Faculty of Public Health Fair Training Strategy 2025-2030

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FACULTY OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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List of Acronyms

ARCP	Annual Review of Competence Progression
BMJ	British Medical Journal
DFPH	Faculty of Public Health Diplomate Examination
DHSC	Department of Health and Social Care
EDI	Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
FPH	Faculty of Public Health
GMC	General Medical Council
HEE	Health Education England
HEIW	Health Education and Improvement Wales
MFPH	Faculty of Public Health Membership Examination
NES	NHS Education for Scotland
NHSWTE	NHS Workforce Training and Education
NIMDTA	Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency
PHNRO	Public Health National Recruitment Office
REG	Recruitment Executive Group
RSPH	Royal Society for Public Health
SEB	Statutory Education Bodies
SJT	Situational Judgement Test
SRbPA	Specialist Registration by Portfolio Assessment
TPD	Training Programme Director
UKPHR	UK Public Health Register

Foreword

The public health profession is rooted in principles of equity and justice. We champion these values in our work every day; challenging structural inequalities, working to support fairer health outcomes, and ensuring that our communities have the chance to live healthy and fulfilling lives. To truly embody these principles, we must hold ourselves accountable to the same standards, and our workforce must represent and reflect the diversity of the communities we serve.

The Faculty of Public Health has made this work a priority in recent years, including through our Anti-Racism Framework, and this Fair Training Strategy represents our continued commitment to leading work with cross-system partners to reduce differential attainment and properly embed principles of equity into public health specialty training.

I am the latest President to take up the mantle of this work, with several years of analysis revealing persistent attainment gaps in public health specialty training and postgraduate examinations particularly affecting colleagues from ethnic minority backgrounds, those from multi-professional routes, international medical graduates, and colleagues of increasing age.

As a profession dedicated to tackling inequalities and systemic barriers we cannot accept unfair differential outcomes within our own workforce, and as a Faculty we must do everything we can to remedy these inequities. A fair and inclusive public health training programme is not only morally just according to public health principles, but it builds a more effective, cohesive, talented, and diverse workforce which truly reflects the communities we serve.

This strategy outlines seven key strategic priorities that will guide our work over the coming years; from leadership and advocacy through to creating inclusive workplace and learning environments. The strategy recognises that the Faculty holds direct responsibility for certain aspects of training – including curriculum development and examinations – whilst in other areas we must work with our cross-sector partners including Statutory Education Bodies and regulators across the Four Nations of the UK to adjust processes and champion best practice.

Though this strategy currently focuses on the public health specialty training programme, our ambition is to expand this work across the wider public health workforce in partnership with organisations such as the UK Public Health Register, the Royal Society For Public Health, and others.

I thank those colleagues who have led this work so far, including members of the Faculty's Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee, the Fair Examinations Steering Group, and many other colleagues who have shared their experiences and insights.

By embedding fairness at the heart of training, we strengthen the foundation of public health itself. This is how we build a profession that truly serves, represents, and protects the health of the public; now and for generations to come.

Professor Tracy Daszkiewicz

President, UK Faculty of Public Health

Executive Summary

Our Vision

Public Health is a clinical specialty rooted in social justice and equity, and our educational systems must reflect these principles. The Faculty of Public Health (FPH) strives to be an exemplar organisation, ensuring equity and inclusion in our own training systems, while setting a standard to inspire other professional bodies. We envision a specialist training pathway, training environment and career structure including career progression, that is equitable, inclusive, and empowering for all - regardless of personal background or training route. We take an asset-based and intersectional approach, recognising the strengths, skills, and multiple identities of public health registrars in training, and committing to structural change that addresses systemic inequity. While currently focused on the specialty training pathway, this strategy aims to evolve to address differential outcomes across the wider public health workforce, guided by the developing evidence base and stakeholder collaboration.

Why is Fair Training important?

The core mission of public health is to improve health and reduce inequalities across the populations we serve. To do this effectively, we must also turn the lens inward and examine our own systems—particularly how we educate, train, and support the public health workforce. A fair and inclusive culture in public health training is integral to building a workforce that truly reflects the communities we serve. When colleagues from all backgrounds have equitable access to opportunities and support, public health becomes a more attractive and accessible career. This helps us to recruit and retain the best and diverse talent, ensuring we are ready to meet the health challenges of an increasingly complex world. A workforce that mirrors our population is better placed to understand and respond to the needs of different communities, making public health interventions more relevant, effective, and equitable.

