



Supporting your Public Health Heroes:

Employer's Toolkit

A guide to facilitating UKPHR registration for
your public health practitioner workforce



Public health practitioners are the UK's unsung heroes: every day, they protect and promote the health and wellbeing of individuals, communities and populations across the UK.

As an employer, one of the best ways you can support this vital workforce is by encouraging and facilitating the registration of individual practitioners with UKPHR.

Recognise expertise. Guarantee standards. Protect the public.

By requiring registrants to demonstrate both their knowledge and their practical skills – the 'know how' as well as the 'show how' – the UKPHR practitioner registration scheme provides independent, robust quality assurance for practitioners working in all areas of public health.

Not only does this enable you to recognise and reward the expertise of your individual employees: it guarantees that your whole practitioner workforce is meeting the highest standards of conduct and competence, ultimately helping you to better protect the public.



About UKPHR

The UK Public Health Register (UKPHR) was established with government support in 2003 to register and regulate public health professionals in the UK. Accredited by the professional standards authority, we've been registering public health specialists since 2003 and public health practitioners since 2011.

About the Practitioner Registration Scheme

Public health practitioners achieve registration with us via one of several local, quality-assured registration schemes, each involving the development of a retrospective portfolio demonstrating their knowledge, understanding and application of 34 core standards.

Successfully registered practitioners are required to undergo regular re-registration (soon to be revalidation), and to undertake ongoing CPD to maintain and enhance their competence.

Supporting practitioner registration

Support from an employer can make all the difference during the registration process – so it's important to know what you can do to encourage and facilitate registration for your practitioners.

This toolkit is designed to help you do just that, with step-by-step guidance across the six areas in which you have the most significant influence:

Step 1.

Creating demand

Step 2.

Facilitating portfolio development

Step 3.

Providing access to structured CPD

Step 4.

Encouraging sharing of best practice

Step 5.

Promoting participation by volunteer assessors and verifiers

Step 6.

Celebrating registration

Each step has ideas, examples and case studies from other employers, as well as a list of clear, actionable points that you can put into practice for your own workforce. Let's get started!

Step 1. Create Demand

One of the most important things that you can do as an employer is to create demand for UKPHR registration.

The more value you place on registration within your organisation, the more likely your employees are to invest both their time and their effort in achieving it.

But it's not just your current employees that you can influence – you can use your recruitment and commissioning processes to encourage registration by future practitioner employees and contractors.

“As a line manager, when recruiting staff, I would value someone to have UKPHR practitioner registration – because I know, being registered myself, the breadth of knowledge and competency that's required of someone who has that registration.”



Kirsten Mueller, Senior Health Protection Practitioner
Public Health England South East



What you can do:

- ✓ When recruiting for practitioner roles, include UKPHR registration as an essential/desirable candidate requirement in your job description or person specification.
- ✓ When commissioning services, consider including as a contract specification a requirement for providers to seek UKPHR registration for any practitioners they use.
- ✓ Promote UKPHR registration during your onboarding process, by encouraging practitioners who are not yet registered to apply to their regional scheme.



#JDs4PHPs

More and more employers are including UKPHR registration as an essential/desirable candidate requirement during practitioner recruitment. To find examples of those who have done so, you can search on Twitter using the hashtag #JDs4PHPs (Job Descriptions for Public Health Practitioners).

This hashtag, which can be used by anyone who spots a job ad containing a reference to the UKPHR practitioner registration scheme, has proved to be an excellent way to recognise and celebrate those employers who are committed to supporting their practitioner workforce.



Some of the many employers featured on the #JDs4PHPs hashtag include:



Step 2. Facilitate portfolio development

Practitioner registration is a rigorous process, requiring a significant investment of time and effort on the part of the individual.

The most time-consuming part of the process – and the most important – is the compilation of a retrospective professional portfolio, which is assessed to demonstrate the registrant’s knowledge, understanding and application of UKPHR’s Practitioner Standards.

As an employer, it is in your interest to support employees undergoing the portfolio development process – the knowledge and skills they will gain in doing so will benefit your whole organisation.



The [UKPHR] Practitioner Registration scheme isn’t a training programme – it recognises people who have been through a whole series of steps already. [It] captures what they’ve already done and puts that into a coherent framework, so they can be assessed and rewarded.



*James Williams, Director of Public Health,
Medway Council*



What you can do:

- ✓ Allocate time during working hours for those undergoing registration to engage with the process, including by attending face-to-face events.
- ✓ Incorporate discussion on portfolio progress into one-to-one meetings and appraisals.
- ✓ Use internal comms to create and promote a positive environment in the workplace for those undergoing registration.

