



## The Public Health Skills Passport and the review of the UK Public Health Skills and Knowledge Framework

### The public health skills passport (England)

The 'Healthy Lives, Healthy People: public health workforce strategy' (DH/LGA/PHE 2013) identifies the need to refine the Public Health Skills and Knowledge Framework (PHSKF), and to develop a new 'skills passport' to support the public health workforce in career development and planning. PHE is leading on both of these activities.

The PHE national workforce development team is now engaged with e-portfolio specialist provider on the development of a web-based skills passport for public health workers in England.

The skills passport will provide an online portal where individuals can record and track their career development, mapping against the UK Public Health Skills and Knowledge Framework. It is called a 'passport' because the skills passport account will be transferable between employers and registration bodies – so the tool can help workers to move around the public health system to develop their careers, enabling them to keep a record of their experience and demonstrate their expertise – all in one place.

The PHE team is working closely with the Public Health Online Resource for Careers, Skills and Training (PHORCaST) team based in Health Education East Midlands, which is preparing for the PHORCaST website to be subsumed into the Health Careers Website early 2015. A wide range of other national partners are involved in informing the project.

The skills passport will be going through a 'proof of concept' phase between now and the end of March 2015. During this time the workforce will be consulted via e-surveys and interviews to help to inform the design.

The tool will be piloted with up to 150 licences to test its use with both individual users and employers, and these pilot sites are in the process of being confirmed. This pilot activity will take place between January and March 2015. Early consultation on the idea of a skills passport, early in 2014, has provided some guidance on what will be required for it to work.

Bulletins will be produced to provide regular updates for the workforce to support output via the PHE website and Twitter account. The PHORCaST website will also be used as a key channel for communication.

## Public Health Skills and Knowledge Framework (UK)

The skills passport will be aligned to the PHSKF, which is a comprehensive set of competencies described for people in the public health workforce from levels 1 to 9 (based on the Skills for Health Competency Framework) and against nine key areas of public health as defined by the Faculty of Public Health (FPH) curriculum.

The PHSKF is used by many agencies and employers to inform job descriptions, and by individuals wishing to identify where they are in relation to a career pathway.

The PHE workforce development team is working with key partner agencies and stakeholders across the UK to carry out a fundamental review of the PHSKF to ensure that it meets the current and future needs of the public health workforce across the system. The PHSKF will need to be revised to ensure that it remains relevant to an extended range of employers – local authorities, civil service agencies, NHS and the voluntary sector – while continuing to reflect the skills and knowledge public health workers feel they are putting to everyday use.

A steering group is currently considering a strategy for a nationwide review, which will involve extensive consultation and workshops across the UK. The steering group is a sub-group of the People in the UK Public Health Group (previously Public Health Workforce Advisory Group).

If you would like to know more about either pieces of work, or to request that you are added to a mailing list for subsequent bulletins please send your query, with full details of your role, base and contact details to [sp-phskf@phe.gov.uk](mailto:sp-phskf@phe.gov.uk).

To help us to get things right, we would like to hear from you if you have ideas about:

- the essential features that a skills passport would need to have for it to appeal to you as a public health worker and/or as an employer
- how you currently use and apply the PHSKF
- the particular strengths of the PHSKF – and its current limitations, if any
- how you think the PHSKF could be improved

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