individuals' baseline risk status. Population interventions have wide reach, significant potential for population impact and are usually more equitable and cost effective than interventions targeting individuals at high risk.
3. Knowledge and understanding of interventions that target individuals or groups according to their baseline risk status are also important for reducing burden and associated disease risk and costs to society (for example, helping those already overweight or obese to lose weight). How to implement them appropriately, in specific contexts, is also of importance. Such interventions need to be scalable for widespread effect and lead to sustainable change in order to improve the health of the public.
4. A key role of public health research is to understand the strengths and limitations and assess optimal balance of population and individual approaches as they are not mutually exclusive.
5. There is an urgent need to grow the scientific evidence-base relating to public health interventions, both within and outside health and care organisations, in order to inform the actions of policy and decision makers. This includes evidence on interventions to address the upstream social and commercial determinants of health; and evidence of effectiveness, evidence of potential effectiveness, evidence of need or evidence of affordability, cost-effectiveness and return on investment.
6. Research that informs public health policy and practice is often trans-disciplinary, drawing on a wide range of scientific disciplines including natural, social, political and data sciences.
7. The focus of Public Health research will be relevant to a wide range of academic and professional disciplines across civil society. Research should measure and report on indicators that reflect the diversity of issues valued by civil society in all its diversity.
8. Research on the health of the public needs to use a variety of methodologies, as appropriate, to synthesis evidence and to take account of the context in which the

Working to improve the public's health

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intervention is evaluated. Often this demands consideration of the complex adaptive systems that impact on health and health inequalities and in which policy decisions affecting health will be made, including budgetary issues.

9. All funding bodies whose research has a bearing on the health of the public should monitor the balance of their research portfolio and consider whether it is an appropriate response to the need to improve the health of the public.
10. FPH has a central and potentially unique role in developing an academic and practice workforce that can champion, develop and undertake this research alongside colleagues from a wide range of other disciplines. FPH is committed to working with higher educational institutions, research funders, health and care organisations (e.g. NHS, PHE, local government, private sector), DH, Public Health Specialty Training Programmes, representative and learned bodies (e.g. Royal Colleges, the Association of Directors of Public Health, the Academy of Medical Sciences and the Society for Social Medicine) to improve the workforce and develop it for the future.
11. FPH has a central and potentially unique role in developing a general public health workforce that has a sufficiently strong knowledge and experience, and understanding, of population health research to be able to:
 - a. Champion and participate in research
 - b. considers its interpretation
 - c. use research findings to advise policy and as a core part of practice.
12. FPH strongly supports the recommendations contained in the AMS 2040 report (<https://acmedsci.ac.uk/policy/policy-projects/health-of-the-public-in-2040>) .
13. FPH also supports the report The Health of People report from the Academy of Social Sciences (<https://campaignforsocialscience.org.uk/healthofpeople/>).
14. FPH welcomes the UK Prevention Research Partnership supported by a dozen major government and charity funders.
(<https://www.mrc.ac.uk/funding/browse/ukprp/uk-prevention-research-partnership-ukprp-consortium-and-network-awards/>)
15. FPH is committed to supporting platforms, such as conferences and training events that bring together public health academic and service workforce to share research and best practice.

February 2018
Version 4.

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