Competency Frameworks in Public Health

All you need in one place

- This infographic outlines 14 frameworks relevant to public health
- The frameworks provide a structure that set out the knowledge and skills required in a particular public health role or area
- Some frameworks may be more relevant than others to you and this document will help you find the right one for you
- Once you have found the most relevant framework, you can use it to self-assess yourself against. This will help you find the areas you are doing well in and the areas you may seek further training or development in
- If you are a manager, you might consider using a framework, such as the Public Health Skills and Knowledge Framework, to help carry out a skills-audit for your team
- We welcome your feedback on this document and always looking to improve. Please email your comments to: register@ukphr.org

View Frameworks →
Infographic showing competency frameworks and professional standards in public health including routes to professional registration

- Recognition of Specialist Status: Exceptional Route (Retrospective Portfolio Assessment)
- UKPHR Defined Specialist Registration
- Certificate of Eligibility for Specialist Registration (CESR)
- General Dental Council
- Dental Public Health Specialty Training
- UKPHR Public Health Register
- UKPHR
- Public Health Specialty Training Programme
- Public Health Skills and Knowledge Framework
- Public Health Practitioner Apprenticeship Standard
- UKPHR Public Health Practitioner (PHP) Registration
- Health Promotion Practitioner Register of the IUHPE Health Promotion Accreditation System
- UK Voluntary Register of Nutritionists (UKVRN)
- Standards of Proficiency for Specialist Community Public Health Nurses
- Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH): Environment Health Professional Standards
- Association for Nutrition
- NMC Nursing & Midwifery Council
- Academic Clinical Fellow (ACF) in public health
- National Institute for Health Research
- Chartered Institute of Environmental Health
- IUHPE UIPES www.iuhpe.org
- Relevant for everyone
- More relevant for Specialists
- More relevant for Practitioners
- Understanding the Public Health Workforce
- Click here
The Public Health Workforce

Core Public Health Workforce

Specialist workforce
Public health specialists work at a strategic or senior management level or at a senior level of scientific expertise in public health.
Public health specialists (who may be employed as public health consultants):
- deal with complex public health issues
- either lead or work with senior colleagues on the planning and delivery of policies and programmes ('interventions') that aim to influence the health of groups of people ('populations') at local, regional and national levels
- plan and lead the evaluation of such programmes
- lead on the gathering and interpretation of health data and information
- work with a range of organisations
To be employed as a Public Health Consultant, individuals must have gone through an approved programme of study or a portfolio route AND hold professional registration at public health specialist level with either the General Medical Council (GMC); the General Dental Council (GDC) or the UK Public Health Register (UKPHR) as appropriate.

Practitioner workforce
- Public health practitioners (PHPs) spend a major part, or all, of their time in public health practice. As such, ‘Practitioner’ describes a certain level of practice not a specified job role or type of job
- PHPs work across the full breadth of public health from health improvement and health protection, to health information, community development and nutrition
- Some PHP roles may require professional registration such as Health Visitors and School Nurses. Other PHP roles operate voluntary registration to set and maintain a minimum level of practice such as the Voluntary Register for Public Health Nutritionists
PHPs work with groups and communities as well as with individuals, such as the public health work of health visitors, the health protection work of environmental health officers or community development workers.

Wider workforce
Any individual who is not a specialist or practitioner in public health, but has the opportunity or ability to positively impact health and wellbeing through their (paid or unpaid) work
A range of roles fall into this category e.g. teachers, local business leaders, social workers, transport engineers, housing officers, GPs etc.

Useful Links

- Health Careers: Public Health Consultants and Specialists
- UKPHR - Specialist
- Understanding the wider Public Health Workforce in England
- RSPH - Wider Public Health Workforce

The Public Health Workforce is usually categorised as either the core or wider public health workforce. The core workforce is often broken down into two further categories, specialist and practitioner, to indicate the level they work at.
Practitioner workforce

- Public health practitioners (PHPs) spend a major part, or all, of their time in public health practice. As such, ‘Practitioner’ describes a certain level of practice not a specified job role or type of job.
- PHPs work across the full breadth of public health from health improvement and health protection, to health information, community development and nutrition.
- Some PHP roles may require professional registration such as Health Visitors and School Nurses. Other PHP roles operate voluntary registration to set and maintain a minimum level of practice such as the Voluntary Register for Public Health Nutritionists.