Good for practitioners, good for employers

As the Public Health Programme Manager at Lincolnshire County Council, David Stacey knows exactly how valuable the practitioner registration process can be – both for individual practitioners and for the organisations that employ them.



*David Stacey,
Public Health
Manager,
Lincolnshire
County Council*



It’s enormously beneficial to us as an employer for our public health practitioners to be registered with UKPHR. We require all the practitioners we employ to be either already registered, or prepared to work towards registration – this not only provides us with assurance

that they are competent to nationally approved professional standards, it also encourages them to reflect on and improve their own practice, and increases their professional credibility among NHS and other colleagues.

By supporting their practitioner employees through the registration process, organisations like Lincolnshire County Council can not only demonstrate that they take public health seriously, but also that they are prepared to invest in and promote the development of their staff.



Our support of individual practitioners through the registration process is symbolic of the importance of public health within our organisation, and a practical demonstration of our commitment to developing our whole public health workforce.



Step 3. Provide access to structured CPD

All practitioners applying for UKPHR registration are required to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding and application of 34 core standards¹, which are based on the Public Health Skills and Knowledge Framework 2016, the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework, and the National Occupation Standards for Public Health.

These core standards provide an in-built structure for CPD, meaning that it is easier to identify the training that will be of most benefit to your individual employees – all you need to do is to help them to access it.

“Employers should provide opportunities for effective continuing professional development, as well as access to up to date research and relevant knowledge.”

Local Government Association (2018)

Standards for Employers of Public Health teams - Standard 3



What you can do:

- ✓ Use the core standards/key competencies required as part of UKPHR practitioner registration as a framework for your appraisal process.
- ✓ Support access to secondments to develop experience or skills that are not part of a practitioner's usual job role.
- ✓ Help existing registrants to meet their revalidation requirements by encouraging participation in existing formal CPD schemes and training programmes.

Making CPD work for you

Several organisations provide useful resources and tools to help make CPD for your practitioner workforce more efficient and more effective. These include:

Health Education England



- The Public Health Practitioner's Education and Training Directory, which lists all current provision of education and training for public health practitioners against UKPHR standards.

The Faculty of Public Health



- An online CPD diary tool to help practitioners keep an accurate record of their learning activities, free to FPH members.
- The FPH Practitioner accredited programme – a series of workshops structured around the UKPHR standards.

“The responsibility for fulfilling CPD requirements and achieving learning needs rests with the individual. However, the employing organisation (including locum agencies, where applicable, and overseas organisations) should provide support for professional development as good practice, in partnership with other relevant bodies.”

Faculty of Public Health (2019)

Continuing Professional Development (CPD): Policies, processes and strategic direction

¹To view the full list of 34 core standards, visit: <https://ukphr.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/UKPHR-Practitioner-Standards-2018-2nd-Ed.pdf>

Step 4. Encourage sharing of best practice

The opportunity to meet and interact with other public health professionals is frequently stated as a key benefit by participants of the practitioner registration scheme.

As well as helping them to grow and progress in their own careers, the networks that your practitioner employees develop during registration can also add considerable value for you, their employer.

A well-connected practitioner workforce can help your organisation to access a wider base of knowledge and skill from across the whole public health sector.

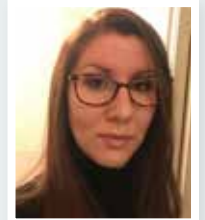


What you can do:

- ✓ Support registrants to attend events held during work hours as part of the scheme.
- ✓ Consider establishing an internal mentorship scheme to support your employees through the registration process and to further develop leadership skills amongst existing registrants within your organisation.
- ✓ Encourage membership of professional bodies such as FPH and RSPH.

Broader networks, broader horizons

Sam Glover, who is now CEO at Healthwatch Essex, completed the UKPHR Practitioner Registration Scheme while she was a newcomer to the public health sector, in her previous role as Dental Public Health Program Manager at Public Health England.



Sam Glover,
CEO,
Healthwatch,
Essex



While I'd initially been apprehensive about taking part in the UKPHR Practitioner Registration scheme alongside doing my first real-world public health job, looking back, it was the best thing that could have happened. The portfolio development process opened up so many invaluable networking and collaboration opportunities.

The mutually beneficial relationships that Sam built with the other practitioners in her cohort not only helped to broaden her own professional horizons – they also benefited her employer.



