

# UK PUBLIC HEALTH NETWORK: year 3 impact report 2017

## Introduction

The UK Public Health Network was formed out of a meeting of Chief Executives and Board members on 8 October 2014. The decision of that summit was that the public health profession needed a more unified voice in order to share knowledge and provide consistent advice on the priorities for improving the public's health and wellbeing. Now in its third year, the Network is more assured in its internal relationships and is demonstrating confidence in identifying and addressing system issues collectively.

## How have we done?

The snap general election held in June 2017 compromised the Network's operations with the summit on the right to health being deferred from May until October 2017. However, the Network continues to show high levels of participation in Network events.

In October, members and observers were asked to reflect on the value of the Network. They concluded that the Network is:

- Enabling new and potential ways of joint working.
- A safe forum for debate.
- Supporting better information sharing.
- Developing and strengthening relationships.
- A unique cross-national, cross-agency and cross-disciplinary network that acts as a high-level problem-solving platform.

The richness of the summits was noted as being of particular value. Members and observers also value having greater access to each other, being able to have open discussions on the forward-looking, strategic and "wicked" issues in public health, and developing shared thinking. It is very encouraging to see Network events increasingly being based on trust with a commitment to collaboration.

The CEOs Group, comprising the Association of Directors of Public Health, Faculty of Public Health, Royal Society for Public Health and the UK Health Forum, continues to provide valuable direction and support for the Network.

Generous funding from The Health Foundation through 2017 to support the post of Network Coordinator has ensured continuity of staffing through the year. The provision of a small secretariat has again proved vital to Network functioning; it has enabled the organisation of Network events as well as delivery of information services such as the weekly consultation scan and briefing papers on the Network's areas of interest.

The Network's Business plan focusses on four areas. The following tables show the outcomes and impacts of deliverables from those priorities during year three.

Heather Lodge

December 2017

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<b>Priority 1</b>	<b>Promote a common and collective agenda to tackle the overarching system issues in improving public health and wellbeing in the UK.</b>
<b>Delivered</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivered a summit in Edinburgh on the right to health (October 2017)</li> <li>• Convened a unique seminar on public health system governance challenges and opportunities (October 2017)</li> <li>• Maintained regular teleconferences between policy leads.</li> </ul>
<b>Outcome</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Network is in the process of compiling a statement on the principles that support a good public health system.</li> <li>• The potential for the public health system to incorporate a rights-based approach was embraced by Network members with a range of commitments made to further the discussion. These include: taking the right to health as a conference theme, framing evidence reviews against the right to health, including the right to health in public health curricula, and developing research proposals for the NIHR.</li> </ul>
<b>Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The discussions in Edinburgh marked a coming of age for the Network. Relationships have stabilised and discussions clearly demonstrated deepening trust between organisations. A seminar investigating the challenges of current governance issues resulted in clear agreement on some key principles. This seminar could not have happened three years ago when relationships were far more fragmented.</li> <li>• The Edinburgh summit was the first time that the Network had met outside London. This was hugely appreciated by all participants and provided an excellent opportunity to strengthen engagement with Scotland.</li> </ul> <p>The success and enthusiasm generated at this summit led to the Network being invited to hold its next summit in Wales.</p>

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<b>Priority 2</b>	<b>Become a thought-leader for best national practice in addressing health and wellbeing across the UK</b>
<b>Delivered</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposal to the Public Health System Leaders Group (PHSG) to take forward the work originally submitted to the Law Commission to review current public health legislation.</li> </ul>
<b>Outcome</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The PHSG agreed to pick up the work following the decision that this could not be progressed through the Law Commission because of the Parliamentary time needed for Brexit.</li> <li>• A programme of work is now being developed between the statutory agencies and the UK Public Health Network. This has set a timetable to explore potential non-legislative routes to clarify existing guidance to local authorities and Directors of Public Health.</li> </ul>
<b>Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The value of enhancing the ability of Directors of Public Health in England to support the Secretary of State in discharging duties to address health inequalities was agreed by the Public Health Systems Group in September 2017. This has now been taken up by a working group that includes the Department of Health, Public Health England and the UK Public Health Network.</li> </ul>
<b>Priority 3</b>	<b>Promote the value of health and wellbeing as a key asset for the UK economy.</b>
<b>Delivered</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A briefing looking at the public health issues raised in General Election 2017 manifestos.</li> <li>• A briefing that analysed the requests of government around Brexit and the promises made by political parties across the UK in General Election 2017 manifestos.</li> <li>• A proposal to explore the impact of trade and investment agreements on public health through a public health system conference and focussed roundtable discussions.</li> </ul>
<b>Outcome</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding is being secured for a public health system conference on trade. There is a growing agreement that trade needs to be addressed collectively in order to pool knowledge, experience and expertise.</li> </ul>
<b>Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering a conference on the public health implications of trade and investment agreements will help the public health system align its thinking and encourage collective action to promote the economic assets of a healthy population. The Network's ability to reach across all four governments of the UK will provide the opportunity to speak with authority and consistency.</li> </ul>

