

## UKPHR response to launch of the revised Public Health Skills & Knowledge Framework

The UK Public Health Register (UKPHR) welcomes the launch of the revised Public Health Skills & Knowledge Framework and congratulates all those who have worked long and hard to bring about its publication. We add our thanks to the People in UK Public Health advisory group for overseeing the project as well as Public Health England for steering it and the Department of Health for supporting the project.

UKPHR believes that the revised Framework is a welcome rationalisation of past publications, including its predecessor known to many as “the Cube”. The new functional approach to describing competences required for working in public health makes the Framework much more user friendly as a competency framework. It is pleasing to see that the opportunity of this revision has been taken to adopt more straightforward language, to bring descriptors of tasks up to date and remove duplication and repetition.

When the standards for registration by UKPHR were established by a wide range of public health stakeholders, the original Public Health Skills & Knowledge was one of several publications that was taken into account in settling on those standards. UKPHR is therefore committed to reviewing whether changes should be made to its standards for registration as a result of this publication of the revised Framework. This is so in relation to registration standards for both specialists and practitioners.

A task & finish group is already looking at routes to registration for specialists and this group will consider whether changes to standards will be required to reflect changes to the Framework. A number of changes to the standards will in any event be made to reflect a revised Public Health Specialty Training Programme Curriculum published in 2015.

A second task & finish group has begun a review of practitioner registration and this group will likewise consider whether changes to standards will be required to reflect changes to the Framework. Some observers note that the new Framework does not describe levels of public health practice. UKPHR has been asked what the effect this change will have on references in UKPHR’s past publications to “Level 5”.

To explain, the minimum requirement for a practitioner’s registration by UKPHR is for the practitioner to demonstrate autonomous practice, in other words he or she is capable of working without direct supervision. This minimum level has in the past been equated with Level 5 in the original Framework (the Cube).

However, the standards developed by UKPHR to reflect this level of practice are free-standing and do not depend on “Level 5” continuing to exist. That said, the Level 5 reference exists in more than one publication which stakeholders took into account when settling those standards. For example, the *Skills for Health Careers Framework* sets out a “Level 5” explicitly and this publication remains in place<sup>1</sup>.

UKPHR confirms that practitioner registration will continue to be operated on the same basis after the launch of the revised Framework as before. Practitioners who are in the process of gaining registration with UKPHR are unaffected as are practitioners who may be thinking about applying for registration in the near future.

Any changes to UKPHR’s standards for registration, for specialists and practitioners, which may be proposed by the respective task & finish groups in the future would be carefully considered by the Board. Extensive consultation with stakeholders would be undertaken and transitional arrangements would be made to manage any period of cross-over from one version of UKPHR’s standards to a new version.

UKPHR commends the revised Public Health Skills & Knowledge Framework to public health organisations, public health professionals and their employers and looks forward to a long and much-used future for the Framework.

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#### NOTES ABOUT UKPHR:

1. UKPHR is the independent, accredited register for the public health workforce in the UK. Its register is accredited by Professional Standards Authority under a statutory scheme and UKPHR is a Registered Charity.
2. UKPHR has been registering public health specialists since 2003. In 2011 UKPHR commenced registration in respect of public health practitioners and in 2015 began registering Public Health Specialty Registrars.
3. The public health workforce is multi-disciplinary and employers, including local authorities can look to registration as an assurance of competence.
4. Registration contributes to public protection, ethical practice and assurance of standards of competence, knowledge and experience.

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