

# FAQs about careers in public health

This page has some frequently asked questions about careers in public health.

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## What is public health?

Very briefly, public health is about helping people to stay healthy and protecting them from threats to their health. Find out more about public health <sup>[1]</sup>.

## How do I get into a career in public health?

Public health is a very large field and the breadth of core public health roles <sup>[2]</sup> includes:

- health visitors <sup>[3]</sup>, school nurses <sup>[4]</sup> and public health nurses <sup>[5]</sup>
- environmental health professionals <sup>[6]</sup>
- public health practitioners <sup>[7]</sup>
- knowledge and intelligence professionals <sup>[8]</sup>
- academics <sup>[9]</sup>
- managers <sup>[10]</sup>, directors <sup>[11]</sup>, and consultants and specialists <sup>[12]</sup>

There are also many more roles within the wider public health workforce <sup>[2]</sup> which may also interest you.

So it depends on which role you're interested in, as to how you might enter and train. Discover more about whether a career in public health is for you <sup>[13]</sup>; you might also find it helpful to take a look at our career planning section <sup>[14]</sup>.

## **Where will I work if I'm working in a public health career?**

Opportunities exist in within national government, local government, the NHS, higher education institutions, the armed services as well as the voluntary and community (or third) sector too.

## **Are there any apprenticeships available in public health?**

A level 6 (degree level) apprenticeship in public health is available in some areas. Other apprenticeships can be relevant to developing a career in public health, so visit our apprenticeships page <sup>[15]</sup> for further information.

## **How do I get a degree in public health?**

Entry requirements and specific content for public health degrees differ greatly depending on the studying institution. It's important therefore to check with institutions prior to making an application. To view a list of example areas of study relevant to public health and where to find out more, please visit the complete university guide website <sup>[16]</sup>.

## **What qualifications or experience do I need to be a health trainer?**

Each post will have slightly different requirements so it's important to check the person specification for the role you'd like to apply to. You can find more information on our role page about health trainers <sup>[17]</sup>.

## **Can I use my qualification in sports and fitness in a public health career?**

A qualification in sports science or fitness will not qualify you for any particular role within public health but there may be many roles where it could be advantageous (for example in some public health practitioner roles <sup>[7]</sup>, in academic <sup>[9]</sup> or knowledge and intelligence roles <sup>[8]</sup> and many more roles within the wider public health workforce <sup>[2]</sup>). You'll need to check the requirements of the person specification when applying for vacancies to guide you as to what qualifications, skills and experience are required.

## **I already have a Master's in Public Health, what are my next steps?**

Depending on the area you're most interested in, there may be a variety of options open to you. Take a look at some of our public health roles to find out more <sup>[18]</sup>. You'll need to check the training requirements in the person specification when applying for vacancies as this will tell you what skills, qualifications and experience are required or preferred. Experience is very likely to be needed in addition to qualifications, so you may wish to look out for relevant work experience or volunteering opportunities.

## **What is the public health specialty training programme?**

Specialty training in public health equips those who successfully completed the training programme to apply for a role as a public health consultant or other senior-level roles. You can apply for specialty training in public health with or without a degree in medicine. More

detailed information can be found on our public health consultants and specialists page [19].

## How do I train to be a health visitor?

In order to train as a health visitor, you must first qualify and register as a nurse or midwife. You will then need to take an approved programme in Specialist Community Public Health Nursing or Health Visiting (SCPHN or HV). You can find out more about training as a health visitor on our health visitor page [3].

## How do I find out more about careers in environmental health?

You can search for courses which lead to professional registration in environmental health on our course finder [20]. You can also find out more about careers in environmental health in our explore roles section [6] and also from the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health [21] ([CIEH](http://www.cieh.org/) [22]).

## Where can I find more information about careers in public health?

You can find more information about careers in public health by visiting our explore roles section [18].

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**Source URL:** <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/public-health/faqs-public-health>

### Links

- [1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/careers-public-health/what-public-health>
- [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/careers-public-health/public-health-workforce-explained>
- [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/public-health/health-visitor>
- [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/public-health/school-nurse>
- [5] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/public-health/public-health-nurse>
- [6] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/public-health/environmental-health-professional>
- [7] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/public-health/public-health-practitioner>
- [8] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/public-health/public-health-knowledge-and-intelligence-professional>
- [9] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/public-health/public-health-academic>
- [10] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/public-health/public-health-manager>
- [11] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/public-health/director-public-health>
- [12] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/public-health/public-health-consultants-and-specialists>
- [13] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/careers-public-health/why-work-public-health/public-health-career-you>
- [14] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/career-planning>
- [15] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/secondary-school-or-fe-college/apprenticeships-traineeships-and-cadet-schemes>
- [16] <http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/courses/options/public-health/>
- [17] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/public-health/health-trainer>
- [18] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/public-health>
- [19] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/public-health/public-health-consultants-and-specialists/entry-requirements-public>
- [20] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/looking-course>
- [21] <http://www.cieh.org/>
- [22] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#CIEH>