Introduction

Welcome to the second in a series of bi-monthly updates for partners and stakeholders on public health reform. This edition focuses on progress in establishing a new public health body for Scotland and next steps; the development of a new website for the reform programme; and updates from the programme board.

This update also covers progress in agreeing public health priorities for Scotland and includes a look at our work over the coming months to maintain momentum on reform, particularly in the context of strengthening our work on developing a whole system approach.

Public Health Scotland

The Health and Social Care Delivery Plan set out the Scottish Government and COSLAs commitment to establish a national body to strengthen national leadership, visibility and provide critical mass to public health in Scotland.

The reform programme can confirm that this new public health body will be known as Public Health Scotland. This name reflects the value of ‘Public Health’ as a widely understood, distinct and established professional discipline, and it reflects the approach of most other national public health bodies around the world.

Agreeing on the name Public Health Scotland will support our communication activity moving forward, as we build on progress in developing Scotland’s public health priorities and consider the role and contribution of the new body in the context of supporting collaboration across the whole system of partners and communities to improve the public’s health.

Although agreeing a name is important, work will continue to be progressed through the recently established Programme Board to create a public health body that supports and enables the systemic change we aspire to. A further update will be provided in the reform programmes July update.

Public health reform on the web

Public health reform is now on the web. The new programme website sets out the vision for reform and our ambitions for the public’s health.

As the programme develops, information and resources on Public Health Scotland, Scotland’s public health priorities and the work to develop a more joined-up, whole system approach will be available online.

The website also provides access to minutes and papers from the Oversight Board and Programme Board. Papers will be available to view and download. Visit www.publichealthreform.scot for further information and to find out more about the reform programme.
Programme Board update

Since the March update, the reform Programme Board has been established to oversee and authorise the key tasks and activities required to create the future state for public health – in terms of the new body and the wider system. The Programme Board membership includes partners from public health, local government, health and social care, community planning and the third sector as well as staff side representation.

The Programme Board has agreed the vision for the overall public health reform programme “a Scotland where everybody thrives”; noted progress with commissions previously issued; and approved the next suite of commissions to inform the development of Public Health Scotland. The programme board papers on all the agreed commissions can be found on the reform programme website.

Developing the public health workforce

The programme team will be developing a number of commissions to support work to develop a public health workforce for the future.

At the Programme Board meeting in April, the first of a series of commissions relating to workforce was approved. This commission will focus on establishing the workforce of the new body and will be led by National Services Scotland and NHS Health Scotland as the two main organisations whose staff will join Public Health Scotland. They will be supported by National Education Scotland.

The work of this commission will be an important step in building the new body. It will provide staff and stakeholders with an opportunity to work together in creating the culture and values to deliver our ambitions for reform. You can keep up to date on this and future commissions on the programme website.

Supporting commissions

As work on commission’s progresses, the Programme Team will work closely with the respective leads to provide support and to help co-ordinate activity across all the commissions. This will include stakeholder engagement.

In the first instance the Programme Team will review each commission proposal to ensure there is a robust process to engage stakeholders and staff.

Once the proposals have been reviewed, the Programme Team will work with partners to identify and co-ordinate input, for example local government, third sector, community planning and health and social care partnerships.

Over and above direct involvement in commissions, where there are opportunities for close collaboration across commissions to engage stakeholders more widely, the Programme Team will work with respective leads to support a co-ordinated approach where possible.

Whole system working

This whole system approach is a key principle underpinning the reform programme. We will only succeed if we see a genuine transformation across the wider public sector and beyond.

Although the commissions to date have been focused on creating the building blocks for the new public health body, it is important that in taking forward each commission, we actively consider how Public Health Scotland will support and enable the wider system.

Good quality engagement is an important element of this approach. In supporting the commissions, the reform team’s focus will be on ensuring that we engage meaningfully and retain a focus on the whole system.
Scotland’s public health priorities

The Programme Team has made significant progress on developing public health priorities for Scotland. Both the Oversight and Programme Boards have endorsed the emerging priority themes.

- Place and community
- Early years
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Harmful substances (including tobacco, alcohol and other drugs)
- Poverty & Inequality
- Diet and physical activity

Subject to COSLA and Scottish Government approval, Scotland’s public health priorities will be published in June 2018.

These will be priorities for the whole system and reflect where we need to make the greatest progress if we are to improve the health of the population and tackle health inequalities.

The thematic priorities are not intended to reflect all of the activities of public health professionals and many key activities which are not explicitly reflected in the emerging themes outlined above. These essential activities will continue and be reflected in the activities of Public Health Scotland.

Over the coming months the focus will be on building momentum and support for closer collaboration on the priorities across the whole system of partners and organisations.

Next steps for Scotland’s public health priorities

Scotland’s public health priorities represent for the first time, an agreement between national and local government on the most important things we need to focus on to improve the public’s health.

The priorities have been developed in partnership and the reform programmes intent is to build on this collaboration to strengthen support for Scotland’s priorities.

This will include working with communities and community planning, recognising their important role in creating health and the conditions for wellbeing.

This is why, over the coming weeks and months the reform programme will continue to invite and encourage public sector, third sector and private sector organisations to join us in our work.

A first step in this will be inviting a wide range of interests to endorse the priorities and to state their support for collective action for the public’s health.

You can help build momentum and commitment to improve the public’s health by endorsing and supporting the priorities and by sharing with the Programme Team innovative examples where partners are working together in different ways.

Information on how to endorse and support Scotland’s public health priorities will be published on the reform website in June 2018.

Next time…

The next update will be published in July 2018 and detail progress in establishing Public Health Scotland, the programme board and next steps in implementing Scotland’s public health priorities.

Visit publichealthreform.scot; follow us @phrscot or email publichealthreform@gov.scot