

Public health consultants and specialists

Public health specialists come from a wide range of backgrounds, including medical. Public health consultants are public health specialists who hold a post as a consultant.

Overview

Public health specialists and consultants are strategists or senior managers or senior scientists. They require skills in all three main 'domains' of public health [1] (health protection, health improvement, healthcare public health), but in practice they may specialise in one area.



[Download transcript \[2\]](#)

Working life

As a public health specialist or consultant, you'll:

Public health specialists and consultants are strategists or senior managers or senior scientists.

- deal with complex public health issues
- either lead, or work with senior colleagues on the planning and delivery of policies and programmes (?interventions?) that aim to influence the health of groups of people (?populations?) at local, regional and national levels
- plan and lead the evaluation of such programmes
- provide professional, evidence-based, and ethical advice to guide the commissioning of services, ensuring that they are high-quality, clinically safe, cost-effective, and that they will improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities across primary care, secondary care, and social care
- lead on the gathering and interpretation of information
- work with a range of organisations

You are also likely to be responsible for departmental budgets, daily management of staff, supervision (eg of public health specialty registrars), delivery of core training, and the commissioning of research projects.

Where will you work?

As a public health specialist or consultant you will generally be employed primarily within local authorities and Public Health England [3](PHE), with some in universities, the NHS, Defence Medical Services [4], and in?voluntary organisations [5].

Public health consultant roles

The following are examples of the variety of public health consultant roles available.

Consultant in dental public health

Consultants in dental public health provide leadership to improve oral health in their locality. They do this by offering expert input into a range of dental public health programmes and by supporting colleagues in the development of dental services and related services, such as nutrition and food. They lead the development and implementation of policies and strategies relating to services in their locality.

As a consultant in dental public health, you'll:

- foster and lead work across internal and external teams to ensure an integrated approach to programmes of health improvement
- develop and use information and intelligence systems to determine the most appropriate and cost-effective public health interventions
- ensure that key dental public health targets and strategic objectives are met
- (if in a local authority) support the director of public health with respect to any dental issues contained in the director?s annual report.

Consultants in dental public health must be fully registered with the UK?s General Dental Council [6] (GDC), be on the GDC Specialist list for Dental Public Health, and will have a Master?s qualification in Dental Public Health or equivalent.

Consultant epidemiologist

Consultant epidemiologists provide strategic leadership in the surveillance of infectious diseases and environmental hazards, and they support the development, maintenance and evaluation of surveillance systems. They lead projects to investigate outbreaks of disease, the most effective approaches to dealing with outbreaks, and the relative cost effectiveness of different interventions. This requires them to analyse and evaluate data and research evidence from a wide range of sources to make recommendations and inform decision-making.

As a consultant epidemiologist, other aspects of your work are likely to involve:

- developing priorities, policies and guidelines for the surveillance, prevention and control of communicable diseases
- preparing plans for the control of communicable diseases
- supporting the local response to outbreaks by providing field epidemiology assistance
- leading the evaluation and quality assurance of epidemiology services, regularly reviewing the management of outbreaks and incidents of communicable diseases
- providing advice and support to other public health staff and organisations, including directors of public health, the government, and local authorities on health protection issues
- promoting professional standards in all aspects of epidemiology, including training, research, and auditing

Want to find out more?

- Find out more about entry requirements for public health consultants and specialists [7]
- Find out more about the skills and interests needed by public health consultants and specialists [8]
- Find out more about training and development for public health consultants and specialists [9]
- Pay and conditions

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Specialty registrars from a professional background other than medicine are subject to Agenda for Change [10] pay scales. See the current rates of pay for those with backgrounds from medicine and those from a professional background other than medicine on our pay and benefits page [11] and on NHS Employers' website [12].

Example salaries:

Consultant in public health/public health medicine: up to £81,618 (Medway Council, 2017)

Consultant in public health/public health medicine: £66,963 (Cheshire East Council, 2017)

Consultant in public health (any background): £69,690 - £76,350pa (North Tyneside Council, 2014)

Consultant in public health, health intelligence division: £75,383- £95,333 (Public Health Wales, 2014)

Consultant in dental public health: £76,001 - £102,465pa (East Dunbartonshire Community Health Partnership, 2014)

- Where the role can lead

Expand / collapse

Public health specialists (specialty registrars) would usually complete their training in order to be able to apply for a consultant post.

Experienced consultants may progress to more senior roles, such as local, regional and strategic director roles in Public Health England [3] or in local authorities.

- Job market and vacancies

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England

A report on the public health workforce (2014) [13] estimated that there are around 1,200 to 1,300 consultants and specialists in active practice plus 250 to 350 registrars working in England. About 52% of all public health consultants and specialists in England work in local authorities.

The profile of the profession is ageing. The average age of Faculty of Public Health membership is 56, which is indicative of the senior public health workforce.

There are concerns over declining numbers of medically qualified public health specialists within local authorities, and over the balance of skills and specialisms required of public health professionals.

In 2016, the competition ratio for CT1 Public Health Medicine was 10.54, and for ST3 Public Health it was 3.00 (NHS specialty training 2016) [14].

