

# UK PUBLIC HEALTH NETWORK

## SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

### Briefing paper

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## Summary

Network members appear to have ongoing links with a total of 85 organisations, agencies and alliances, both within the UK and internationally.

Links are particularly strong to organisations in the field of diet and nutrition with Network members linking to 13 organisations and alliances. Relationships with professional and managerial organisations are also very strong, particularly across local government. With the exception of the Obesity Health Alliance, there is little duplication of representation.

There would appear to be some gaps in representation of Network members, notably in the fields of mental health and the built environment. Relationships with age-focused organisations were also not identified. However, this analysis is based on details provided on websites and may not be current. The apparent gaps may also be filled by the statutory agencies; the complexity of the statutory agencies' relationships meant it was not possible to capture details in this analysis.

This analysis confirms that the Network can occupy a unique space in speaking across the UK on matters of strategic importance to the public health community, rather than adding its voice to a slightly crowded marketplace on single topics. There may be additional opportunities to speak on areas not covered comprehensively through existing relationships, such as mental health or holistic health. Since Network members also have good relationships with equivalent professional organisations and agencies outside the UK, there is opportunity to speak on public health internationally.

## 1. Background

The UK Public Health Network currently comprises 18 organisations, nine of which are membership organisations (representing professional, academic and not for profit bodies) and nine of which are statutory organisations. The latter operate with observer status within the Network.

<b>Full members</b>	<b>Observers</b>
Academy of Medical Royal Colleges	Department of Health
ADPH (UK)	Dept of Health Social Services & Public Safety, NI
Chartered Institute of Environmental Health	Local Government Association
Faculty of Public Health	NHS Health Scotland
Institute of Public Health in Ireland	Public Health Agency, NI
Royal Society of Public Health	Public Health England
Society for Social Medicine	Public Health Wales
UK Health Forum	Scottish Government
UK Public Health Register	Welsh Government

Individual members of the Network deliver their public health functions through links to and partnerships with many organisations, both within the UK and internationally. An analysis of these links was undertaken to help understand the extent of the Network’s influence.

## 2. Methods

Websites of the Network’s members were searched for details of the organisations external to the Network that they considered to be partners or with whom they have an ongoing relationship or with whom they do regular work. Although policy leads within the Network were also approached for help in identifying their organisational links, few were able to supply these. Details used in this report are therefore based largely on website information and may not be fully representative or up to date. It is also worth noting that many Network members also work with a wide variety of organisations on a short-term or ad-hoc basis and might not consider these to be partners. This report represents a minimum rather than a complete view of the external relationships maintained by Network members.

Initially, attempts were made to include Network observer organisations in this analysis. However, they were omitted as it did not prove possible to identify partners. This is partly because statutory agencies tend to be much larger and have a correspondingly wider set of relationships that are not necessarily captured by the organisation.

There are numerous overlapping and complex internal links between Network members or between Network members and observer organisations. These have been excluded from this investigation and may result in misleading conclusions around potential gaps in representation. The degrees of connectedness would be interesting to map and would provide greater insight into how well the Network worked internally.

Partner organisations were divided into five groups, as shown in table 1.

**Table 1: breakdown of the UK Public Health Network’s organisational links**

Type of organisation	Definition
Organisations	Registered charities/third sector bodies, academic organisations, professional bodies etc that exist as legal entities. This group was sub-divided into national and international organisations.
Alliances / networks / coalitions	Informal bodies that have no independent or legal status and are either hosted by another organisation or operate by collective agreement
Agencies	Statutory agencies (excluding current Network observers). These were sub-divided into national and international agencies.
Parliamentary	All party parliamentary groups, relationships with individual MPs
Other	Media

A full list of organisations can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

### 3. Results

The marketplace on individual public health issues would seem to be somewhat crowded. 85 separate entities have been identified as having representation from Network members. However, there appears to be little duplication. With the exception of the new Obesity Health Alliance, many of these organisations seem to be represented by only one or two Network members. [Appendix 2](#) maps the links between Network members and national organisations and alliances across the spectrum of public health in the UK.