Fairness in training is not just the right thing to do - it is central to achieving our vision of better health for everyone. A diverse and inclusive workforce brings a broader range of perspectives, lived experience, and ideas, leading to more innovative and relevant public health action. Inclusive environments build trust, support openness, and encourage collaboration, creating the conditions for bold and creative solutions. Crucially, if we are to uphold our core values of equity and social justice, we must lead by example. That means ensuring fairness within our own systems, so we can earn the trust of the public and deliver truly inclusive public health for the future.

	Leadership and Advocacy We will lead by example in tackling structural inequities and adopting anti-racist strategies.
	Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration We will collaborate to co-design meaningful interventions and to share our learning.
	Data Intelligence We will systematically collect and analyse relevant data to address attainment gaps.
	Fair Recruitment Practices We will uphold and provide advice on fair recruitment practices that do not differentiate by demographic characteristics.
	Inclusive Curriculum and Assessments We will ensure FPH assessments and curriculum are inclusive and equitable, and candidates are well-supported.
	Fair Training Pathways We will advocate for and facilitate equitable training experiences for all colleagues.
	Inclusive Workplace and Learning Environments We will advocate for learning and working environments where everyone feels they belong.

Background

The Faculty of Public Health (FPH) sets and maintains the professional standards in the discipline of public health and is responsible for overseeing the quality of training and professional development of public health registrars and consultants in the UK. The FPH also sets the standards for the specialist public health workforce to improve and protect the public's health and wellbeing.

In February 2020 the British Medical Journal (BMJ) published an article which suggested that, amongst all the medical specialties, public health recruitment resulted in the largest gap between the proportion of candidates deemed appointable from ethnic minority backgrounds (15%) and those from white backgrounds (36%). This sparked the FPH Fair Training programme, a multi-phased programme of work aiming to examine the public health specialty training programme through an equity, diversity and inclusion lens. This work aligned with wider efforts across other medical specialties and regulatory bodies, such as the General Medical Council (GMC) Fair Pathway's for All, to understand and address differential attainment linked to protected characteristics in medical education and training.

In response to the BMJ article, Health Education England (HEE), now known as NHS Workforce Training and Education (NHSWTE) Directorate, and the Public Health National Recruitment Executive Group (REG), supported by the FPH, commissioned a package of analytic work specifically to investigate the apparent differential attainment within the recruitment process. The first output was a report on recruitment into public health training, which identified that candidates from ethnic minority backgrounds, those who are older, those from international medical graduate backgrounds and multi-professional backgrounds are materially under-

represented by the end of the recruitment process. Since the publication of the report in 2022, action is being taken to address the identified attainment gap, which is summarised in Appendix A. This piece of work has been called Fair Recruitment.

The FPH's second phase of the Fair Training programme has started to look at the specialty training programme itself. This phase of work will be examining public health training in all four countries of the UK, and across as many protected characteristics as there is data available to analyse. The initial focus has been on Fair Exams, the postgraduate examinations, and a report on differential attainment in the public health postgraduate examinations was published in 2024. This report analysed ten years of national performance data for all Diplomate (DFPH) and Membership (MFPH) first attempts. The report identified that in the DFPH, candidates of increasing age, black, Asian or white other ethnicity, a multi-professional background, and candidates who were not UK Registrars had lower odds of passing on first attempt. For the MFPH, candidates of increasing age, black and Asian ethnicity had lower odds of passing on first attempt. These results were statistically significant for both exams. The FPH has established a Fair Exams Steering Group to lead on implementing the recommendations included in the report and supporting work to close the existing attainment gaps.

Purpose and Scope of the Fair Training Strategy

Building on the findings so far, this Fair Training Strategy sets out a long-term approach to embedding equity and inclusion across the lifespan of a public health specialist's training and career. It recognises the need for consistent, systemic action to ensure all individuals entering and progressing through public health specialty training have equal opportunities to succeed. The strategic priorities outlined in the following pages are directly shaped by the evidence and learning to date from reviewing specialty training recruitment processes and assessments. It is intended that progress through specialty training and Annual Review of Competence Progression (ARCP) outcomes, as well as consultant appointments and career progression will be analysed as the work progresses. The strategy aims to provide clarity on the FPH's role, focus effort where it can have the greatest impact, and ensure continued momentum in making public health training and careers fairer for all.

