



## **Association of Directors of Public Health – submission to the consultation on Public Health England’s Strategy for research, development and innovation.**

The Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) is the representative body for Directors of Public Health (DsPH) in the UK. It seeks to improve and protect the health of the population through DPH development, sharing good practice, and advising on public health policy and legislation at a local, regional, national and international level. [www.adph.org.uk](http://www.adph.org.uk)

### **Overview and summary**

The Association of Directors of Public Health welcomes this consultation on PHE’s strategy for research, development & innovation, in view of the importance of national and local research and information to support evidence based and effective public health activity, strategy, service planning and commissioning, and monitoring of outcomes and effectiveness.

Directors of Public Health (DsPH) in England (supported nationally by Public Health England) are the frontline leaders of public health, working across health improvement, health protection and health care public health service planning & commissioning.

Directors of Public Health and others working across the local and national PH system require access to high quality local and national research data and scientific evidence base to support evidence based decision making to inform service planning, commissioning and practice within and across all public health sectors and organisations.

It is increasingly important for Directors of Public Health to be able to demonstrate the economic/value for money arguments in support of public health interventions, innovations and practice. As such, the Strategy and subsequent research programme should support practical, accessible and adaptable information, guidance and tools that illustrate these arguments across a wide range of topics and settings, and enable putting information and evidence into practice.

Similarly, the Strategy and subsequent research programme should enable the development of information and integrated pathway approaches that support Directors of Public Health and their Local Authorities to:

- fulfil the full potential for significant public health/health inequality innovations and gains across Local Authority functions and through cross-sectoral collaborations with the NHS and other sectors (such as the voluntary & community sector);
- design and deliver effective and integrated health and social care.

The Strategy and subsequent research programme should:

- be set within the context of PHE Information & Intelligence provision;
- be aligned with other health research strategies in England within the NHS, research centres and other national bodies to ensure that research priorities, collaboration and relationships are supported, unnecessary duplication is avoided, and national and local priorities are met;
- take account of the information needs of DsPH and Health & Wellbeing Boards in fulfilling their responsibilities – and therefore be collaboratively developed with the involvement of key \*stakeholders including DsPH and other PH professionals, Local Government, NHS, and the Voluntary & Community Sector;

- take account of information/intelligence gaps nationally and locally – for example we are aware of gaps in small area data, making it more difficult for DsPH to assess and address local (for example at ward level) health inequalities;
- address the deficit of research on high impact upstream health improvement measures at national, local and international levels.

## **ADPH response to specific consultation questions**

This initial consultation document is broad-brush and therefore our response is not detailed, but rather highlights key principles and priorities for further development of, and consultation on, both the Strategy and the priorities for future research.

Please refer to the overview and summary above, and specific comments below.

### ***1. Are our stated challenges and opportunities the correct ones?***

There needs to be an integrated, and cross-government/sector approach to prevention and early intervention to support resource efficiencies and adoption into policy and practice.

The Strategy should support collaborative research by a range of stakeholders in order to achieve a whole system and inclusive approach and outcomes.

Continuous feedback loops will accelerate the translation of information into knowledge and the adoption of new evidence when this is available. Collaboration, sharing of information, repositories, standards and knowledge technologies are vital in enabling this.

Research outcomes should be accessible to both public health professionals and to support innovative approaches across other sectors – to inform policy development and decision making across the wider determinants of health (for example in local government).

### ***2. Is the knowledge pathway a useful model?***

A knowledge pathway is a useful model for describing the information cycle to expand knowledge and improve public health and reduce health inequalities. However, this will need detailed development in collaboration with \*stakeholders (as highlighted in summary/overview above).

### ***3. Are the next steps appropriate for finalising this strategy?***

The Strategy and research programme will need further development in collaboration with \*stakeholders (as highlighted in summary/overview above).

### ***4. Are the key tasks likely to enable implementation of this strategy with partners across the public health research landscape and are there any others that we have missed?***

We would agree that the key tasks of knowledge, infrastructure, capacity, innovation and communication are a useful framework for the strategy.

**Association of Directors of Public Health  
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