

Public health consultants and specialists

Public health specialists and consultants help people and communities maximise their potential for a healthy, happy and productive life, so they can live healthier for longer.

You'll focus on health at a population level, looking at ways to make communities and environments healthier, reducing ill-health and tackling health inequalities.

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[Download transcript](#) ^[3]

Life as a public health specialist and consultant

Public health specialists and consultants are strategists, senior managers or senior scientists in public health. You'll need skills and knowledge in health protection, health improvement and healthcare public health but, in practice, you may specialise in one area.

Public health specialists come from a wide range of backgrounds, and may or may not hold a medical degree.

You could be employed in different sectors, including local government, central government or its executive agencies, the NHS, universities, the defence services, the private sector or the voluntary and social enterprise sector.

Daniel Flecknoe

Specialty registrar in public health

The training programme is fantastic, because as well as giving you the opportunity to experience a lot of different sorts of public health work, you also have a certain freedom to pursue your personal interests, so long as you can demonstrate that you are achieving the required competencies.

[Read Daniel's story](#) ^[4]

As a public health specialist or consultant, you'll work with a range of organisations to:

- deal with complex public health issues
- either lead or work with senior colleagues to plan and deliver 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 [5], secondary care [6], and social care
- lead on gathering and interpreting information

One area you could specialise in is epidemiology [7], leading on projects to tackle outbreaks of disease or environmental hazards. You'll investigate their origins, assess the relative effectiveness and cost of different approaches to tackling them, and make recommendations for action. This type of work is currently very high profile, given the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Your work will have a large management and leadership element, and you'll be responsible for departmental budgets, managing staff, delivering core training and commissioning research projects.

How much can I earn?

As a specialist working at consultant level in the NHS, your salary will be between £105,504 and £139,882.

If you choose specialty training as a route to consultant level, you can expect to earn a salary of at least £49,909 during your training.

How about the benefits?

- making a difference
- flexible and part-time working
- high income early in your career
- working anywhere in the world
- excellent pension scheme
- good holiday entitlement

Must-have skills

- flexibility to cope with multiple and changing demands
- ability to meet tight deadlines
- high level of intellectual rigour
- political awareness, tact and diplomacy
- ability to understand a range of cultures
- ability to work across organisational and geographic boundaries
- ability to advise, challenge and advocate
- negotiation and motivation skills
- ability to influence without having direct authority.

The [Public Health Skills and Knowledge Framework \(PHSKF\)](#) ^[8] describes the functions and activities carried out by people working to protect and promote the public's health across the UK.

Entry requirements

You can become a public health specialist from a wide variety of backgrounds including medicine, dentistry, nursing, research, teaching, science and environmental health.

The specialty training programme is open to non-medical and medical applicants. It usually lasts five years and you may be able to train part-time, for example, for health reasons or due to caring responsibilities. You will need to have one of the following:

- a first degree at 1st or 2:1
- a Master's or PhD
- a degree in medicine or equivalent medical qualification

What are my chances of starting a career in public health?

In 2024, there were 1508 applications for 105 NHS specialty training places.

How to become a public health specialist and consultant

To hold professional registration as a public health specialist, you'll need to go through an approved programme of study or a portfolio route. To be a consultant in public health, you must also hold a professional registration at public health specialist level with either the General Medical Council (GMC), the General Dental Council (GDC) or the UK Public Health Register (UKPHR) as appropriate.

See the [UKPHR](#) ^[9] and [Faculty of Public Health](#) ^[10] websites for more information on specialist registration.

Where a career as a public health specialist and consultant can take you

You could:

- specialise or conduct research in areas such as dental public health, infectious diseases and hazards ([epidemiology](#) ^[7]) or health improvement
- teach public health students or postgraduate students in training
- strategic and leadership positions
- get involved in research at universities, in the NHS or private sector

- **Live NHS vacancies**

You can see the latest NHS public health specialist vacancies below. Non-NHS vacancies are also available on the [Civil Service Careers website](#) ^[11] and on council, private and voluntary sector websites.

Find a vacancy

Enter your location or postcode

Show results within

Search

- **Consultant in Public Health/Consultant in Public Health Medicine**

County hall, OX1 1ND

Salary:

£91615.00 to £103835.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Oxfordshire County Council

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Public Health/Consultant in Public Health Medicine job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[12]

- **Consultant Midwife Public Health**

London, E11 1NR

Salary:

£80025.00 to £91336.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Barts Health NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Midwife Public Health job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[13]

- **Bank Specialist Public Health Dietitian**

CTM WIDE, CF37 4AL

Salary:

£37898.00 to £45637.00

Type:

Bank
Employer:
Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board
[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Bank Specialist Public Health Dietitian job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[14]

- **Public Health Practitioner**

Newbridge, NP11 5GH

Salary:
£37898.00 to £45637.00

Type:
Permanent

Employer:
Aneurin Bevan University Health Board
[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Public Health Practitioner job \(opens in a new window\)](#)
^[15]

- **Public Health Practitioner**

Trowbridge, BA14 8JN

Salary:
£38626.00 to £40476.00

Type:
Fixed-Term

Employer:
Wiltshire Council
[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Public Health Practitioner job \(opens in a new window\)](#)
^[16]