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Scotland

The main employers of public health consultants, specialists and specialty registrars in Scotland are local NHS Health Boards, NHS National Services Scotland, and other national NHS Health Boards (NHS Health Scotland and Healthcare Improvement Scotland). A report on the public health workforce in Scotland (2015) [15] estimated that there were at least 189 public health consultants, specialists and specialty registrars in Scotland.

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Northern Ireland

The majority of all public health consultants and specialists in Northern Ireland work in the Public Health Agency [16].

Wales

There are approximately 50 public health consultants working in Wales (medical and non-medical), about 20 registrars and a large number of public health practitioners. The largest proportion of the specialist public health workforce is employed by one NHS Trust, Public Health Wales, which has both local and national teams. Public Health Wales was created in 2009 by merging the National Public Health Service for Wales, Wales Centre for Health, Screening Services and several other

organisations. At the same time, seven new Health Boards were created, responsible within their geographic areas for the planning and delivery of primary care services, community services and hospital services. Each of these Health Boards employs an Executive Director of Public Health, accountable to the Health Board Chief Executive. They are supported by a local Public Health Team, which remains employed by Public Health Wales.

Where to look for job vacancies:

Local government

- Local Government Jobs (UK) [17]
- Scottish Local Government Jobs [18]
- Local Government Jobs in Northern Ireland [19]
- Welsh Local Government Jobs [20] [21]
- Public Sector Jobs in Wales [22]

National government

- Working for PHE [23]
- Universal Jobmatch (Gov.UK) [24]

NHS?

- NHS Jobs [25]
- NHS Scotland Recruitment [26] ?
- NHS Education for Scotland [27]
- Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland [28]
- Public Health Wales (NHS) Recruitment and Employment [29]??
- Royal Society for Public Health [30]

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Recruiting for values

If you're applying for a role either directly in the NHS or in an organisation that provides NHS services, you'll be asked to show how you think the values of the NHS Constitution apply in your everyday work. The same will be true if you are applying for a university course funded by the NHS.

Find out more about NHS values [31]

If you're applying for a job in a local authority, each has its own set of core values underpinning its recruitment exercises, which can usually be found in the recruitment section of its website.

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Job titles

Note that terms such as 'practitioner?', 'manager?', 'specialist?' and 'consultant?' may have different meanings in different job titles. Therefore, they do not necessarily reflect the role category that the job really belongs to. It is important to check the person specification of the role to fully understand the skills and knowledge required.

- Further information

Expand / collapse

- Faculty of Public Health [32]
- Faculty of Public Health job descriptions [33]
- Public Health Register [34]
- General Medical Council [35]
- British Society of Community Dentistry (BASCD) [36]
- General Dental Council ? Specialist Lists [37]

Other roles that may interest you

- Public health knowledge and intelligence professional [38]
- Public health manager [39]
- Dentist [40]
- Director of public health [41]

Partner logos



FACULTY OF
PUBLIC HEALTH

[32]



Government
Association [42]

Source URL: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/public-health/roles-public-health/public-health-consultants-and-specialists>

Links

- [1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/careers-public-health/what-public-health>
- [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/resources/transcript-ann-goodwin>
- [3] <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england>
- [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/careers-public-health/employers-public-health-staff/armed-forces>
- [5] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/careers-public-health/employers-public-health-staff/third-sector>
- [6] <http://www.gdc-uk.org/Pages/default.aspx>
- [7] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/public-health/public-health-consultants-and-specialists/entry-requirements-public>
- [8] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/public-health/public-health-academic/training-and-development-public-health-academic>
- [9] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/public-health/public-health-consultants-and->

specialists/training-and-development

[10] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Agenda_for_Change

[11] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/working-health>

[12] <http://www.nhsemployers.org/your-workforce/pay-and-reward/pay>

[13] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mapping-the-core-public-health-workforce>

[14] <https://specialtytraining.hee.nhs.uk/Competition-Ratios>

[15] <http://www.healthscotland.com/documents/25602.aspx>

[16] <http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/>

[17] <http://www.lgjobs.com/>

[18] <https://www.myjobscotland.gov.uk/home/>

[19] <https://www.localgovernmentjobsni.gov.uk/>

[20] <http://www.wlga.gov.uk/jobs>

[21] <http://www.wlga.gov.uk/jobs/>

[22] <https://uk.jobted.com/?l=wales>

[23] <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england/about/recruitment>

[24] <https://www.gov.uk/jobsearch>

[25] <https://www.jobs.nhs.uk/>

[26] <https://jobs.scot.nhs.uk/>

[27] <http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk/recruitment.aspx>

[28] <http://www.hscni.net/>

[29] <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/888/page/46729>

[30] <http://www.rsph.org.uk/en/resources/jobs/>

[31] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/working-health/nhs-constitution>

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

[33] http://www.fph.org.uk/job_descriptions

[34] <http://www.publichealthregister.org.uk/>

[35] <http://www.gmc-uk.org/>

[36] <http://www.bascd.org/>

[37] <http://www.gdc-uk.org/Dentalprofessionals/Specialistlist/Pages/default.aspx>

[38] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/public-health/roles-public-health/public-health-knowledge-and-intelligence-professional>

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

[40] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/dental-team/roles-dental-team/dentist>

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

[42] <http://www.local.gov.uk/>