Network links to organisations and alliances are particularly strong in the fields of:

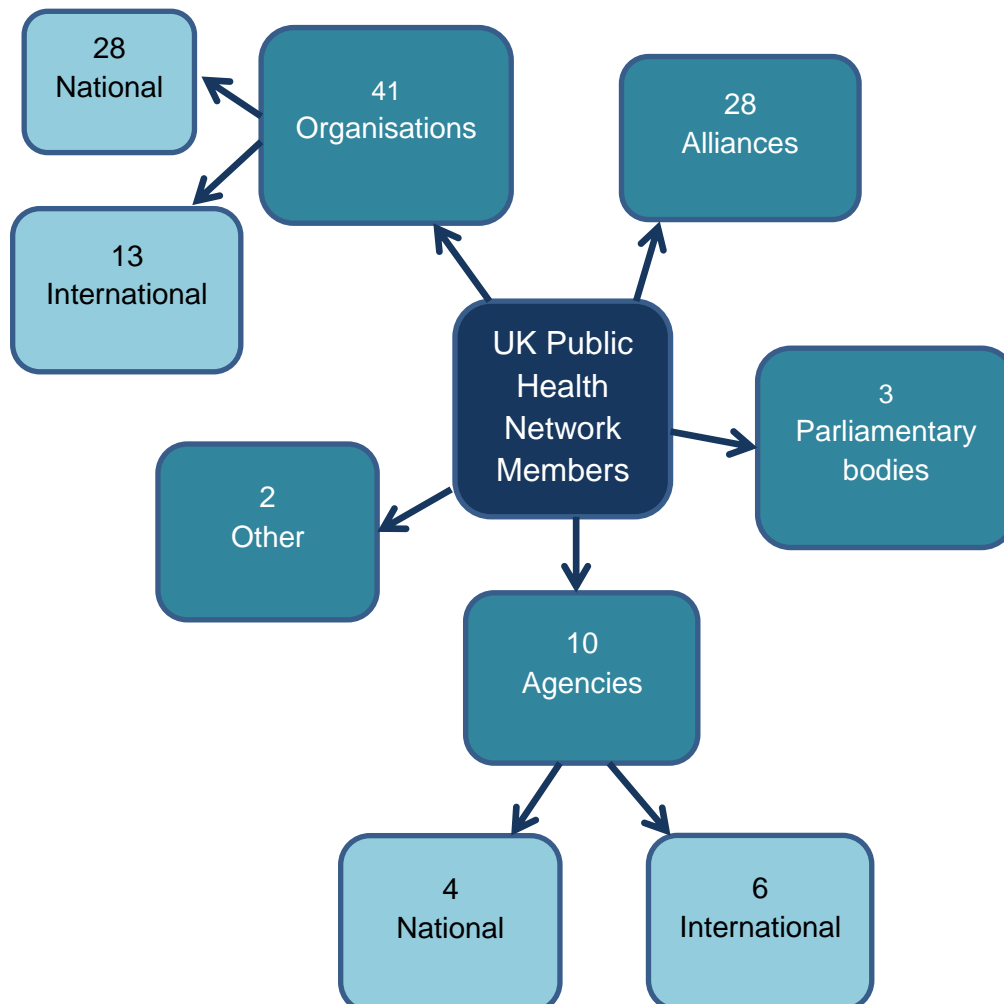
- Food and nutrition: (links to 13 organisations)
- Environment: (links to 4 organisations)
- Alcohol (links to 3 organisations)
- Active travel & transport: (links to 3 organisations)

The Network is also well-represented with a range of managerial / professional representation bodies, including:

- Local authority (links to 5 organisations)
- Medical / clinical (links to 6 organisations)

Table 2 illustrates the breadth of the Network's current external relationships.

**Table 2: Breakdown of Network members' organisational relationships**



A couple of Network members have unique links, largely because their remit is broader than public health. The Academy of Medical Royal Colleges is the only Network member to have consistent links with the medical education bodies. The LGA has numerous links to organisations with wider public health functions, particularly in the crime and justice fields as well as various governance bodies.

