

April 2015

Factsheet Five:

Statutory regulation and UKPHR

A key determinant of which groups of workers should be subject to statutory regulation is *risk to the public*. In 2010 the UK Public Health Register (UKPHR) commissioned research to assess the risks posed at different levels of public health practice.

The conclusion was that public health practice, whether it be at the strategic or front-line operational levels, carries risk of harm to the public. The risk is sufficient to justify regulation of the public health workforce.

UKPHR argues that statutory regulation for only some groups of public health workers is inconsistent. The entire public health workforce should be subject to statutory regulation. UKPHR is willing to be the statutory regulator.

All UKPHR assessment processes, internal and external, are quality assured by UKPHR moderators. Standards are maintained by comprehensive, compulsory training for assessors and verifiers. At regular development days, assessors share learning points in connection with assessment and standards.

At present all applicants for registration with UKPHR have to complete a **declaration of fitness to practise** and give details of any previous disciplinary history. They must state their understanding and acceptance of the principles and guidance published in *Good Public Health Practice*¹ and UKPHR's **Code of Conduct**².

Both documents emphasise the paramount importance of public safety. Complaint and other information received about a registrant will be scrutinised carefully in the light of the standards set out in these two documents and the declarations registrants have made.

UKPHR is open and publicly accessible in its operations. The work done in respect of operating the voluntary register³ and publicising it widely promotes public confidence in registered public health professionals. This publicity is achieved through maintenance of UKPHR's website, news releases, Twitter communications and joint promotional work with public health partners.

¹ [http://www.fph.org.uk/uploads/Good%20Public%20Health%20Practice%20-%20\(Jan12\)%20-%20DRAFT.pdf](http://www.fph.org.uk/uploads/Good%20Public%20Health%20Practice%20-%20(Jan12)%20-%20DRAFT.pdf)

² <http://www.ukphr.org/registration/code-of-conduct/>

³ UKPHR is a voluntary register accredited by the Professional Standards Authority

The risk posed by **Directors of Public Health, their consultants and specialists** is stated as follows in the report of the research UKPHR commissioned:

Public Health Consultants and Specialists work directly with members of the public - particularly in health protection roles. Most importantly, poor practice at a population level could have catastrophic implications for public health. Increasingly public health is being led, managed and operationalised in a multi-agency environment, evidenced by the joint appointment of Directors of Public Health... This role extension and the changing demands of the role require that those holding the Public Health Specialist posts are held accountable for actions not only at a local level but nationally.

It states the following about **practitioners**:

Public Health Practitioners form the largest proportion of the public health workforce. They are key members of this workforce and have a large influence on health outcomes. At present many Public Health Practitioners remain unregulated. Public Health Practitioners generally operate under the management of a Consultant/Specialist, however management relationships vary. At Public Health Skills Career Framework level 5 Practitioners begin to work autonomously and assume the responsibilities associated with autonomous practice.

UKPHR focuses on assurance that applicants are safe and competent to practise at their level of registration, taking account of the different risks posed by different levels and types of public health practice. The assessment process identifies the levels of practice demonstrated and identifies where there may be additional competencies required to meet the changing demands of the public health workforce.

In UKPHR's view, it is important to consider how the regulator operates:

- Modern, right touch regulation capable of flexibility and changing in line with developments in practice and public protection;
- Application of the principles of good regulation – proportionate, accountable, consistent, transparent and targeted;
- Malpractice is identified and the individuals stopped from practising;
- Slipping standards of professional competence are picked up early and intervention seeks to return individuals to full competence;
- Good practice is supported by sharing knowledge, highlighting case studies and helping to maintain a culture of continuous improvement.

For further information or if you wish to contact the UKPHR for any other reason
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