



PUBLIC HEALTH SKILLS AND CAREER FRAMEWORK (PHSCF)

HOW TO USE IT: IDEAS FOR EMPLOYERS AND COMMISSIONERS

How the framework can help you

Chief Executives, managers and service commissioners can use the framework to:

- analyse the skills required to deliver on health improvement, protection and inequality targets
- know where and how to access and deploy skills to meet targets
- facilitate flexible working within and across organisations
- facilitate flexibility in delivery of targets, as priorities shift
- improve recruitment and retention by guiding the development of clearer career paths and informing competences needed in the wider workforce
- inform knowledge needed at a strategic influence level so as to strengthen the public health approach within organisations.

Director of Public Health, Health and Social Services Board

Your Health and Social Services Board has just had a change of Chief Executive. The new CE is reviewing all departments with a view to making efficiency savings, in order to put more funds into commissioning clinical care for the Board's population, including reducing staff. As Director of Public Health you are very aware that your Board has been slow in meeting public health targets for the last few years, as clinical services always seem to take precedence over population health improvement and protection activities. You feel strongly that, with the change in leadership, it's time to use this opportunity to push a broader public health approach, while also ensuring that your team, which is modest in size already, is spared any further reductions.

Starting from the basis of what your department is required to do, how it fits with the Board's strategic plan, and the implications of not delivering on your targets, you then outline what roles and responsibilities are required to ensure you can deliver. You point out that your department's responsibilities are wide ranging, and include health intelligence (to inform commissioning decisions), health protection, health promotion, partnership working and planning for new services based on newly identified needs. As such, you suggest what is needed should include:

- One Level 9 Public Health Specialist, in the Director's role
- At least five Level 8 Public Health Specialists, covering both core and defined competences in the framework. Each specialist leads on a key area of the public health function, including health protection, maternal/child health service planning, community health service planning, acute health service planning and mental health service planning
- At least six Level 6/7 Public Health Practitioners, covering at least one defined area and the core areas of the framework, to manage specific health improvement, promotion and protection programmes including coordination with community pharmacy, smoking cessation, sexual health, cancer prevention, ophthalmic services and health intelligence;

Purpose of the Public Health Skills and Career Framework

- inform skills and career development of everyone who contributes to improving and protecting the health and wellbeing of the population
- facilitate the development of a skilled public health workforce that is fit for purpose to tackle health inequalities and deliver the national public health agenda
- provide a consistent and coherent vision across the whole of public health, value everyone's contribution and the interactions between those contributions

For further information about the PHSCF
please visit:

www.phru.nhs.uk

www.skillsforhealth.org.uk

How you can use the framework – theoretical examples

Analysing the skills required to deliver on health improvement, protection and inequality targets

The breadth and depth of health improvement, protection and inequality targets is such that a wide cross-section of the potential public health workforce will be needed to ensure these targets are achieved, and sustained.

Local Government Environmental Health Manager

Your unit is responsible for achieving government targets to reduce air and water pollution, as a major contribution to protecting population health. In order to do this you need a range of skills on your team that could include: management (for strategic planning and team management), scientific (for measuring and monitoring pollution levels), information and intelligence (for entering and analysing monitoring data), programme implementation (for implementing pollution reduction strategies, liaising and communicating with public and companies on how to reduce pollution).

Using the skills and career framework, you can plot the level of competence and skill you would ideally need to deliver on your targets, and compare this with what you have to hand. Given the need for the above skills you could interrogate the framework and find that you could plot staff against the following PHSCF areas:

- Surveillance and assessment
 - Level 4: Be able to obtain and use routine data to describe the health of a population; collect, collate, analyse and present basic data on health and well-being and related needs;
- Policy and Strategy
 - Level 7: Interpret and communicate local, regional and national policies and strategies within own area of work; work with a range of people and agencies to implement policies and strategies; contribute to the development of policies and strategies within and beyond own area of work; assess the actual and potential impact of policies and strategies on health and well being;
- Leadership and collaborative working
 - Level 7: Manage and advocate for programmes or projects to improve population health; engage and influence others in and beyond own organisation to improve population health; lead others across projects and programmes;
- Health Protection
 - Level 5: Contribute to field epidemiological investigations; implement interventions to protect health and well being taking into account health inequalities; identify and communicate with at-risk contacts and give advice under guidance.

Know where and how to access and deploy skills to meet targets

Having identified the public health skills required you can review the talent that currently exists within the team you manage, the wider organisation and partner organisations.

Programme Manager for a Charity focusing on housing for the elderly

There are UK wide targets to reduce fuel poverty and improve housing for vulnerable populations, including the elderly. Your programme, funded jointly by the Government and with National Lottery funds, aims to increase the availability of fuel for the elderly and reduce poor housing conditions (damp, non-maintained boilers etc.) for the elderly in your region. Ongoing funding is dependent on your programme demonstrating that you are contributing to meeting the region's target (e.g. eradicate fuel poverty by 2016 – Northern Ireland). You have identified the skills and competences you require to carry out this work:

- Surveillance and assessment: Level 5 (to be able to collect and analyse routine and non-routine data about levels of fuel poverty and poor housing in your region, and then monitor improvements)
- Policy and Strategy: Level 6 (to be able to understand, interpret and implement relevant housing related strategies in your region)
- Leadership and Collaborative Working: Level 7 (to be able to engage and work collaboratively with a range of people and organisations to improve housing and influence future policies)
- Health Improvement: Level 5 (to be able to involve the elderly in decisions around their fuel use and housing; plan housing improvement projects and develop resources and communications targeting the elderly); Level 2 (to be able to provide information about your programme within the community of elderly and undertake health improvement tasks and activities as requested)
- Health and Social Care Quality: Level 6 (to be able to set quality standards for your programme; monitor performance against these standards and contribute to service reviews)

Inform knowledge needed at a strategic influence level so as to strengthen the public health approach within organisations

The skills and career framework provides more detail about what public health entails from a practical point of view than has been provided before. It also recognises that most of the people working at strategic levels within organisations whose operations influence public health are not likely to be high level public health specialists. The PHSCF allows organisational chief executives, board members and directors to consider what they need to know to ensure that public health aspects of their organisation's work are understood and built upon.