

Video transcript

Lucy Douglas-Pannett

Public health specialty registrar

I'm Lucy Douglas-Pannett. I'm a public health specialty registrar, which means I'm training to be a consultant in public health. I'm based at Leicestershire County Council, but I also work with University Hospitals of Leicester.

What attracted you to the training programme?

I started the training programme having had a nursing background. When I was district nursing I met a lot of patients who didn't understand why they were ill. So I spent a lot of time educating patients and trying to empower them to take control of their own health, and then was introduced to the concept of the training programme. So I now spend a lot of time working around health improvement and health education, but I also look at the quality of care provided. So we are very fortunate in the fact that what we do is very far reaching, so I would like to say that I am hoping to improve everybody's health: it is about every single person out there. But it's about ensuring that people understand the choices they're making and the impact they have on their health in the long term, but also making sure that when they do come into contact with healthcare services, that the services are appropriate, that the quality is of good standard and that evidence-based healthcare is used wherever possible.

What is the training programme like?

As a specialty registrar, the training programme is between four and five years long, dependent on your background. When I started, I didn't have a Master's in public health, so one of the first things I did was spend a year studying at the University of Nottingham for a Master's in public health. I also simultaneously had a placement in Leicester City Council, so started working around infant mortality there and doing a number of other projects, but, as I said, alongside studying quite hard and spending three days travelling into Nottingham. I also have had a placement with Public Health England, so we learn a lot about infectious diseases, and once we've passed two sets of Faculty exams we're able to go on-call for Public Health England, so we take notifications of infectious diseases and we make sure that the public health response to infectious diseases is appropriate. In our final placement (we tend to have two main placements and the infectious diseases placement),

I've been working with the University Hospitals of Leicester around their quality agenda and helping use population data to set their five-year strategic plan.

What experience have you gained during training?

There are three main domains of public health.

You have health improvement, which is one of the reasons that the decision was made for public health to move to local authorities, so that we could help influence the much wider determinants of health. So within the local authorities, I've worked on projects around planning, around housing, education, and making sure that we have access to green spaces to reduce the levels of obesity in the country.

There's also health protection, which is part of the reason we have our placement at Public Health England. We look at the management of infectious diseases, exposure to biochemical hazards, and making sure that the health of the population is protected through vaccination and screening. And then the last domain is healthcare public health which entails making sure that the standard of care that we provide is reduced in variation, so everybody knows what to expect when they go to a hospital or to their primary care GP, making sure that the care we provide is cost effective and that we get the best value for money.

What will you do next?

I'm in the final year of my five-year training programme. I'm starting to look at long-term job prospects and the area that I'm particularly interested in is healthcare public health. As I said, I've had a secondment to the local hospital; I also work with the CCGs quite closely and I'm hoping to continue that work when I become a consultant next year.