- **Consultant in Public Health (South West)**

Bristol, BS1 6EH

Salary:
Negotiable

Type:
Fixed-Term

Employer:
Department of Health & Social Care
[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Public Health \(South West\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[17]

- **Senior Public Health Practitioner**

Port Talbot, SA12 7BR

Salary:

£46840.00 to £53602.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Swansea Bay University Health Board

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Senior Public Health Practitioner job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[18]

- **Director of Public Health**

Truro, TR1 3AY

Salary:

£87645.00 to £122911.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Cornwall Council

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Director of Public Health job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[19]

- **Environmental Public Health Scientist**

Cardiff, CF10 4BZ

Salary:

£46840.00 to £53602.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

Public Health Wales

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Environmental Public Health Scientist job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[20]

- **Director of Public Health**

Silverlink North, NE27 0BY

Salary:

£105467.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

North Tyneside Council

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Director of Public Health job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[21]

- **Public Health Intelligence Manager**

Morpeth, NE61 2EF

Salary:

£54489.00 to £58149.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Northumberland County Council

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Public Health Intelligence Manager job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[22]

- **Public health lead - healthy behaviours**

Hereford, HR4 0LE

Salary:

£44711.00 to £48710.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Herefordshire Council

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Public health lead - healthy behaviours job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[23]

- **Bank Public Health Dietetic Assistant Practitioner**

Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 1BZ

Salary:

£26928.00 to £29551.00

Type:

Bank

Employer:

Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Bank Public Health Dietetic Assistant Practitioner job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[24]

- **Clinical Specialist - Safeguarding and Public Protection**

Exeter, EX2 5AF

Salary:

£53755.00 to £60504.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Devon Partnership NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Clinical Specialist - Safeguarding and Public Protection job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[25]

- **Senior Safeguarding Public Protection and Mental Capacity Practitioner**

Lincoln, LN2 4WH

Salary:

£46148.00 to £52809.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Lincolnshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Senior Safeguarding Public Protection and Mental Capacity Practitioner job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[26]

- **Sexual Health Specialist Practitioner**

Exeter, EX4 6NN

Salary:

£38682.00 to £46580.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Sexual Health Specialist Practitioner job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[27]

- **Health Play Specialist**

London, WC1N 3JH

Salary:

£31944.00 to £34937.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Health Play Specialist job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[28]

- **Health Improvement Practitioner Specialist**

Morpeth, NE61 2EF

Salary:

£38626.00 to £42708.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Northumberland County Council

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Health Improvement Practitioner Specialist job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[29]

- **Specialist Occupational Health Physiotherapist**

Blackburn, BB2 3HH

Salary:

£37338.00 to £44962.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialist Occupational Health Physiotherapist job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[30]

- **Locum Consultant - Sexual Health**

Sunderland, SR4 7TP

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Locum Consultant - Sexual Health job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[31]

- **Play Specialist - Health Play Team**

Crewe, CW1 4QJ

Salary:

£26530.00 to £29114.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Play Specialist - Health Play Team job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[32]

- **Consultant Mental Health Liaison - Bolton**

Farnworth, Bolton, BL4 0JR

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Greater Manchester Mental Health NHSFT

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Mental Health Liaison - Bolton job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[33]

- **Specialist Midwife, Drugs, Alcohol & Mental Health**

Manchester, M8 5RB

Salary:

£37338.00 to £44962.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialist Midwife, Drugs, Alcohol & Mental Health job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[34]

- **Band 6 Specialist Physiotherapist - Pelvic Health**

Boston, PE21 9QS

Salary:

Negotiable

Type:

Fixed-Term

Employer:

United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Band 6 Specialist Physiotherapist - Pelvic Health job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[35]

- **Specialist Mental Health Practitioner - Occupational Therapist**

Exeter, EX2 4NU

Dartington, TQ9 6JE

Torquay, TQ2 7BA

Barnstaple, EX31 3UD

Salary:

£46148.00 to £52809.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Devon Partnership NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Specialist Mental Health Practitioner - Occupational Therapist job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[36]

- **Consultant in Sexual Health and HIV**

London, UB1 3HW

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

London North West University Healthcare NHS Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant in Sexual Health and HIV job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[37]

- **Consultant Psychiatrist (Mental Health Access Team)**

Winsford, CW7 2AS

Salary:

£105504.00 to £139882.00

Type:

Permanent

Employer:

Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

[Apply now on NHS Jobs for Consultant Psychiatrist \(Mental Health Access Team\) job \(opens in a new window\)](#) ^[38]

- **Further information**

These organisations have further information about being a public health specialist or consultant, particularly as your career progresses. Take a look.

- [Faculty of Public Health](#) ^[39]
- [Faculty of Public Health job descriptions](#) ^[40]
- [Public Health Register](#) ^[41]
- [British Society of Community Dentistry \(BASCD\)](#) ^[42]
- [General Dental Council – Specialist Lists](#) ^[43]

Other roles that may interest you

- [Public health knowledge and intelligence professional](#) ^[44]
- [Public health manager](#) ^[45]
- [Dentist](#) ^[46]
- [Director of public health](#) ^[47]

Partner logos

Faculty of Public Health ^[39]

Local Government Association ^[48]

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