

Public health reform

Specialist Public Health Workforce Commission

Questions and Answers

February 2019



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.

The commission has agreed a set of shared assumptions that will guide our work, these are:

- The status quo has not been successful in delivering the level of improvements that we want - therefore some form of change is inevitable
- There is a need to strengthen partnership working across the public and third sectors - therefore this needs to be a priority within any option developed
- The need for increased public health leadership stated clearly by the Scottish Government - all options need to consider how this can be strengthened
- Organisational change is disruptive - therefore significant organisational change will only take place where there are clear gains to public health in Scotland

Who is part of the specialist workforce?

A key objective of the commission is to scope and define the specialist public health workforce, building 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". The Specialist Expert Advisory Group developed this to consider the core workforce and those specialist roles that require registration with a professional body. For the purposes of the commission, this includes:

- Staff in public health departments
- Environmental health staff in local authorities

- Staff in health promotion/ improvement departments
- Staff in new public health body - Public Health Scotland
- Staff working in surveillance and health intelligence

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

No, this will include the core and specialist workforce as defined by the commission and include the core public health workforce and specialist public health workforce working in local and national boards, health and social care partnerships 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. A Specialist Expert Advisory Group has been established to support the commission develop different options that are efficient, effective, resilient support public health leadership and consider ease of implementation.

The commission will develop the options for the programme board to consider how best the specialist workforce functions can be delivered based on evidence and stakeholder involvement, 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. A Specialist Expert Advisory Group has been established to support the commission develop different options. The options developed will be subject to further engagement and review. 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 the summer 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?

Public Health Scotland will be established as a legal entity by in the summer of 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 developed options, it will be for the programme board to consider and determine next steps to progress any option.

Will the commission consider registration requirements?

No, this isn't in the scope of the commission. Once the commission has developed options, it will be for the programme board to consider and determine next steps to progress any option.