Public Health Reform Programme
Specialist public health workforce

Deliverable 1

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Deliverable 1: Documentation outlining key questions and answers

Why is public health reform happening?

Despite improvement over time, average life expectancy in Scotland remains significantly lower than in other countries of the UK and the rest of Western Europe. There are also marked differences between the most and least deprived areas of Scotland. An increased, coordinated effort is needed in order to achieve greater improvements in the health of the population in Scotland.

To improve the public’s health and the long term sustainability of Scotland’s public services, Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) have committed to a reform programme bringing together partners from across public health, the public, private and third sectors.

The Health and Social Care Delivery Plan set out the actions Scottish Government and COSLA will lead through the reform programme to deliver the recommendations from the Public Health Review.

Why is public health reform looking at the specialist workforce?

The Public Health Review made recommendations to strengthen leadership for the public’s health and refocus the public health function in Scotland. It recognised the important contribution of the specialist workforce in supporting this ambition and providing the national and local leadership to enable change to improve population health.

Who is part of the specialist workforce?

A key objective of the commission is to scope and define the specialist public health workforce, and will build on the work undertaken as part of the Public Health Review which defined the core public health workforce as “All staff engaged in public health activities that identify public health as being the primary part of their role”.

Is this just about the local specialist workforce in territorial health boards?

No, this will include the specialist workforce as defined by the commission and include those working in specialist public health roles in local and national boards as well as other sectors including local government.

Do you already have a preferred model in mind?

No, the commission has been tasked with reviewing the evidence and experience from other models. The commission will then make a recommendation on how best the specialist workforce functions can be delivered based on evidence and stakeholder involvement, whilst remaining consistent with the reform programmes ambitions for effective leadership and a strong focus on partnership.
Have any options been ruled out?

No, as outlined above, the commission has been tasked with reviewing the evidence and experience from other models, this work has not commenced and no models have been considered. This will be done collaboratively based on evidence and stakeholder involvement.

What will happen with the recommendations of the group?

The recommendations from the group will be considered by the Public Health Reform programme board and other stakeholders. Once the programme board has considered the recommendations further work will be required with stakeholders to take forward any recommendations.

When does Public Health Scotland come into being?

Our intent is for Public Health Scotland to be established as a legal entity by April 2019. Public Health Scotland will become operational and begin to exercise its functions no later than the 1st December 2019.

When will staff from the existing national agencies transfer to the new organisation?

Our intent is for Public Health Scotland to be established as a legal entity by April 2019. Once this has been established, detailed planning will be undertaken to have staff in place for Public Health Scotland to be operational and begin to exercise its functions no later than the 1st December 2019. As the process and details are developed we will provide regular updates.

Will the commission look at terms and conditions?

No, this isn't in the scope of the commission. Once the commission has made recommendations, it will be for partners working with the reform programme to consider any potential implications moving forward.

Will the commission consider registration requirements?

No, this isn’t in the scope of the commission. Once the commission has made recommendations, it will be for partners working with the reform programme to consider any potential implications moving forward.