PHPs work with groups and communities as well as with individuals, such as the public health work of health visitors, the health protection work of environmental health officers or community development workers.
Specialist workforce

Public health specialists work at a strategic or senior management level or at a senior level of scientific expertise in public health.

Public health specialists (who may be employed as public health consultants):

• deal with complex public health issues
• either lead or work with senior colleagues on the planning and delivery of policies and programmes ('interventions') that aim to influence the health of groups of people ('populations') at local, regional and national levels
• plan and lead the evaluation of such programmes
• lead on the gathering and interpretation of health data and information
• work with a range of organisations

To be employed as a Public Health Consultant, individuals must have gone through an approved programme of study or a portfolio route AND hold professional registration at public health specialist level with either the General Medical Council (GMC); the General Dental Council (GDC) or the UK Public Health Register (UKPHR) as appropriate.
A UK public health resource, hosted by Public Health England

**WHAT:** First introduced in 2008 and revised in 2016, the UK Public Health Skills and Knowledge Framework (PHSKF) sets out the functional areas in which individuals, teams and organisations operate to deliver on public health outcomes.

**WHO:** The tool can be used by anyone, regardless of their role, level, or employing organisation.

**WHY:** To plan personal development, undertake skills audits, inform job descriptions, and develop curricula for training and education qualifications.

**Useful Links**

The Public Health Skills and Knowledge Framework (PHSKF)
Public Health Practitioner Apprenticeship Standard

An England initiative, partnering education providers and employers, led by Public Health England

WHAT: A trailblazer group is currently developing an apprenticeship standard for public health practitioners (PHPs) at Level 6 (degree)

The expression of interest was approved by the Institute for Apprenticeships in December 2016

WHO: For those considering a career in public health and wish to undertake an approved apprenticeship

WHY: Successful apprentices will have achieved a degree in public health; will meet the national benchmark standards for occupational competence; and, subject to assessment and verification, will be eligible for UKPHR registration

Useful Links

More details about the PHP apprenticeship and the trailblazer group are available by emailing sp-phskf@phe.gov.uk

Institute for Apprenticeships
UKPHR Public Health Practitioner (PHP) Registration

Operated by UK Public Health Register (UKPHR) UK-wide

WHAT: UKPHR public health practitioner standards define a minimum level of knowledge and skill to be held by all practitioners

WHO: People working in a public health role with a level of autonomy to make decisions and who would like to attain professional registration to certify their level of practice

WHY: The standards can be used to assess current competence and highlight any gaps in knowledge, understanding and/or experience. Practitioners have the opportunity to attain professional registration via a portfolio that is assessed and verified

Useful Links
View the UKPHR public health practitioner standards
UKPHR Public Health Practitioner (PHP) Registration
An international standard set by International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE)

WHAT: IUHPE’s Health Promotion Accreditation System (the System) offers a voluntary process of registration of health promotion practitioners and accreditation of health promotion courses that are assessed as meeting specified competency-based criteria

WHO: People who have graduated from an approved course or those who can demonstrate a minimum 2 years’ experience working in the field of health promotion

WHY: To raise standards and provide assurance for individuals operating in health promotion roles across Europe

Useful Links
The UK Public Health Register (UKPHR) is the National Accreditation Organisation for the UK. The criteria for eligibility for practitioners and courses are outlined in the IUHPE Core Competencies and Professional Standards

UKPHR introduction to the Health Promotion Practitioner Register
Standards of Proficiency for Specialist Community Public Health Nurses

Operated by Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)

WHAT: A set of standards of proficiency underpinned by key principles of public health practice

WHO: Students prepared to enter a practice-based profession at a level beyond initial registration as a nurse or midwife
It is recognised a public health nurse may or may not hold a specialty community public health nurse (SCPHN) qualification

WHY: Part of the register for specialist community public health nurses because this form of practice has distinct characteristics that require public protection

Useful Links
Standards of proficiency for specialist community public health nurses
Health Careers: Entry requirements (public health nurse)
UK Voluntary Register of Nutritionists (UKVRN)

Operated by UK Voluntary Register of Nutritionists (UKVRN) UK wide

WHAT: Registered Nutritionists must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of core competencies in nutrition science and their application of this knowledge to their practice

WHO: Individuals can directly apply to register as Registered Associate Nutritionists (ANutr), either after studying an accredited course or as Registered Nutritionists (RNutr) via a portfolio route. Nutritionists may work in public health and also in community, education, research and other health settings.

