

The Association of Directors of Public Health

Annual Review 2023/24





ADPH Annual Review

Foreword



Greg Fell, ADPH President

I can of course only take partial credit for ADPH's achievements over the last year, having taken over as President from Prof. Jim McManus last Autumn. Thanks to Jim's hard work and tireless enthusiasm, we have gone from strength to strength and continue to be a powerful force for good. This strength doesn't just come from the Board, Council and staff – all of whom do an incredible job – but from **all** our members. Thanks to contributions from members from all four countries and the dependant territories, and strong partnerships with a wide range of organisations, we have advocated strongly for long-term solutions to create healthy environments for all. This call is key to all our work and is one which, if adopted, will help to reduce preventable ill-health, and benefit the economy by reducing demand on our health and social care services, and improving productivity.

It is vital then that as we move forward, we continue to listen to and learn from ADPH's membership so that we constantly improve our practice to benefit local communities and, at the same time, effectively represent the voice of local public health at a national level to bring about positive change for the whole country.

While we don't know what opportunities and challenges the next Government will bring, we do know that despite our small size, we are a trusted and respected voice and, thanks to our collective dedication, will be on hand to be as constructive as possible, and as challenging as necessary in order to improve, protect and promote our population's health.



Nicola Close, ADPH Chief Executive

Dealing with the associated costs of being a core participant in the Covid-19 Public Inquiry earlier this year resulted in significant financial challenges. It was however important for us to represent our members' experience of the pandemic on this national stage and, thanks to generous one-off contributions from members, a temporary freeze on recruitment and improved efficiency, we are on now on course to rebuild our reserves.

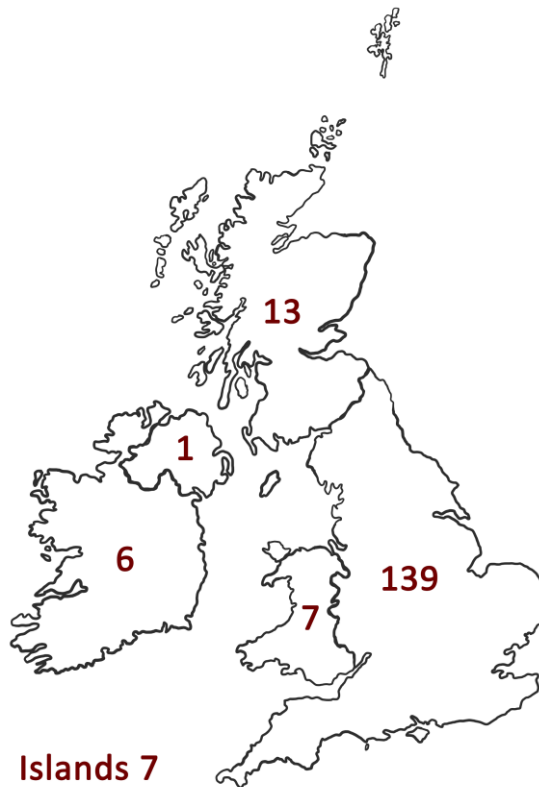
This year, we have also been finishing the work scheduled in the current business plan, whilst developing our new, ambitious three-year plan. The plan is focused on the needs of our members, who are at the centre of all we do, and takes a systematic approach to delivering our priorities. We will also be ensuring our business and governance systems are efficient and that we give value for money for our members and sponsors while maintaining our ethical stance.

We hope that the work done to improve our internal systems and strengthen our relationships with members and partners alike will allow us to continue to innovate to provide effective support and advocacy, without ever compromising on quality.

Our members 2023/24

435 Members 	213 Associate Members in 60% of Local Authorities 	41 Alumni Members 
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Numbers of DsPH by country



20 New DsPH 	14 New DsPH used to be Associate Members 	95% Full members engaged with ADPH activity 
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Our priorities

We have secured funding from [The Health Foundation](#) for [three collaborative projects](#) that build long-term, sustainable partnerships with existing partners and organisations that do not necessarily see themselves as public health. Each project involves all four countries and dependant territories and will run until 2026.

Commercial Determinants of Health (CDOH)

This project will support local public health teams and their partners to increase awareness of CDOH and develop guidance on how to work positively with local business, whilst combating negative CDOH by:

- Building a consensus across different organisations with an interest in CDOH, ensuring a wider context which cuts across single issues such as gambling, obesity and tobacco.
- Working closely with external groups who are doing useful work on CDOH for local authorities and ensuring that the Director of Public Health (DPH) voice is represented.
- Collating examples of good practice to develop a resource for members.

Our advisory group is chaired by Gerry Taylor (DPH for Sunderland City Council) and is made up of DsPH and representatives from [The Institute of Public Health](#), [Welsh Government](#) and [The Health Foundation](#).

Healthy Places

This project will develop relationships between planning and public health professionals in local areas by:

- Evaluating the existing tools that can be used to build public health into the planning system.
- Working closely with the [Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport](#) (ADEPT) to strengthen partnership working between Directors of Place and DsPH.
- Collating and sharing evidence and good practice.

This year, we have held a workshop for DsPH, their planning colleagues and members of ADEPT to understand current relationships and begin to develop a shared language.

Our advisory group is chaired by Darrell Gale (DPH for East Sussex County Council) and is made up of representatives from the [Quality of Life Foundation](#), [ADEPT](#), [Chartered Institute of Environmental Health](#), [The Royal Town and Planning Institute](#), and the [Town and Country Planning Association](#).

Infants, Children and Young People (ICYP)

This project will build on our [Adverse Childhood Experiences work](#) to develop stronger partnerships by:

- Engaging with a wide network of organisations to ensure we capture all the key voices in this space.
- Collating existing policy on adversity, trauma, and resilience to identify gaps and inform next steps.
- [Collating examples of good practice](#) of work to develop a resource for members.