International connections appear to be very strong. Many of the links are to equivalent professional associations in public health and environmental health. However, several members of the CEOs Coordinating Group in particular work with the organisations such as the OECD and European Commission as well as the WHO. The links between Network members and international organisations and agencies are mapped in [Appendix 3](#).

#### **4. Gaps in representation**

Based on details collated from members' websites, there would appear to be some gaps in the Network's connections. Links to organisations and alliances seem to be less obvious in the fields of:

- Mental health
- Sexual health
- Physical activity
- Built environment (including housing and planning). However, statutory agencies, such as Public Health England, have been strengthening links with this sector in particular.

Network representation with age-focussed bodies also appears to be less clearly defined. Few Network members declare ongoing links with organisations working in the fields of maternal, child & adolescent health or with those concentrating on older people's health.

#### **5. Implications for the Network**

Most Network members identify links with numerous organisations and agencies, particularly on the 'hot topics' of alcohol, diet and tobacco. This suggests there may be little to be gained for the Network by working in this arena.

This analysis underlines the Network's unique position within the public health community. Operating at both a strategic level and across the UK will enable it to speak with a united voice on the key issues in improving the public's health.

In addition, there may be scope for speaking on topics where Network members appear to have less collaboration - particularly in relation to holistic health and across the life course. The Network would also appear to have sufficient links through its members to speak on public health internationally if it wished.

## Appendix 1: Partners within the UK Public Health Network

### 1. Agencies

**National:** Department for Energy and Climate Change  
Health Education England  
National Youth Agency  
Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

**International:** Congress of Council of Europe  
Department of Health (ROI)  
European Commission  
Health Services Executive (ROI)  
Health Information and Quality Authority (ROI)  
WHO

### 2. Alliances/coalitions/networks

- Action on Sugar
- ADASS
- ADCS
- Alcohol Health Alliance
- Alliance for Equity in Dental Health
- Association of Local Authority Medical Advisors
- Centre for Cross-Border Studies
- Centre of Excellence for Public Health Northern Ireland
- Children's Food Campaign
- Community Development and Health Network
- Consensus Action on Salt
- Dementia Action Alliance
- Disability Action Alliance
- District Council Network
- Eating Better Alliance
- Energy Bill Revolution
- Food for Life Partnership
- Food Research Collaboration
- Healthy Air Campaign
- Healthy Universities Network
- Obesity Health Alliance
- Partnership for Active Travel, Transport and Health
- Pharmacy Forum
- Physical Activity Network
- Smokefree Action Coalition
- SOLACE
- Sustain
- UCL Street Mobility

### 3. Organisations

**National:** Alcohol Concern  
All Ireland Institute of Hospice & Palliative Care

BMA  
British Dental Association  
British Dietetic Association  
British Heart Foundation  
British Infection Association  
British Liver Trust  
Cancer Research UK  
CEEP UK (European Centre for Employers & Enterprises providing  
Public services)  
Centre for Effective Services  
Centre for Public Scrutiny  
General Medical Council  
Institute of Food Safety Integrity & Protection  
Kings Fund  
Medical Schools Council  
National Association of Clinical Tutors  
NHS Alliance  
NHS Confederation  
NICE  
Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health  
Royal College of Midwives  
Royal College of Nursing  
Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland  
Sustrans  
Terence Higgins Trust  
The Health Foundation

**International:** American Public Health Association  
Australasian Faculty of Public Health Medicine  
EIRE DsPH  
Environmental Health Association of Ireland  
HRB Centre for Health, Diet & Research  
Institute of Population and Public Health  
International Development Research Centre  
International Federation for Environmental Health  
International Union for Health Promotion and Education  
National Association of City & Council Health Officials  
OECD  
World Federation of Public Health Associations  
World Obesity Federation

