

FUNCTIONS OF A DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

2.1 Description

The main duties of a DPH are set out in law, and how those statutory functions translate into everyday practice depends on a range of factors that will be shaped by local needs and priorities from area to area and over time.

Generic functions of the Director of Public Health

- Provide leadership, expertise and advice on a range of issues, from outbreaks of disease and emergency preparedness through to improving local people's health and concerns around access to health services
- Improve the health of the local population through the understanding the factors that determine health and ill health and how to change behaviour and promote both health and wellbeing in ways that reduce health inequalities
- Provide the public with expert, objective advice on health matters
- Promote action across the life course, working together with local authority colleagues such as the director of children's services and the director of adult services, and with NHS colleagues
- Deliver population healthcare advice to NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups
- Work through local resilience to ensure effective and tested plans are in place for the wider health sector to protect the local population from risks to public health
- Work with local criminal justice partners and police and crime commissioners to promote safer communities
- Work with wider civil society to engage local partners in fostering improved health and wellbeing

Statutory functions of the Director of Public Health

- Has responsibility for all of the duties of a local authority to take steps to improve public health
- Is responsible for any of the Secretary of State's public health protection of health improvement functions that is delegated to local authorities, either by arrangement or under regulations
- Exercises local authority functions in planning for, and responding to emergencies that present a risk to public health
- Is responsible for a local authority role in co-operating with the police, the probation services and the prison service to assess the risks posed by violent or sexual offenders
- Such other public health functions as the Secretary of State specifies in regulations, currently:

- The local authority's public health response as responsible authority under the Licensing Act 2003, such as making representations about licensing applications
- If the local authority provides or commissions a maternity or child health clinical the DPH will also have responsibility for providing Healthy Start vitamins (a function conferred on local authorities by the Healthy Start and Welfare Food Regulations 2005 as amended)
- Each DPH must have a place on their local health and wellbeing board

Local authority functions of the Director of Public Health

- Be an active and effective member of the health and wellbeing board, advising on and contributing to the development of joint strategic needs assessments and joint health and wellbeing strategies, and commission services accordingly
- Take responsibility for the management of the local authority's public health services, with professional responsibilities and accountability for effectiveness, availability and value for money
- Deliver Local Authority Public Health Commissioning responsibilities, including;
 - Sexual Health Services
 - Drug and Alcohol Misuse Services
 - 5-19 Healthy Child Programme
 - Tobacco Control Measures
 - Obesity prevention and treatment
 - NHS Healthchecks
 - National Child Measurement Programme
 - Local initiatives on workplace health
- Support, review and challenge public health screening and immunisation programmes
- Play a full part in the local authority's action to meet the needs of vulnerable children, for example linking effectively with the Local Safeguarding Children Board
- Contribute to, and influence the work of, NHS commissioners, ensuring a whole system approach across the public sector