Public Health in the West Midlands

"Public Health is the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organised efforts of society"

Sir Donald Acheson 1988

Public health is the science and art of promoting and protecting health and well-being, preventing ill-health and prolonging life through the organised efforts of society. This is done by identifying risks that affect different people in different places at different stages of their life. Public Health seeks to find the best ways to minimise these risks so individuals can live long and fulfilling lives.

Public health consultants look at 'the bigger picture' and then take action to promote healthy lifestyles, prevent disease, protect and improve general health, and improve healthcare services.

For information specific to training as a specialist or as a practitioner in public health in the west midlands, visit the School of Public Health pages here [1]. For some of the key initiatives HEE is involved in, in the region, see below.
Making Every Contact Count (MECC)

We have an ongoing commitment to embed principles of prevention and MECC into undergraduate curricula of all commissioned courses, through Education Commissioning for Quality (ECQ) process and regular meetings of MECC Higher Education Institutes (HEI) Network.

We have developed two versions of the MECC e-learning on-line training, one more focused on NHS staff and the other on Local Authority (LA) staff. Find out more on: www.makingeverycontactcount.co.uk [2]

MECC Plus and Wider Determinants of Health

Beyond the alcohol, diet, exercise and smoking advice as part of MECC, we have run a number of exercises to raise awareness amongst staff of the wider determinants of health, such as the impact of illegal money lending on health and wellbeing. Our Integrated Care Transformation Team has commissioned development of a MECC Pus Toolkit for the wider public health workforce to Make Every Contact Count (MECC) for Wellbeing.

It emphasises a person-centred approach to wellbeing — a shift in emphasis from MECC being a ?do to? towards MECC being a ?how to? approach. It uses as its basis a Person-Centred Outcomes Assessment tool — focusing on the 5 themes critical to personal outcomes assessment (health, relationships, participation, security and independence). It includes a focus on the wider determinants of wellbeing — the emphasis is very much on ?what matters to you?? and not just what matters to the workforce. It includes a focus on non-medical solutions to mental health issues such as social prescribing, keeping an emphasis on lifestyle behaviours with contextualised examples. It also includes awareness raising about health literacy. It has a particular focus on utility for integrated care working. The basic competences for Making Every Contact Count (MECC) can form a shared competence set for frontline staff throughout the system and aid system mobility.

PH Workforce Development

In the West Midlands we have a PH Practitioner Registration Scheme which recruited its eighth cohort in September 2016. With this cohort progressing well, the UK Public Health Register (UKPHR) has approved a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) policy for registered practitioners. After being piloted in the West Midlands, it has been implemented nationally from 1st July 2016.

A PH Community Fellowship Scheme is in place, where a PH specialty registrar leads a team of trainee doctors on a four month community voluntary sector project. Cohort one completed very successfully, and we have expanded the scheme with ten teams for cohort two commencing December 2016.

A skills audit has taken place of the PH training and development needs of the National Association of Sport and Leisure Trusts (SPORTA) workforce. The recommendations from the audit have been completed and recommendations are being taken forward by SPORTA and local authority colleagues.

In the West Midlands we delivered the first UK Conference on Dementia & Sight Loss, in collaboration with NHS England Eye Health Network & Vision 2020 in July 2016. This successful event highlighted the real need to raise eye health as a public health issue given the huge impact of sight loss on mental and physical wellbeing; we have commissioned RNIB Scotland to provide further training to frontline staff in community, acute sector and care homes using a face-to-face, e-learning and Train the Trainer approach.

We are also involved in advising and working with West Midlands? Fire Service with regards to public
health and prevention, making links between fire, social inequalities and health, including input into the national Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) Fire Service Toolkit and workforce training and development.

Recognising the key role of community pharmacy support staff, we have commissioned 200 training places for them to achieve RSPH Level 2 Award in Understanding Health Improvement.

A suite of podcasts on training in public health has been developed in the West Midlands to complement both specialists? and practitioners? learning, providing useful preparation for the masterclasses and signposting to further information (see SoundCloud and iTunes, search for "Training in Public Health", also #phdevelop). The podcasts include a wide range of interviewees focusing on the sharing of their experiences, highlighting skills they have developed and how these relate to the curriculum (both Specialist and Practitioner). An editorial group with representation from HEE, FPH and the University of Birmingham leads the podcast development. From a practitioner perspective in particular, the podcasts provide useful ?pre-listening? prior to attendance at relevant masterclasses.

**Podcast topics include:**

- WM PH Community Fellowship Scheme
- UK PH Register
- Armed Conflict & Health
- Preparing for consultant interviews
- MFPH Part B Exam
- PH Ethics & Law
- Sustainability & Health
- Academic Public Health
- Transport & Health
- Global Health
- PH Workforce Development
- Community Development

**The proof of concept pilot**

This commenced in July 2016. This has involved 300 school children across Birmingham to undertake Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) Youth Health Champion (YHC) Award through the simulation of job roles in the NHS and public health. The Youth Health Champion award is a qualification that gives students the knowledge and confidence to deliver a message around health and well-being to their peers in schools and colleges.

**PH Network**

Based on the East Midlands? model and led by Public Health England (PHE) WM, a PH Consultant Network has been established that meets four times a year. It will assist Educational Supervisors in meeting their portfolio requirements and it will meet Key Area 10 of the new curriculum which is performing and delivering as a consultant.
Key Contacts

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Find out more about our national activity on population health, what other areas are doing to promote this area locally, on the dedicated national page [6].

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Related Content

Population health and prevention

Public health prevention and promotion is a priority for the NHS. Developing the public health workforce and raising awareness of public health among the wider NHS and social care staff will help to transform public health and improve the health of the nation.

Read more [7]

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Links
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