



Faculty of Public Health

Of the Royal Colleges of Physicians of the United Kingdom

Working to improve the public's health

Short-term senior public health appointments

The consultant in public health and the public health academic play a senior and significant role in the system whether working in PHE, local government or academia. This must be reflected in the arrangements for the appointment to consultant roles that are required.

Joint guidance on the appointment of directors of public health and consultants in public health in England has been produced in partnership by FPH, Public Health England, the Local Government Association and the Universities and Colleges Employers Association. (See http://www.fph.org.uk/faculty_guidance). These two documents provide detailed advice and good practice on the process for the appointment of senior public health consultants and recognises that the external professional assessment and advice provided by FPH is a central component of appointments. The system in place for appointing directors of public health and consultants in public health (the AAC – Advisory Appointment Committee) is the most efficient way of assuring the necessary technical and professional skills and ensuring that all appointments are fit for purpose.

Appointments to locum and interim posts are technically exempt from the need to advertise or to be selected by an AAC provided the employment is for an initial period not exceeding six months, with extensions of a maximum period of a further six months subject to a satisfactory review by the employing organisation(s) and to consultation with FPH. (Employers should notify the FPH office at an early stage about locum posts which are to continue for more than six months and then contact the Faculty Adviser for their region about conducting the six month review.)

However, locum and interim appointments cause disproportionately more employment problems than substantive posts and equal attention and care should be paid to following the correct recruitment procedures as for substantive posts to reduce the risk to employers and the public. Employers must have satisfactory procedures in place to ensure that those appointed are of adequate standard and meet the criteria for the post to which they are appointed: candidates should always be assessed by an appointments committee including at least two professional members and references must always be obtained. In the interests of public protection and risk management, **FPH therefore firmly advises the use of the AAC process for ALL posts.** This includes the approval of the recruitment literature for interim and locum posts by the Faculty Adviser as for substantive posts. FPH will then provide FPH Assessors to take part in the selection process.

Locums and interims are an important asset to the public health system and make a valuable contribution to it. However, the appointment should be a temporary measure of limited duration. A substantive appointment to the post should be made as quickly as possible. A vacant post should not be filled over a substantial period of time by means of a series of short-term appointments.

More detailed guidance is given in the Code of Practice on the appointment and employment of HCHS locum doctors, issued by the NHS Executive in August 1997:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/232107/Locum_Code_of_Practice_1997.pdf

Also see: FPH supplementary employers' guidance http://www.fph.org.uk/faculty_guidance

Any queries please email aac@fph.org.uk