WHY: In the nutrition industry, registration with UKVRN is seen as a benchmark of quality, science-based nutritional knowledge and skills.

Useful Links: Entry onto the register is an assurance that individuals meet rigorous standards of competence and professionalism.
Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH): Environment Health Professional Standards

Operated by Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) UK wide

**WHAT:** Environmental Health Professional Standards define what is expected of environmental health professionals

**WHO:** Environmental health incorporates professionals working in many sectors and the professional standards will be applicable to a range of people

**WHY:** The standards include commitments, behaviours, skills and technical expertise. The standards are being divided into levels to develop a Professional Standards Framework that will be aligned to different grades of membership and levels along the CIEH professional pathway

**Useful Links**

Environmental Health Professional Standards
Public Health Specialty Training Programme

**Operated by Faculty of Public Health UK wide**

**WHAT:** A route to specialist registration in public health via an approved training programme. You can apply to train in public health as a public health specialty registrar/trainee via the public health specialty training programme. The training programme is a balance of academic training and experience of working in a variety of public health roles. Training usually lasts five years, full-time and includes two exams and a portfolio.

**WHO:** Training is open to those with and without a degree in medicine. The person specification and eligibility criteria can be found on the Health Education England Specialty Training website.

**WHY:** For individuals wishing to train as a public health specialists.

**Useful Links**
- Entry requirements (Public Health Consultant and Specialist)
- Degree in medicine (Careers in medicine)

Details of how to apply are listed on the Faculty of Public Health website and the full curriculum (refreshed in 2015) is available to view here.
An exceptional route to registration as a public health specialist operated by UK Public Health Register (UKPHR) UK wide. This route is closing 31 August 2019

WHAT: A route to specialist registration in public health by submitting a portfolio

WHO: This route to registration is for individuals who have held a senior position in public health (i.e. at consultant level) for three or more years and wish to apply for recognition of their status as a generalist specialist in public health. This route is called Recognition of Specialist Status (RSS) and is an exceptional route

WHY: RRS route is for individuals who can demonstrate the required knowledge and skills and are currently working in a post requiring specialist registration

Useful Links: Those who wish to apply for RSS must seek permission from UKPHR. The procedure for determining requests to proceed by this route can be viewed by clicking here
UKPHR Defined Specialist Registration

A route to registration as a public health specialist operated by UK Public Health Register (UKPHR) UK wide. This route is closing 31 August 2019

WHAT: Defined specialists are required to demonstrate knowledge and competency in a range of areas of public health practice, some of them to a higher level of practice. This differs to the generalist routes as generalist registrants demonstrate every competency and to the same level. A portfolio of evidence is needed to show that individuals meet the defined specialist standards and this is assessed centrally by the UK Public Health Register.

WHO: Experienced individuals in a senior role in a specific area of public health practice can apply for defined specialist registration with UKPHR.

WHY: This route recognises a small group of senior public health professionals that have expertise in particular areas, such as health protection or public health intelligence. They are usually eligible to apply for consultant posts alongside their generalist colleagues.

Useful Links
Further information in the briefing pack and framework and guidance documents.
UK Public Health Register (UKPHR)
Specialist Registration by Portfolio Assessment

A route to registration as a public health specialist commencing September 2018 and operated by UK Public Health Register (UKPHR) UK wide

WHAT: UKPHR is planning on introducing a retrospective portfolio assessment route to be called “Specialist Registration by Portfolio Assessment”. Individuals will be assessed against the learning outcomes in the Public Health Specialty Training Curriculum (2015)

WHO: For those working in a senior public health role who can demonstrate their knowledge and skills at specialist level and wish to apply for registration as a specialist in public health

WHY: Offering an equivalence route to specialist registration for those with substantial experience at this level and the specialty training scheme may not be relevant or appropriate for them

UKPHR’s target is to start receiving portfolios under this route from 01 September 2018 onwards and further information is available here

Useful Links

Specialist Registration by Portfolio Assessment
Certificate of Eligibility for Specialist Registration (CESR)

A route to registration as a medical practitioner at public health specialist level operated by General Medical Council (GMC) UK wide

WHAT: A route for doctors to submit evidence to prove experience, skills and competencies equivalent to those who have successfully completed the public health specialty training route and achieved a certificate of completion of training