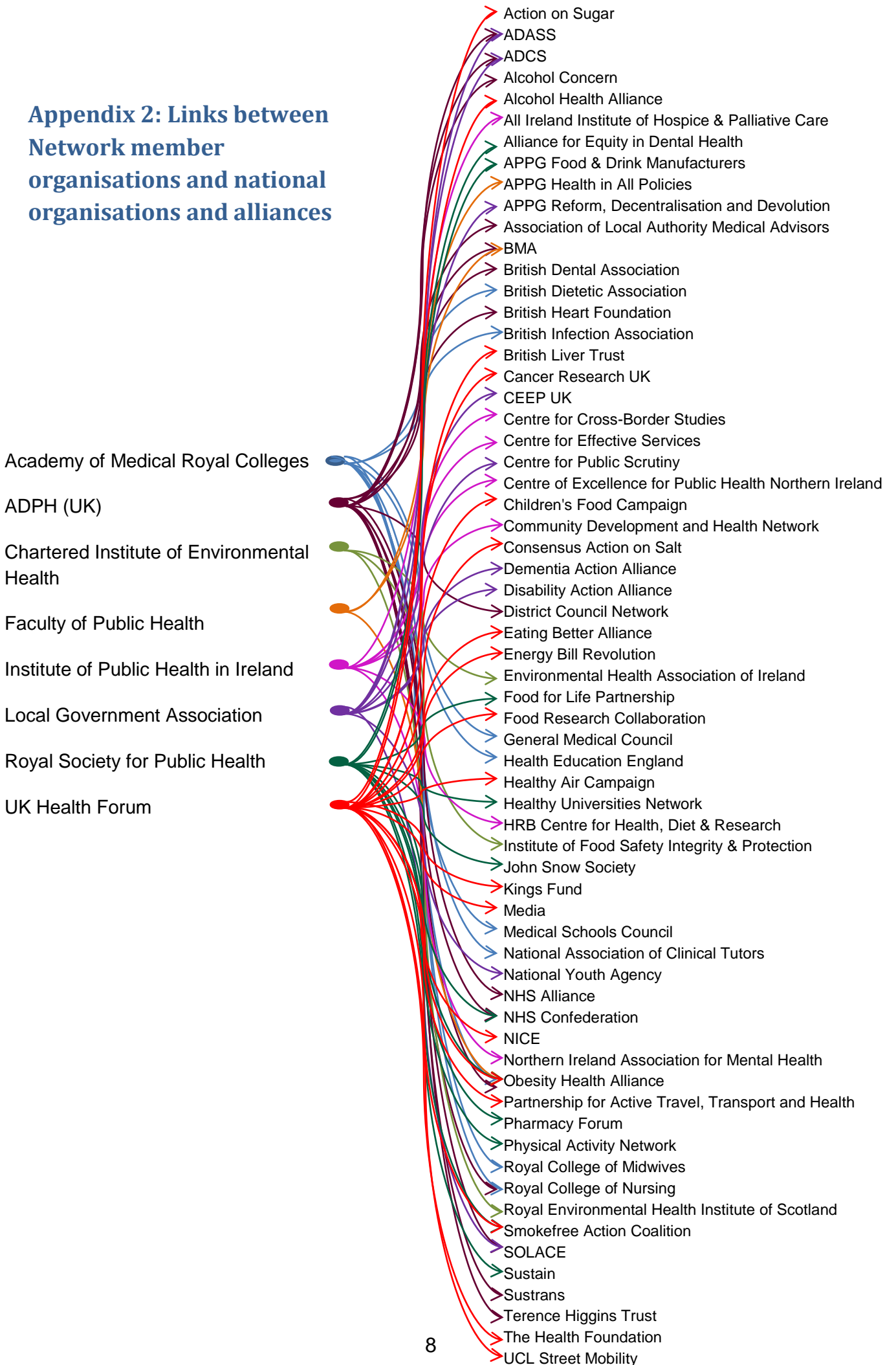
#### **4. Parliamentary**

- APPG Food & Drink Manufacturers
- APPG Health in All Policies
- APPG Reform, Decentralisation and Devolution

#### **5. Other**

- John Snow Society
- Media

## Appendix 2: Links between Network member organisations and national organisations and alliances





### Appendix 3: Links between Network member organisations and international organisations and agencies

