

Public health reform

Specialist Public Health Workforce

Commission

Briefing

December 2018



Introduction

The establishment of a new public health body – Public Health Scotland, shared public health priorities and a commitment to strengthening and supporting a genuinely collaborative, whole system approach to improving health is the foundation of the reform programme.

None of this will be achievable without the contribution of the specialist public health workforce in Scotland. This workforce is diverse and includes staff located in public health departments in local NHS boards and Health and Social Care Partnerships, Environmental Health staff in Local Government and staff based in national NHS boards – many of whom will form the core of Public Health Scotland.

The reform programme presents an important opportunity to consider how the specialist public health workforce – nationally and locally – can best be organised and supported to deliver our reform ambitions.

Specialist Public Health Workforce Commission

The Specialist Public Health Workforce Commission's remit is to consider how the specialist public health workforce should be best organised in Scotland to most effectively meet the needs of national, regional and local partners, and to deliver the most effective and efficient public health function for Scotland going forward (the full terms of reference for the commission can be accessed [here](#)). The commission has also developed a question and answer document which can be accessed [here](#).

Our approach

As co-chairs we are committed to engaging widely across the range of functions and specialities and creating a genuinely collaborative and engaging process. The first step has been to establish an expert advisory group – drawing on expertise and insight from across the whole system – to co-produce options for the reform programme board to consider.

The first meeting of this expert advisory group took place on the 10th and 11th December. The expert advisory group developed a number of options spanning national, regional and local arrangement to support an effective, efficient and resilient public health workforce.

Each option was reviewed in relation to their relative strengths and weaknesses, however, there was no preference or single model emerging from the process. Each of the models had significant strengths and indeed complemented each other. What emerged were areas of common ground to build on and inform the development of future options; this included:

- Effective collaboration across the whole system with a clear focus on achieving greater gains in population health
- Celebrating success and strengthening existing effective arrangements
- Supporting effective and visible public health leadership nationally and locally
- Working with and involving communities in decision making
- Ensuring a strong focus on local delivery where most effective
- Decision making at the appropriate level

A full report from the expert advisory group session will be made available to the group and on the reform website (www.publichealthreform.scot) in January 2019.

Next Steps

The Expert Advisory Group agreed to further develop each option in sufficient detail to enable a framework for further engagement with the specialist workforce and wider stakeholders in January 2019. More details to follow.

This will inform an assessment and evaluation of different options and emerging models when the Expert Advisory Group meets again in February 2019. The input from the group and wider stakeholders will inform the report for the programme board in March 2019.

The work of the commission is an important opportunity to develop a strong resilient public health function in Scotland and realise our ambitions for the workforce to play a strong leadership role as part of a whole system approach to protecting and improving health.

As co-chairs we are ambitious in what we are trying to achieve. Our commitment is to work collaboratively, build on the key strengths that exist already and ensure we communicate effectively on progress, creating opportunities for the workforce and wider stakeholders to engage in the process as we move forward.

We look forward to working together over the coming weeks and months to support our collective ambition to improve the health and wellbeing of our communities and creating a framework to deliver an effective, efficient and resilient public health workforce for the future.

Audrey Sutton

Head of Connected Communities, North Ayrshire Council

Co-Chair, Specialist Public Health Workforce Commission

Dona Milne

Director of Public Health, NHS Fife

Co-Chair, Specialist Public Health Workforce Commission