WHO: Doctors wishing to gain entry onto the GMC’s specialist register

WHY: Acts as a route to applying for consultant jobs for doctors who have not followed the public health specialty training programme in the United Kingdom

Useful Links
Further information is available here and link to public health guidance

Useful Links: Public Health Specialty Training Programme, Recognition of Specialist Status: Exceptional Route (Retrospective Portfolio Assessment), UKPHR Defined Specialist Registration, Specialist Registration by Portfolio Assessment, Certificate of Eligibility for Specialist Registration (CESR), Academic Clinical Fellow (ACF) in Public Health, Dental Public Health Specialty Training

General Medical Council

UKPHR
Public Health Register
Protecting the public | improving practice
Academic Clinical Fellow (ACF) in Public Health

A training programme in research, education and public health operated by National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) UK wide

WHAT: Academic clinical fellows are part of a programme that includes both training in the specialty of public health and training in being an academic researcher and teacher

WHO: Fellowships are ideally suited to those who have had little formal academic training and are committed to a career in academia

WHY: Build experience and skills as an independent researcher and educator and/or apply for post-doc fellowship or senior lecturer post

Useful Links
Recruitment is through open competition nationally. Find out more about academic clinical fellowships
Dental Public Health Specialty Training

A training programme in dental public health which can lead to entry to the Specialist List for Dental Public Health operated by General Dental Council (GDC) UK wide

WHAT: A training programme for dentists wishing to lead and contribute to a wide range of work streams to improve population oral health and reduce inequalities

WHO: Dentists usually with a strong interest in prevention. A Masters in Public Health or Dental Public Health is normally undertaken as part of the 4 year training pathway. Trainees will usually work in a variety of placements and settings including NHS England, local authorities, other members of the dental profession and academic institutions

WHY: Successful completion of training leads to award of the Certificate of Completion of Specialist Training (CCST) which enables entry to the GDC’s Specialist List for Dental Public Health and eligibility to apply for Dental Public Health Consultant posts and other senior roles

Useful Links

4 year training pathway
Specialty Training Curriculum in Dental Public Health
British Association of Community Dentistry (BASCD)
Useful Links

Public Health Skills and Knowledge Framework

The Public Health Skills and Knowledge Framework (PHSKF)

Public Health Practitioner Apprenticeship Standard

More details about the PHP apprenticeship and the trailblazer group are available by emailing sp.phskf@phe.gov.uk

Institute for Apprenticeships

UKPHR Public Health Practitioner (PHP) Registration

View the UKPHR public health practitioner standards

UKPHR Public Health Practitioner (PHP) Registration

Health Promotion Practitioner Register of the IUHPE

Health Promotion Accreditation System

The criteria for eligibility for practitioners and courses are outlined in the IUHPE Core Competencies and Professional Standards

UKPHR introduction to the Health Promotion Practitioner Register

Public Health Specialty Training Programme

Entry requirements (public health consultant and specialist)

Degree in medicine (Careers in medicine)

Details of how to apply are listed on the Faculty of Public Health website and the full curriculum (refreshed in 2015) is available to view here

UKPHR Defined Specialist Registration

Further information in the briefing pack and framework and guidance documents

UK Public Health Register (UKPHR)

Specialist Registration by Portfolio Assessment

UKPHR's target is to start receiving portfolios under this route from 01 September 2018 onwards and further information is available here

Specialist registration by portfolio assessment

Academic Clinical Fellow (ACF) in Public Health

Recruitment is through open competition nationally. Find out more about academic clinical fellowships

Dental Public Health Specialty Training

4 year training pathway

Specialty Training Curriculum in Dental Public Health

British Association of Community Dentistry (BASCD)

General Dental Council

Health Careers: Public health practitioner

Health Careers: Public Health Consultants and Specialists

UKPHR - Specialist

Understanding the wider public health workforce in England

RSPH - Wider Public Health Workforce

Disclaimer: The information contained is intended for the personal use. The information may be changed at any time. The information was accurate at the time of publishing. UKPHR does not warrant or guarantee the accuracy or completeness of any information after the document was published. In no circumstances, shall UKPHR be liable for any losses or damage whatsoever that anyone may suffer as a result of relying on such information. A short review of the document is planned in January 2019 and we welcome your feedback to influence the review.