By collaborating with one of my colleagues on the scheme, I was able – for the first time – to get a dental-specific page included in the JSNA [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment] for Essex County Council.



Step 5. Promote participation by volunteer assessors and verifiers

The UKPHR Practitioner Registration scheme relies on voluntary participation by experienced public health professionals to assess and verify potential registrants and their portfolios.

Volunteers develop a range of valuable transferable skills in these roles, and as part of the UKPHR Practitioner Assessors and Verifiers Network, they gain access to opportunities that can provide many professional benefits – both for them and for you.



As an assessor it is great to see [how] registration encourages individuals to reflect on their work [and] to explore and experience different disciplines within the field of public health. Although I became an assessor to support other practitioners, it has also enabled me to learn more about the vast array of projects, research, roles and settings we have in Wales to improve population health and wellbeing.

Emma Cahill (Principal Public Health Practitioner, Merthyr Tydfil Local Public Health Team), Assessor for UKPHR Practitioner Registration Scheme – Wales



What you can do:

- ✓ Encourage your more experienced employees to become volunteer assessors and verifiers and to join the UKPHR Practitioner Assessors and Verifiers Network.
- ✓ Allow volunteer assessors and verifiers time to engage with their role as part of their professional duties.
- ✓ Consider voluntary experience with UKPHR alongside any professional experience when assessing individuals for internal promotion.



Volunteering [can] help develop key skills vital for leadership and management roles, such as coaching, mentoring, communication, creativity, team-building and time management. It can also have a powerful impact in increasing confidence, building greater self-awareness and in some cases enhancing professional knowledge. There is also significant potential for networking, both within and outside the organisation. These benefits are not restricted to those at the start of their career, and can be just as applicable for established leaders.

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD):
'Volunteering to Learn' research report 2014



Step 6. Celebrate registration

Achieving registration with UKPHR is a significant professional milestone for a practitioner.

It signals to peers, clients and employers that an individual has the experience, dedication and professionalism required to provide the very best public health service.

Likewise, celebrating registration (and registrants) promotes your organisation's status as a top-quality employer and public health service provider.



What you can do:

- ✓ Encourage the use of the UKPHR Registrant logo by registrant employees.
- ✓ Include figures for percentage of registered practitioners in your annual reports and impact reports, and promote your role as an employer through quotes/testimonials from employees that you have supported through the scheme.
- ✓ Support nomination of your practitioner employees for the UKPHR Innovation in Public Health Practice Awards.



I firmly believe in the benefits that would be achieved by establishing a professionally defined PH practitioner workforce within Scotland – namely a workforce with demonstrated skills and competencies – and the registration offered by UKPHR is very important in achieving this.

Elaine Young, Assistant Director of Public Health, NHS Ayrshire and Arran



Registered
UKPHR
Practitioner

Protecting the public | improving practice

UKPHR Registrant Logo

UKPHR Practitioner Registration Schemes are available in the following areas:

East of England

Thames Valley

East Midlands

Wessex

London, Kent, Surrey & Sussex

West Midlands

North East

Yorkshire & Humber

North West

Wales

South West

Scottish Boards

NB There is currently no formal local practitioner registration scheme in Northern Ireland. Interested individuals can contact us at register@ukphr.org

To apply for a place on a regional scheme, individual practitioners should contact their relevant scheme coordinator. A list of coordinators and their contact details can be found at www.ukphr.org/practitioner

Benefits of practitioner registration

For employers:

- ✓ **Quality assurance** – registration is a guarantee that high standards of practice are being met and maintained by your whole practitioner workforce.
- ✓ **A foundation for CPD** – our core scheme standards can be used as the basis for a structured, effective CPD program and can streamline internal appraisal processes.
- ✓ **Improved workforce skills** – our portfolio development process helps your employees develop valuable transferable skills such as leadership and self-reflection.
- ✓ **Cost savings** – encouraging practitioner registration is a cost-effective way to meet your due diligence requirements during recruitment.

For individuals:

- ✓ **Confidence in existing skills** – registered status sets practitioners apart from their peers and is an objective recognition of their knowledge and achievements.
- ✓ **Motivation to improve their practice** – our re-registration/revalidation system requires registered practitioners to continually enhance their professional competence.
- ✓ **Career development opportunities** – our portfolio development process facilitates networking and sharing of best practice, enhancing registrants' career progression.

For the public:

- ✓ **Reassurance** – registration gives people peace of mind that their public health practitioners know what they are doing.
- ✓ **Accountability** – people can check the credentials of individual practitioners and know that there is someone to complain to if things go wrong.