



# PHE Advisory Board Paper

**Title of meeting** Public Health England Advisory Board  
**Date** Wednesday 25 September 2013  
**Presenter** John Newton, Chief Knowledge Officer  
**Title of paper** Research Strategy

## 1. Purpose of the paper

1.1 This paper briefly sets out an approach to defining the content of a research strategy for Public Health England (PHE) and assigns accountability for the high level content. The approach was agreed by the National Executive at its meeting on 11 June 2013.

## 2. Recommendation

2.1 The Advisory Board is asked to **COMMENT** on and **ENDORSE** the approach set out in the paper, assisted by an invited panel of external experts.

## 3. Background

3.1 PHE is committed to being a science and evidence based organisation. This is important both for its credibility and effectiveness because adoption of valid science and evidence will lead to effective and efficient delivery strategies. PHE starts from a strong position as an organisation with a track record of excellence in science across the range of its operations, however there is potential to do more and there are unmet needs for high quality science in many areas of public health. In addition, there are many opportunities to develop productive partnerships with other organisations with a common interest in public health science and research. Also, there is a general sense that academic activity in public health in England has not been closely aligned with delivery functions. The creation of PHE presents an excellent opportunity to address this.

3.2 One of PHE’s published early actions for 2013/14 is as follows:

- Develop a research strategy for PHE that demonstrates academic excellence and value for money, identifies priorities for research nationally that are aligned with current and future public health needs, including advances in genomics. Engage with academic health science networks to accelerate adoption and spread.

3.3 The latest version of PHE’s corporate programme deliverables included the following:

Research Strategy approved by National Executive and other stakeholders	March 2014
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## 4. The research strategy

4.1 The strategy will consist of a number of contributing projects which are related but distinct. These are as follows:

- (i) A description of the science base for PHE’s core operational strategies. This will include a second UK Global Burden of Disease project looking at

inequalities in burden within the UK.

- (ii) A review of the major research requirements of the wider public health system, drawing especially on PHE's interactions with councils and national partners.
- (iii) A mapping and development strategy for PHE's own research activity including PHE's health protection and vaccine research but also in other areas.
- (iv) An academic strategy for PHE to manage and develop its academic workforce including honorary clinical academics and trainees, and job planning appraisal and revalidation.
- (v) An assessment of the opportunity for further alignment of PHE activity with National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) public health programmes, relevant Medical Research Council programmes and the work of Academic Health Science Networks.
- (vi) A project to secure the resources required for PHE's academic activities and for public health excess treatment costs.

## **5. Stakeholders**

5.1 A range of stakeholders have already pledged support and arranged events to feed in to the process including:

- (a) National Institute for Health Research board meeting on public health, 15 May 2013;
- (b) Chief Medical Officer's public health leaders meeting, 26 June 2013;
- (c) Seminar with Academy of Medical Sciences, 27 June 2013; and
- (d) Medical Research Council Population Health Sciences Programme.

## **6. Accountability and Governance**

6.1 A small senior research strategy team will oversee progress on a monthly basis and will consist of the four accountable individuals below plus Kevin Fenton. Others will be invited to contribute to delivery as required.

- (a) John Newton, Chief Knowledge Officer, will be accountable for the overall strategy and for (vi);
- (b) Adrian Davis, PHE Director of Population Health Science, will be accountable for (i) and (ii);
- (c) Anthony Kessel as PHE Director of Public Health Strategy and Research and Development will be accountable for (iii) and (iv); and
- (d) Brian Ferguson, Knowledge and Intelligence Team Director for Northern and Yorkshire, will be accountable for (v).

**Professor John Newton**

*Chief Knowledge Officer*

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