



Public Health
England

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To: John Ashton, President, Faculty of Public Health
Janet Atherton, President, Association of Directors of Public Health
Shirley Cramer, Chief Executive, Royal Society of Public Health
Bryan Stoten, Chair, UK Public Health Register
Angela Mawle, Chief Executive, UK Public Health Association
Will Frost, Senior Policy Executive, British Medical Association

12 August 2013

Dear Colleagues

Re: Public health appointments to local authorities

You will have seen the media reports about the appointment of Directors of Public Health prompted by the decisions in Lancashire. These reports have not described the whole situation and so I thought it would be helpful to provide you with some background and further information. Duncan is currently on leave but I am writing to you on his behalf, as the Acting Chief Executive of PHE.

PHE's role in the appointment of Directors of Public Health

The Health and Social Care Act and the October 2012 guidance from the Department of Health is clear that local authorities must, acting jointly with Public Health England, which operates on behalf of the Secretary of State for Health, appoint an appropriately-qualified Director of Public Health to have responsibility for public health functions. Directors of Public Health have been added to the list of statutory chief officers and the term Director of Public Health is only applied to individuals who are on the Faculty-approved registers.

Within those clear stipulations, the organisation and structures of individual local authorities are a matter for local leadership and will differ around the country, depending on local circumstances. PHE's role is to work with local authorities to ensure that they have appropriate structures in place within the statutory requirements.

The DPH is the champion for health within the local authority and the guidance is clear that there should be direct accountability between the DPH and the local authority Chief Executive (or other head of paid service) for the exercise of the local authority's public health responsibilities and that the DPH should have direct access to elected members.

Public Health England, on behalf of the Secretary of State, has a number of roles in the recruitment process that are set out in the guidance. These include agreeing the job description with the local authority, assuring the Secretary of State that the recruitment and selection process was robust and that the local authority's preferred candidate has the necessary skills and experience to fulfil the role.

The Department of Health is in the process of amending the October 2012 guidance and making it 'statutory', and we do not expect any significant changes.

We have agreed with the Association of Directors of Public Health that there will be a list of the statutory Directors of Public Health on our website – the list will change as new appointments are made and interims are appointed to cover vacancies so we will regularly check with ADPH so we have a common list agreed between us.

Lancashire County Council

You will have seen the announcement by Lancashire County Council that it has appointed an executive lead with overall responsibility for adult services and public health whose background is in social work, rather than public health.

Throughout the appointments process, Public Health England (PHE) has been supporting Lancashire County Council to ensure the council complies with the regulations and has a statutory DPH jointly appointed by the Secretary of State and the Council.

The background is that, when the council was not successful in appointing to the role of DPH with responsibility for social care earlier this year, PHE agreed to support this recruitment process providing that

- the process was open to public health-trained candidates as well as others such as social care directors,
- PHE and Faculty of Public Health would be on the appointment panels and these would comply with AAC standards; and
- in the event of the appointment of a non-public health trained person, LCC would make a further appointment of statutory DPH for Lancashire.

Both the Faculty of Public Health and Public Health England were represented in the recruitment process. At no point has the Council looked to do anything other than the above, though this was not communicated in their initial press release, announcing the new executive lead's appointment. The following day PHE and the Council issued a joint statement making this position clear and the statement is as follows:

"Jo Turton, interim chief executive of Lancashire County Council, said:
"Throughout this process, we have worked closely with our colleagues at Public Health England and we were delighted to appoint Steve Gross as our executive lead with overall responsibility for adult services and public health

"As planned, we will now appoint a director of public health, who will work across the council as our statutory chief officer with responsibility for public health in Lancashire.

"We will carry out this process jointly with our partners in Public Health England."

The statutory DPH will work across the council as statutory chief officer with responsibility for public health in Lancashire will be a member of the senior leadership team and the appointment process will be carried out jointly with PHE through an AAC process in line with the national guidance.

Telford and Wrekin Council

There have also been some comments made about the position at Telford and Wrekin Council. In this instance, the Council has appointed a public health-qualified specialist to the post of Director of Public Health and Assistant Director, Health and Wellbeing, responsible to the Director of Health, Wellbeing and Care. This appointment was made with the support of PHE and the agreement of the Faculty of Public Health and the candidate takes up post at the end of September.

Public Health England is fully committed to working in partnership with local authorities; to advising them to design roles that enable them to deliver their new statutory duties in line with the national guidance and to recruiting excellent public health specialists who can provide the required advice and leadership locally.

I hope this helps clarify the position and I would be happy to discuss any other issues that you or colleagues may have.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R Gleave". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'R' and 'G'.

Richard Gleave
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- c.c. Felicity Harvey, Department of Health
Nicola Close, Chief Executive, Association of Directors of Public Health
Russell Ampofo, Acting Chief Executive, Faculty of Public Health
Carolyn Downs, Chief Executive, Local Government Association
Graeme McDonald, Director, SOLACE
David Kidney, Chief Executive, UK Public Health Register
PHE National Executive and Advisory Board members