While this strategy is rooted in the public health specialty training pathway (where the Fair Training programme originated) we recognise that there are multiple equivalent routes to specialist registration and a wider public health workforce beyond specialist roles. Our future ambition is to work in partnership with other organisations to reduce differential attainment gaps and differential experiences within the public health workforce. This includes strengthening partnership working with organisations such as the UK Public Health Register (UKPHR), Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH), and other public health professional bodies to share data, align efforts, and support inclusive public health careers.

Roles and Responsibilities

The FPH oversees the quality of training and professional development for public health consultants in the UK. Its direct responsibilities include setting training standards, developing

the curriculum, and running examinations. These standards are set in collaboration with the GMC and the UKPHR, the two regulatory bodies for Public Health Specialty Training.

The four Statutory Education Bodies (SEBs) are responsible for the delivery and supervision of specialty training through local deaneries. Postgraduate Deans, Heads of School, and Training Programme Directors (TPDs) lead this work, supported by local educational and clinical supervisors. Recruitment to specialty training posts is managed nationally by the Public Health National Recruitment Office (PHNRO).

FPH works in partnership with SEBs to influence policy, share evidence, and promote best practice. While some strategic priorities and examples of "what good looks like" fall within FPH's direct remit, such as setting curriculum standards, others call on the FPH to play an influencing and advocacy role, working with partners to shape policy and promote best practice.

A Vision for Fair Training in Public Health Specialty Training and Careers

Public Health is a clinical specialty rooted in the values of social justice and equity, and our own educational systems must embody these principles. The Faculty of Public Health (FPH) strives to be an exemplar organisation, ensuring equity and inclusion within our own systems while setting a standard that can inspire and influence other professional bodies and training providers. We envision a specialist training pathway, career structure, and training environment that is equitable, inclusive, and empowering for all - regardless of personal background or training route. Achieving better health for all, leaving no one behind, is only possible if our workforce reflects the diversity of the communities we serve.

To achieve this, the FPH will take an asset-based approach to fair training, recognising and valuing the strengths, skills, and experiences of trainees, and embedding these assets into the way we recruit, assess, and support progression. We are committed to reshaping training systems and cultures so they actively support equity and address structural barriers, ensuring that everyone has a fair opportunity to succeed.

This strategy aims to address unfair differences in outcomes and experiences between groups, while recognising that not all differences can or should be eliminated. It will apply an intersectional lens, recognising that each individual has multiple identities, such as race, gender, class, disability, and sexuality, that interact to create unique experiences of both discrimination and privilege. By embedding this perspective, we recognise the complex ways in which people experience opportunity and disadvantage, and commit to structural change that tackles systemic inequity in all its forms. Our approach will be broad-based, drawing on both quantitative and qualitative evidence, wider literature, and close collaboration with stakeholders to identify priorities and develop targeted areas for action.

While this strategy currently focuses on the specialty training pathway, it aims to evolve into a wider approach that addresses differential outcomes across the public health workforce, in partnership with other professional bodies.

Strategic priorities

1. Leadership and Advocacy – We will lead by example in tackling structural inequities and adopting anti-racist strategies.
2. Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration – We will collaborate to co-design meaningful interventions and to share our learning.
3. Data Intelligence – We will systematically collect and analyse relevant data to address attainment gaps.
4. Fair Recruitment Practices – We will uphold and provide advice on fair recruitment practices that do not differentiate by demographic characteristics.
5. Inclusive Curriculum and Assessments – We will ensure FPH assessments and curriculum are inclusive and equitable, and candidates are well-supported.
6. Fair Training Pathways – We will advocate for and facilitate equitable training experiences for all colleagues.
7. Inclusive Workplace and Learning Environments - We will advocate for learning and working environments where everyone feels they belong.

Leadership and Advocacy

The FPH champions health and equity in all policies, tackles health inequalities, and promotes a public health approach to anti-racism. We will be a leading voice in advocating for fair training cultures and equitable career structures. We recognise that attainment gaps are driven by complex, structural inequities across the life course, and that addressing them requires a coordinated, multi-sector response. We will lead by example, embedding transparency, innovation, and accountability into our own systems and processes, and advocating for others to do the same.

What does success look like:

- FPH articulates a clear, evidence-informed position on tackling attainment gaps and structural inequities, embedded across committee and SIG strategies and workplans.
- Our leadership approach recognises and amplifies the strengths, skills, and expertise of colleagues and stakeholders, ensuring that strategies to tackle inequity are informed by the assets people bring to the system as well as the challenges they face.
- An external peer review group provides independent scrutiny and constructive challenge, strengthening the Fair Training Strategy and helping identify and address biases or assumptions in our approach.
- FPH regularly publishes data, case studies, and progress reports demonstrating tangible action and impact on fair training outcomes.
- FPH actively influences national policy and workforce planning to support a fairer, more inclusive public health training system.

Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration

We will actively engage individuals and groups most affected by attainment gaps to better understand their experiences and to co-design meaningful and credible interventions. We recognise the value of their time, insight, and lived experience, and will ensure their contributions are reflected in decision-making. We will collaborate with stakeholders across and beyond the public health system to challenge structural inequalities, share learning and best practice, and foster inclusive working and learning environments.

What does success look like:

- Colleagues from across the public health workforce meaningfully contribute to the design, delivery, and evaluation of interventions to build inclusive and equitable training cultures and careers.
- Work to embed equitable and inclusive training cultures and careers are clearly mapped across stakeholders and settings, enabling aligned collaboration and coordinated action.
- An engagement and communication strategy is in place to raise awareness, encourage ongoing dialogue with members and the wider workforce, share our learning, and connect with others addressing similar challenges. The strategy purposefully includes a focus on inclusive engagement and communication.
- The EDI Committee and Special Interest Group (SIG) are embedded as key partners in this work, helping to shape priorities, co-design interventions, and act as a vital link to the wider membership.

Data Intelligence

We will embed a robust and systematic approach to collecting, storing, and analysing demographic and outcome data. This will enable us to identify inequalities across the training and career pathway and track progress in closing attainment gaps. We recognise that quantitative data for some demographic groups may be limited, and that insights from qualitative evidence, gained through stakeholder engagement and collaboration, are essential to fully understand differential outcomes.

What does success look like:

- Reliable demographic and educational outcome data are available across specialist training pathways and careers, enabling timely identification of potential inequalities.
- Clear accountability structures are in place to evaluate progress against key metrics, supporting evidence-informed decision-making to close attainment gaps.
- Data sharing agreements with key partner organisations including regulatory bodies, Statutory Education Bodies (SEBs) and professional public health bodies are in place, supporting a coordinated, system-wide approach to data collection, analysis, and action by the relevant responsible organisation on inequalities across training and career pathways.

Fair Recruitment Practices

We will continue to influence cross-sector partners, including the National Recruitment Executive Group (REG) and NHS Workforce Training and Education (NHSWTE) to identify and reduce any bias within our recruitment processes. We will proactively raise awareness of the public health specialty training programme among underrepresented groups and advocate for SEBs to provide targeted application support. This includes ensuring access to high-quality information and preparation resources so that all applicants have a fair and equitable opportunity to succeed.

What does success look like:

- Recommendations from the external review of the psychometric tests at the Assessment Centre are published and implemented.
- The assessor pool is diverse and representative of the public health specialist workforce.
- High-quality information and preparation resources are available and actively used by applicants to support equitable access and success.

Inclusive Curriculum and Assessments

We will ensure that the design and delivery of FPH postgraduate assessments offer all candidates an equitable opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and competence. We are committed to reviewing the inclusivity of our curriculum and assessments, working with SEBs to provide accessible, high-quality preparation materials, meaningful feedback, and tailored support. Reasonable adjustments will continue to be strengthened, informed by the work of the Reasonable Adjustments Working Group.

What does success look like:

- The Public Health Specialty Training Curriculum is reviewed and updated using decolonising and antiracist principles as part of the curriculum development and review process.
- FPH postgraduate examinations are grounded in an inclusive syllabus and give all candidates a fair opportunity to succeed.
- All candidates have access to high-quality preparation materials that are aligned with the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges' principles for addressing attainment gaps.
- Candidates receive tailored assessment support and formative feedback that meets their individual learning needs.
- The FPH examiner pool is diverse and representative of the public health specialist workforce.
- Candidates requiring reasonable adjustments can access them through a clear, accessible, and well-communicated process.
- Curriculum review working groups and strategic committees actively consider recommendations from the Fair Exams report and broader Fair Training Strategy priorities.

- Feedback from candidates, including those with disabilities and additional needs, is actively sought and used to make ongoing improvements to curriculum and assessment accessibility.

Fair Training Pathways

We will work with SEBs and training regions to ensure that all colleagues undertaking specialist training, regardless of background, professional route, or individual challenges, have equitable access to the support, opportunities, and resources they need to progress and thrive.

