

# **Contents**

<u>Section</u>	<u>Heading</u>	<u>Page</u>
1.	<i>Purpose of this document</i>	2
2.	<i>Scope and Organisational Context</i>	2
3	<i>Key Functions of UKPHR</i>	2
4.	<i>Legislative Framework for Equality and Diversity</i>	3
5.	<i>Equality and Diversity Policy and Objectives</i>	5
6.	<i>Implementing the Equality and Diversity Policy</i>	7
7.	<i>Appendix 1: Protected Characteristics</i>	9

## **1.0 Purpose of this document**

This document sets out the equality and diversity policy of the UK Public Health Register (UKPHR) and the action plan being put in place to achieve the outcomes intended by the policy.

## **2.0 Scope and Organisational Context**

**2.1** The UKPHR was established in 2003 by the 'tripartite group' – the Multidisciplinary Public Health Forum (MDPHF), the Faculty of Public Health (FPH) and the Royal Institute of Public Health (RIPH). Its objective is to promote public confidence in public health professionals' practice in all four UK countries through independent regulation.

**2.2** The UKPHR is an independent body with its own Board.

## **3.0 Key Functions of UKPHR**

**3.1** Public health specialists and practitioners can be employed by a wide range of statutory, voluntary and private organisations, and come to the profession through diverse professional and educational routes. The ethnic, cultural and other personal backgrounds of those in public health are also increasingly diverse, and likely to be even more so in future years to reflect the UK's increasingly diverse population. UKPHR offers voluntary registration as public health specialists and practitioners to those who may not be registered with other regulatory bodies.

**3.2** Registration is designed to assure the public and employers that multidisciplinary specialists and practitioners in public health are appropriately qualified and competent. It sets standards for registration that are recognised throughout the United Kingdom and provide significant public protection from unprofessional or unethical behaviour. It seeks to enhance professional recognition of public health practice among employers, other professionals and the public.

**3.3** Application for admission to the register is through submission of a written portfolio that includes evidence of qualifications, experience and skills together with testimonials from work colleagues. The task of assessing a submitted portfolio rests with a nominated assessment team comprising two assessors from the Registration Panel, one of who takes the role of lead assessor. The recommendations of assessment teams are considered periodically by the UKPHR Registration Panel which comprises a Chair, who is currently a member of the Board, together with the lead assessor of each of the assessment teams. Other members of the Registration Panel are invited as appropriate. Occasionally, the Registration Panel could invite an applicant to a personal interview (viva) to explore their application further before a decision is made.

**3.4** Where issues are raised about the professional competence of a registrant, UKPHR follows a 'Fitness to Practise' (soon to be termed 'Fitness for Registration') process to investigate the facts and make decisions in relation to the individual's registration status.

**3.5** Assessors are not employees of UKPHR but are senior, appropriately qualified and experienced individuals from a variety of backgrounds, working with UKPHR in a voluntary capacity, sometimes as part of their own professional development. They undergo comprehensive training in assessment procedures to ensure that they operate within the Nolan principles<sup>1</sup> and undertake each assessment as objectively and impartially as possible.

**3.6** The work of UKPHR is overseen by a Board appointed by, and accountable to, the Company Directors. Its Committees offer their services on an unpaid voluntary basis. Day-to-day responsibility for delivering the strategy and objectives of UKPHR rests with the Chief Executive supported by a small staff group. These are the only paid employees of UKPHR.

**3.7** This equality and diversity policy applies to the organisation as a whole and all those associated with UKPHR, whether paid or acting in a voluntary capacity, and the execution of its key functions.

#### **4.0 *Legislative Framework for Equality and Diversity***

UKHPR wholly endorses both the moral and the business case for promoting equal opportunities and eliminating discrimination, as well as for ensuring that it operates in a fair and transparent manner with staff, associates and all other stakeholders. It actively seeks to ensure best practice in the area of equality and diversity as well as compliance with legal requirements. The legislation which underpins this policy is set out below.