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Priority 4	Change the narrative around the public's health from a focus on the impact of behaviours to the determinants of health
<b>Delivered</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shaping strategic thinking across the UK public health system on issues such as economic investment in public health and the use of the right to health in tackling health inequalities.</li> <li>• Three blog posts have been published during 2017, on public health legislation, public health and trade, and the need to reframe non-communicable diseases.</li> <li>• Weekly consultation scan.</li> <li>• Maintaining a public face of Network via Twitter.</li> </ul>
<b>Outcome</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invitation to speak at Healthy Cities seminar in London in October 2017 about the vision for new UK health and wellbeing of future generations' legislation.</li> <li>• Article in <i>Lancet</i> in June 2017 on reframing non-communicable diseases.</li> </ul>
<b>Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blog posts have achieved over 4000 page views on the Network's website. Email responses suggest that these are a valuable way of exploring changes to the public health narrative. Such posts are proving to reach wider public health audiences, both in the UK and internationally.</li> <li>• 75% of visitors to the Network's website in 2017 were UK-based. However, 9.5% and 4% of visitors were from the US and Canada respectively with further visits recorded from Australia, China, India, Spain, and France.</li> <li>• Twitter followers continue to increase; as at 8/12/17, @ukphnetwork has 433 followers, gaining an average of 11 followers per month during the year. Top tweets (ie those that were most re-tweeted, liked etc) tended to be those on the issue of public health legislation.</li> </ul>

### How will we improve?

During 2018 the Network aims to consolidate work already in progress and investigate in further detail some of the issues raised during 2017. Work currently planned includes:

- Collaborating on a programme of work to clarify public health legislation in England.
- Leading a piece of work to investigate the impact of trade and investment agreements on public health.
- Exploring the structures and functions of national public health agencies in greater detail, including development of a statement on the attributes of good governance for the public health system.
- Following up the knowledge shared on a rights-based approach to public health.

Project funding, both from within Network and external sources, will be sought to support this programme and the post of Network Coordinator.

The CEOs Group will continue to monitor Network membership regularly to ensure it is representative of the public health system and remains fit for purpose.

# UK Public Health Network 2017 at a glance

## ENGAGING

**18  
October**

Held one summit on the right to health

Held one unique seminar on public health system governance



External engagement:



4 governments,  
2 public bodies,  
3 third sector organisations,  
1 public health systems group

## INVESTIGATING



Published 8 briefing papers

2 projects in progress:  
public health law  
National public health agencies:  
phase 1



4 projects in pipeline:  
Trade events  
Public health law  
National public health agencies phase 2  
Governance consensus

## CONNECTING



28 issues of Brexit reading list



Published 37 issues of consultation scan



Published 7 newsletters



Published 3 blog posts

With grateful thanks to THE HEALTH FOUNDATION for supporting the Network this year

## **UK PUBLIC HEALTH NETWORK: year 3 impact report 2017**

### **About the Network**

The UK Public Health Network provides a unique forum for public health professionals in the UK to agree priorities for improving the health of the public and to speak with one voice. It works collaboratively and in partnership with the UK's umbrella and membership public health organisations, including the statutory agencies across all four countries.

### **Composition of the UK Public Health Network: 2017**

#### **Members**

Academy of Medical Royal Colleges

Association of Directors of Public Health (UK) (including Association of Directors of Public Health in Wales and Scottish Directors of Public Health)

Chartered Institute of Environmental Health

Faculty of Public Health

The Health Foundation

Institute of Public Health in Ireland

Royal Society for Public Health

Society for Social Medicine

UK Health Forum

UK Public Health Register

#### **Observers**

Chief Medical Officers for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

Kings Fund

Local Government Association

NHS Health Scotland

Public Health Agency NI

Public Health England

Public Health Wales

### **Contact us**

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