

Public health regulation, registration and membership

Regulation, registration and professional body membership are all important in ensuring that public health professionals are appropriately trained, competent and fit to practise.



Statutory regulation

Some public health professionals are subject to statutory regulation. Examples include:

- public health specialists (including consultants and directors of public health) with a medical or dentistry background
- public health nurses, school nurses and midwives
- health visitors
- some public health scientists

Details of the statutory regulators for these roles will be found on the training and development page of the relevant role

[1].

Read more about the twelve UK health and social care statutory regulators on the GMC website [2].

Registration

Many other public health professionals are not covered by statutory regulation. Nevertheless, it is important that they can demonstrate that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out the job both now and in the future. This can be achieved through registration.

For instance, entry on the UK Public Health Register (UKPHR [3]) is essential for public health specialists from backgrounds other than medicine and with a dentistry background; and to become an environmental health practitioner, it is necessary to register with the Environmental Health Registration Board (EHRB [4]).

The standards that bodies such as UKPHR and EHRB set for entry onto their register and for maintaining registered status provide assurance to employers and commissioners - it is evidence of competence.

Increasingly, job descriptions for public health practitioners indicate that practitioner registration with the UKPHR [5] is essential or desirable. Commissioners of public health services may also take the registration status of practitioners into account.

Registrants may need to pass an exam or submit for assessment a portfolio evidencing their knowledge, skills and experience. Those admitted to the register are expected to maintain and renew their registration in order to ensure their standards of practice are kept up to date. This may be supported with ongoing continuing professional development (CPD) between each renewal as well as professional appraisals. Employers increasingly look for registration as evidence both of competence on appointment and of competence being maintained through CPD and revalidation.

The prime purpose of registration is to protect the public and give confidence that the public health workforce is appropriately trained, competent and fit to practise. Therefore, the UKPHR and EHRB registers are open to inspection by the public.

Individual registrants benefit from registration because it represents objective evidence that they attained appropriate standards to competence. Registration brings recognition and status, providing identified membership of the public health workforce, and stimulus and support for maintaining competence through constant updating of knowledge, skills and experience. Increasingly, it aids the mapping of future career paths.

Professional body membership

Membership of a professional body is voluntary and complements, but is not a substitute for either regulation or registration. It is likely to provide support for continuing professional development (CPD) and the opportunity to engage with a wide network of other public health professionals.

Public health professionals can apply to become members of the Faculty of Public Health (FPH) through various routes depending on their level of training, experience or contribution to the field of public health. The FPH has an international membership network of more than 4,000 public health specialists and professionals.

Find out more about classes of membership in FPH [6].

Environmental health professionals can apply to become members of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH [7]). Please note the CIEH [7] is set to discontinue its register in April 2020.

Find out more about membership of CIEH. [8]

Nurses and midwives can apply to become members of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN).

Find out more about membership of the RCN [9].

Partner logos



Source URL: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/working-health/working-public-health/public-health-regulation-registration-and-membership>

Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/public-health/roles-public-health>

[2] http://www.gmc-uk.org/about/UK_health_and_social_care_regulators.asp

[3] <https://www.ukphr.org/>

[4] <http://www.ehrb.co.uk/>

[5] <http://www.ukphr.org/i-want-to-apply-for-registration/practitioner/>

[6] http://www.fph.org.uk/classes_of_membership

[7] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#CIEH>

[8] <http://www.cieh.org/members.html>

[9] <https://www.rcn.org.uk/membership>

[10] <http://www.fph.org.uk/>