##### **4.1 *The Equality Act 2010***

The Equality Act came into force on 1 October 2010. It brought together over 116 separate pieces of legislation into one Act. Combined, they provide a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. Appendix 1 sets out the legislation which the Act replaces.

##### **4.2 *Protected characteristics***

The Act covers nine protected characteristics (details included in Appendix 2) on the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment - the process of transitioning from one gender to another
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy
- Race, referring to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality including citizenship, ethnic or

- national origins
- Religion or belief (including lack of belief)
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

**4.3** Although UKPHR needs to be mindful of all of these protected characteristics, some of the factors such as age, disability, sex, race and gender are likely to be more immediately relevant to the work of UKPHR.

#### **4.4 *Other relevant sections of the Act***

There are some specific sections of the 2010 Act that apply to the work of UKPHR. Access to a professional body is covered by section 57, which makes special reference to the behaviour expected of a 'trade organisation'. A trade organisation includes an organisation of workers whose members carry out a particular trade or profession. Section 57 makes it unlawful for a trade organisation to discriminate against, harass or victimise a person who is, or is applying to be, a member.

Section 53 applies to 'Qualification bodies' and makes it unlawful for a qualifications body to discriminate against, harass or victimise a person when conferring relevant qualifications (which includes renewing or extending a relevant qualification). Section 54 explains the meaning of various terms used in section 53. In particular, it defines a qualifications body as a body which can confer any academic, medical, technical or other standard which is required to carry out a particular trade or profession, or which better enables a person to do so by, for example, determining whether the person has a particular level of competence or ability.

#### **4.5 *Public Sector Equality Duty***

On 6 April 2011 a new Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) came into force under the authority of the 2010 Act.

##### *General Equality Duty*

The general single equality duty requires public bodies, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share or have different protected characteristics.

The duty explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

### *Specific Public Sector Equality Duties*

The Equality Act (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 came into force on 10 September 2011. These set out the specific public sector equality duties that certain public bodies must comply with. The aim of the specific duties is to help public bodies comply with the general duty to promote equality in the workplace contained in the Equality Act 2010, which has been in force since 5 April 2011.

## **5.0 Equality and Diversity Policy and Objectives**

### **5.1 Some definitions**

**Equality** is about creating a fairer society/organisation where everyone can participate and has the same opportunity to fulfil their potential and make their fullest contribution.

**Diversity** is about recognising that everyone is different in a variety of visible and non-visible ways. It is about creating a culture and practices that recognise, respect and value difference. It is about harnessing this potential to create a productive environment for those within the organisation and those with whom the organisation comes into contact.

**5.2** UKPHR has well established policies and practices to ensure fairness and objectivity in the actions of those involved in the discharge of its functions, not least its commitment and adherence to the Nolan principles. The following equality and diversity policy and its constituent objectives complement and underpin the existing UKPHR commitment to objectivity and transparency in all its work.

### **5.3 Overarching Policy**

**It is the policy of UKPHR to be proactive in the pursuit of equality and diversity across the whole range of its organization and functions, and to aspire to become an exemplar of fairness and transparency to those with protected characteristics and those without. UKPHR recognises that 'Equality and Diversity' is not an 'initiative'**

**or a 'project'; it is an ongoing core aim and a core process.**

#### **5.4 *Specific Policy Objectives***

**5.4.1** UKPHR's commitment to equality of opportunity is not just about staff and employment: it affects every aspect of UKPHR activity and the way in which it runs its business.

**5.4.2** UKPHR is committed to policies that will promote equal opportunities in all aspects of its employment and business, covering all the protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010 and its accompanying regulations.