What does success look like:

- The FPH has a clear understanding of which groups of Registrars are affected by differential outcomes across their specialty training journey and acts on this insight to improve experiences, including analysing differential attainment in Annual Review of Competency Progression (ARCP) and Key Area 10 panel outcomes.
- The pool of Educational Supervisors is diverse and representative of the public health specialist workforce.
- Educational Supervisors have the knowledge, skills, confidence, and resources to support Registrars of all backgrounds, beliefs, and identities in their local training environment and to advocate for best practice.
- Assessment outcomes do not unfairly limit access to wider training opportunities, ensuring that no individual is disadvantaged in progressing their career.

Inclusive and Enabling Workplace and Learning Environments

We will promote and support inclusive, respectful, and equitable learning and working environments across the public health system. We recognise that a sense of belonging, representation, and psychological safety is essential for individuals to thrive throughout training and into their careers.

What does success look like:

- Individuals experience a strong sense of belonging in their workplace and learning environments and within the broader public health workforce.
- Diverse leaders are visible, recognised, and celebrated as role models and mentors in national, regional, and local public health organisations, including the FPH.
- Registrars are supported to identify and access the support and reasonable adjustments they need, regardless of their training setting, with timely and person-centred adjustments implemented across the training pathway.
- The FPH actively identifies and shares good practice to support understanding and implementation of inclusive approaches across the breadth of Public Health settings.
- After completion of training, Public Health Consultants have access to a broad range of Continuous Professional Development opportunities and resources, supporting their personal learning needs and development as inclusive, compassionate, and effective leaders.

Towards a Public Health Workforce-Wide EDI Strategy

This strategy focuses on the public health specialty training pathway, where the Fair Training programme began and where the FPH holds direct responsibilities including setting standards for training, curriculum development, and examinations. However, we recognise that specialty training is just one of several pathways into public health. Individuals pursuing practitioner registration or the Specialist Registration by Portfolio Assessment (SRbPA) may face similar challenges in access, support, and progression.

Our ambition is to expand the scope of this work over time working with partners to improve equity, diversity and inclusion across the wider public health workforce. This includes strengthening partnerships with the UK Public Health Register (UKPHR), Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH), General Medical Council (GMC), and other professional bodies to share learning, build an evidence base, and align efforts. In areas beyond our direct remit, the FPH will continue to use its voice and influence to advocate for fairness, remove barriers, and support inclusive access to all training and registration pathways.

Recent and planned developments that support this wider ambition include:

- The UKPHR has begun to collect demographic data on protected characteristics from its registrants. This data will enable analysis of progression, retention, and barriers to revalidation or re-registration across demographic groups
- The UKPHR has begun to collect data on protected characteristics from Specialist Registration by Portfolio Assessment (SRbPA) applicants. Although the sample size is still small, the growing dataset will enable the identification of any differences in success rates for different groups.
- An evaluation by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) into regional support programmes for SRbPA applicants is underway. This includes examining the support available for those preparing to sit the DFPH and identifying what works in terms of preparing individuals for a successful SRbPA application.
- The FPH and UKPHR are developing a data-sharing agreement to facilitate shared learning and partnership working on interventions to tackle attainment gaps.

Delivering the Fair Training Strategy

The FPH will work closely with partners across the public health system, including educators, employers, regulators, and trainees, to implement the strategic priorities and embed equity and inclusion into every stage of the training and career pathway. Oversight and governance will be provided by the FPH Education Committee and the EDI Committee, with progress regularly reviewed and reported to the FPH Board. Specific workstreams will be led by steering or task and finish groups as appropriate.

Acknowledgements

The FPH would like to thank everyone involved in drafting and editing the content of this strategy including FPH staff, and members of the FPH EDI Committee, Fair Exams Steering Group and REG. We would also like to thank colleagues from the UKPHR and the RSPH for their valuable input and ongoing collaboration.

Appendix

Appendix A – A summary of the action taken to date to tackle the attainment gap in recruitment into specialty training

- Separating the Assessment Centre scores from the Selection Centre so there is no carry through of the biases at Assessment Centre into final scores.
- Developing the information hub to provide as much support as possible to all candidates, including links to regional recruitment events taster days.
- Improving the Situational Judgement Test (SJT) using a wider range of people from different backgrounds to provide diversity of thought and opinion. More examples have been made available for applicants to prepare with, in advance of the recruitment process.
- Continuing to refine the training for Selection Centre assessors and to refine Selection Centre materials.
- Kent, Surry and Sussex Specialty Registrars piloted a buddy scheme for applicants to the public health training programme from Black and Asian backgrounds based in the region.
- The Work Psychology Group has been commissioned to review the tests at Assessment Centre to see if there are ways of making this fairer.

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