Public Health Practitioner Training & Development Programme
2010-12

Guidance Document
(to be read in conjunction with the Application Form)

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Public Health Workforce across South Central to public health teams, local government, primary care and the health and social care sector including voluntary agencies.

Purpose and Summary of Document:
This document sets out a process for the application of public health practitioners to the Public Health Practitioner Training & Development Programme. The document provides background information to the scheme and outlines:

- who is eligible to apply
- the application process
- what support successful applicants will receive
- what will be expected of them in return

¹ With thanks to Kelly McFadyen, Public Health Wales, for use of documentation
1. Background

In November 2009, the UK Public Health Register (UKPHR) introduced a final draft of the Public Health Practitioner Standards for Registration. A copy of the draft standards can be downloaded at: http://www.publichealthregister.org.uk/files/UKPHR%20Practitioner%20Standards%20101109[1].doc.

Through the development of a proposed regulatory framework for public health practitioners the UKPHR aims to protect the public via the development of agreed professional standards which will:

- provide quality assurance of the workforce to a common and agreed standard;
- provide quality control of the workforce by placement onto a professional register.

It is proposed that this framework of standards for public health practitioners should become a fundamental part of career and skills development, developing this workforce to support the most effective delivery of the public health agenda. However, the Department of Health is currently conducting a review of regulation in public health and the UKPHR has put on hold its implementation of public health practitioner registration until the review is completed. That said, public health practitioners have already been engaged in learning/development programmes and local implementation systems are urgently needed for assessment.

This programme facilitated by the Wessex & Oxford deaneries proposes the use of the UKPHR draft standards and frameworks to pilot a local assessment process in South Central. Working with UKPHR processes and frameworks will ensure locally assessed practitioners can transfer to a national regulatory system if that becomes available.

The programme will work with practitioners wishing to develop professional portfolios offering them a range of support through CPD opportunities and mentoring including support in self-assessment, collating evidence and demonstrating competence. Trained assessors and verifiers will also be available to review portfolio summaries and evidence.

This programme will be fully evaluated with regard to both the process and the impact on the participants.
This and other related documents will be available on the following South Central workforce & education website:

2. Support Programme

The programme will support practitioners across South Central in developing portfolios of evidence against the draft Public Health Practitioner Standards. The Wessex & Oxford deaneries are committed to supporting all practitioners working across a range of organisations to develop their portfolios of evidence. Through the programme practitioners may access one of two different levels of support following an application process.

- **Structured** Practitioner Portfolio Development Support
- **Informal** Practitioner Portfolio Development Support

The different levels of support are detailed below:

2.1 **Structured Practitioner Portfolio Development Support**

Practitioners accepted onto the Structured Public Health Practitioner Portfolio Development Programme will, in normal circumstances, be expected to attend four one day events.

Participants of the pilot scheme could be called upon to assist by mentoring and supporting future applicants; skill development for this purpose will be provided.

Practitioners on the Structured programme will also:

- have access to a Mentor
- have access to an Assessor and to a Verifier panel who will review and feedback on elements of their portfolio development.

Participants on the Structured programme will be required to attend four formal learning days; in addition to this there will be opportunities to attend additional CPD events. As a guide for employers, it is advised that participants are allowed a total of eight days protected learning time to attend formal learning sessions, additional CPD events and have some allocated writing time for portfolio development.
This level of support will be most suited for practitioners who have started developing a portfolio, gathering evidence, writing reflections etc and self-assessed against the Public Health Skills & Career Framework and/or Practitioner Standards and only have one or two competency gaps which can be easily addressed.

**Practitioners on the Structured Programme will be expected to submit a completed portfolio by September 2011.**

Please note: as the programme is part of a local implementation process for the Public Health Practitioner (Draft) Standards, participants will be expected to contribute to the evaluation of the scheme.

### 2.2 Informal Practitioner Portfolio Development Support

Practitioners receiving Informal Practitioner Portfolio Development Support will be offered four days’ support. This level of support will be most suited for practitioners who have started developing a portfolio of evidence but on self-assessment against the Public Health Practitioner (Draft) Standards may have several competency gaps they need to address.

Practitioners on the Informal programme will be expected to have made good progress on their portfolio by September 2011.

### 2.3 Other Practitioners

People who have not previously considered developing a portfolio, are interested in finding out more about the process and who may wish to access related CPD events will be offered such opportunities through their local networks.

### 3. Application Process

In order to be considered for a place on the Structured programme, interested practitioners must submit a completed application form along with a completed self-assessment form. In completing the self-assessment the applicant will describe competence against each area of the standards (giving practical examples of evidence) and will identify any gaps they will need to address (and how they intend to go about this). For the Informal support programme, practitioners should complete an application form only.
3.1 Selection criteria

Applicants must be able to demonstrate:

- A minimum of two years public health experience for the Structured Programme (usually having occupied a public health practitioner post at NHS Agenda for Change band 5 and above or equivalent in other sectors). Where there are more applications than places, it is likely that length and level of experience will be considered carefully.

- Self-assessment against the Public Health Practitioner (Draft) Standards. For the Structured programme, applicants must be able to demonstrate a broad range of relevant experience with only minor gaps, each of which should be relatively easy to address within the timeframe.

- A commitment to completing a portfolio against the Public Health Practitioner (Draft) Standards. For the Structured programme this must be a genuine commitment to completing the portfolio by September 2011. Those on the Informal support programme will be expected to have made a good start on developing a portfolio by this time.

- A commitment from their line manager for support, including the allocated time off to attend the “formal” workshops/events, other relevant CPD events arranged through the scheme and additional writing time (up to eight days depending on the level of support applied for).

3.2 Submission process and deadline

Please send the signed application documents either by post or electronically. In the case of an electronic version sent by email, it is also essential to have signatures.

The deadline for applications is 29 October 2010.
Completed applications should be sent to:
Debbie Durrant
South Central Public Health Development
Southern House, Sparrowgrove
Otterbourne
SO21 2RU

Tel: 01962 718491
Fax: 01962 718401
Email: phdevelopment@nesc.nhs.uk

3.3 Selection Panel

Applications will be reviewed by a multi-disciplinary panel (comprising members of the Oxford & Wessex deaneries/Schools of Public Health) to ensure that candidates meet the application criteria.

Successful applicants will be allocated onto the Structured programme or the Informal programme.

Please note: Applicants not accepted onto the Structured programme will be offered support through the Informal programme as appropriate.

Successful applicants will be expected to attend one of two initial Practitioner Portfolio Development Support Days:

- Oxford (venue TBC) on ??????????? November
- Wessex (venue TBC) on ?????????????? November

4. Terms and conditions

Applicants accepted onto the Programme must agree to abide by its principles and participate fully in the support programme as outlined in this document. On acceptance onto the Structured programme practitioners will be expected to draw up a learning contract in liaison with their allocated mentor, assessor and manager. Should an applicant accepted onto the Programme fail to comply without official notification of exceptional circumstances they will not be guaranteed further support in the future.