**5.4.3** The aim is to ensure that no job applicants, employees, applicants for registration, Board and committee members, assessors, moderators, advisors or visitors receive less favourable treatment or are disadvantaged by conditions or requirements which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

**5.4.4** The recruitment and selection of all those carrying out the functions of UKPHR, including the Board and its Committees, Assessors, and the Registration Panel, Fitness to Practise Panel etc., will follow best practice in ensuring the elimination of discrimination.

**5.4.5** UKPHR is committed to providing a working and business environment which upholds the rights and dignity of all those who work for it and/or have business relationships with it, and which is free from discrimination, prejudice, intimidation and all forms of harassment including bullying.

**5.4.6** UKPHR will ensure that information required from applicants for initial registration on any UKPHR register, for renewal of registration or for other regulatory purposes, does not disadvantage anyone, whilst safeguarding the integrity of the register/s.

**5.4.7** UKPHR is committed to a programme of action to ensure that this policy is implemented and monitored at an organisational and individual level.

#### **5.5 *Policy Review***

This policy is intended to accord with current legislation and will be regularly reviewed and updated as necessary.

## **6.0 Action Plan: Implementing the Equality and Diversity Policy**

There are three main strands in ensuring that UKPHR implements this policy systematically and achieves exemplar status in its adherence to the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010. These three strands are

- Equality Analysis
- Training and
- Monitoring.

The key tasks against each strand are identified in the following sections.

### **6.1 Equality Analysis**

UKPHR will regularly review all of its policies and key documents to ensure that they accord with this policy, and appropriate amendments will be made wherever appropriate. This review will include the information requirements from those applying for registration; the guidelines issued to those assessing submitted portfolios; the criteria for assessing portfolios; and communications with actual and potential applicants.

### **6.2 Training**

**6.2.1** UKPHR will ensure that all employees and everyone associated with it, whether they be members of its Board and Committees, Assessors or advisors, are fully trained to carry out their tasks in accordance with the law and with best practice in ensuring transparency and equality of opportunity.

**6.2.2** Given that most of those working on behalf of UKPHR are essentially working in an unpaid voluntary capacity, UKPHR needs to provide training itself in equality and diversity; or be assured that they have received training elsewhere which incorporates the latest changes in the law as well as best practice in delivering equality and diversity). In any event, UKPHR will remain accountable for the behaviours and actions of all its employees and associates who carry out its functions.

### **6.3 Monitoring**

**6.3.1** The Board of UKPHR will require regular assurance that the organisation is operating within the law and in accordance with best practice in delivering equality and diversity. This will be achieved by regular reports to the Board on performance against agreed indicators.

**6.3.2** Analysis is of how people from different ethnicities, or from any of the protected groups, progress through the registration process is crucial. It will enable the Board to determine whether the outcomes

sought through implementing this policy are being achieved, and whether action needs to be taken to change policies, procedures and behaviours to achieve more equitable outcomes.

**6.3.3** Equally, information will need to be collected on the protected characteristics of Assessors and other associates, including on how and why they are appointed to these roles within UKPHR. Even though these are unpaid roles, all recruitment, selection and appointment processes of UKPHR need to demonstrate transparency and best practice in offering equal opportunity to all, whether they have protected characteristics or not.

## Footnote<sup>1</sup>

### **The Seven Principles of Public Life**

#### **Selflessness**

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

#### **Integrity**

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

#### **Objectivity**

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

#### **Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

#### **Openness**

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

#### **Honesty**

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

#### **Leadership**

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Protected characteristics: definitions**

Throughout the guidance you will see reference to 'protected characteristics'. This page gives you more information on each of the nine protected characteristics.

#### **Age**

Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).

#### **Disability**

A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

#### **Gender reassignment**

The process of transitioning from one gender to another.

#### **Marriage and civil partnership**

Marriage is defined as a 'union between a man and a woman'. Same-sex couples can have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters.

#### **Pregnancy and maternity**

Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

#### **Race**

Refers to the protected characteristic of Race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

#### **Religion and belief**

Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

#### **Sex**

A man or a woman.

#### **Sexual orientation**

Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.