Our advisory group is chaired by Sarah Muckle (DPH for Bradford Metropolitan District Council) and is made up of representatives from the four nations, as well as the [Association of Directors of Children's Services](#), [Royal College of Pediatrics and Child Health](#), [Institute of Health Visiting](#), [School of Public Health Nurses Association](#), and the [NSPCC](#).

Governance and management

Summary

This year, we have successfully managed varying pressures, including an unexpected Presidential election and high financial costs resulting from our participation in the Covid-19 Public Inquiry. We have also:

- Completed the implementation of the 2021-24 [Business Plan](#).
- Appointed [three new team members](#).
- Continued to facilitate a hybrid and flexible working model for staff by ensuring IT systems and hardware are secure and robust.
- Reviewed and updated MS365 and email security.
- Secured funding for the English HIV and Sexual Health Commissioners' Group ([EHSHCG](#)), English Substance Use Commissioners' Group ([ESUCG](#)) and new English Healthy Weight Commissioners' Group ([EHWCG](#)) through annual subscriptions.
- Undertaken a comprehensive review of policies and protocols in order to improve efficiency.
- Completed our yearly accounts, which were signed off without exception by our auditors, Begbies.
- Published our 2023 Annual Report in a new format.
- Conducted quarterly wellbeing surveys to support staff wellbeing and development.
- Added a 'live' searchable directory of current DsPH to our [website](#).
- Developed the 2024-27 Business Plan.
- Organised a Project Management course and training for 12 staff members.
- Established support for the UKPHR Portfolio Group.
- Put in place urgent measures to ensure our reserves (depleted because of the cost of the Covid-19 Inquiry) return to safe levels through a call for extra support from DsPH, a freeze on recruitment and other cost-saving initiatives.

PHocus on the ADPH Board Elections

What we did

During 2023/24, we needed to appoint a new President, Vice-President and two new [Board Members](#) following the resignation of our previous President, Prof. Jim McManus. We kept members informed of the vacancies through our usual communications channels and to manage the electronic ballot process, we commissioned UK Engage, an independent, external provider.

The impact

By holding the elections mid-term we were able to ensure continuity of governance and ensure that the transition between posts was as smooth as possible. Using WeDPH and BriePH to keep members updated had the dual impact of engaging members with the process, and cementing WeDPH and BriePH as our main communication channels, resulting in a 68% turnout. Meanwhile, the use of an external provider to oversee the ballot has guaranteed that the process is fair and trustworthy – an important value for ADPH members and staff alike.

Supporting our members

Summary

This year, we focused on meeting our members' support needs through our flagship events and ongoing programmes, whilst developing them to meet the increasing demands of the DPH role. We have:

- Provided a space for our members to network and share knowledge on tackling Drugs and Alcohol and the challenges of health inequalities in Children and Young People at our Annual Workshop.
- Held our Associate and New DsPH workshops to share ideas, resources, and challenges by focusing on key skills required to navigate and develop their role.
- Held our face-to-face Annual Conference in December providing an opportunity for members to discuss working in partnership across services to improve public health. The event was also an opportunity to engage in conversation with the Scottish, Welsh, and English Chief Medical Officers (CMOs).
- Developed a programme of new [offer elements](#) in order to increase engagement with our Alumni.
- Expanded our pool of mentors in our [Mentoring Scheme](#) and supported them in their practice through facilitated peer sessions, making 29 new matches during the year.
- Organised a reflective writing session in partnership with the [Faculty of Public Health](#) to support our members continuous professional development.



I really appreciated hearing from experienced and highly regarded DsPH, especially when talking about the DPH role, their experience first year and beyond. It's provided me with lots to reflect upon. Really good use of time.

PHocus on members' development

What we did

This year, to strengthen our members' professional growth and guarantee our support offer elements fit current demands, we conducted a member needs survey among DsPH. As a result, we have:

- Developed new [support offer elements](#) including regular New DsPH calls, Action Learning Sets, shadowing opportunities in other public health organisations, and an expanded Mentoring Scheme.
- Identified key challenges and priority areas so that we could develop an [Annual event plan](#) focused on these, including leadership, public health budget management and workforce management.

Impact

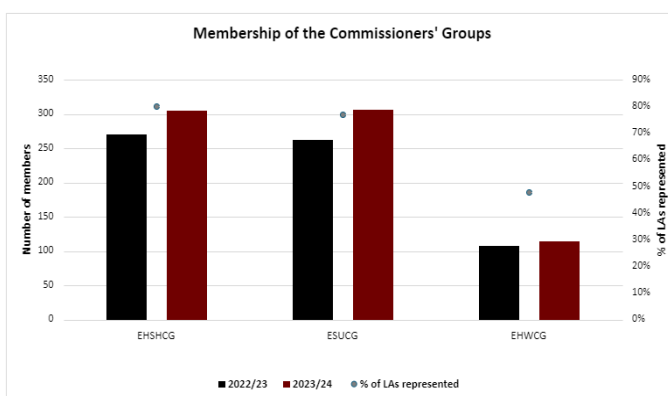
Carrying out the survey gave us vital insight into what type of support members most value, enabling us to develop an expanded support offer that will meet members' needs.

Improving public health practice

Summary

This year, [Networks](#) and [Commissioners' Groups](#) (CGs) have continued to promote and embed practice improvement across their work programmes.

- DPH involvement has increased, and Sector-led Improvement (SLI) Leads for all Networks and CGs have been elected to drive forward improvement work across their regions. An SLI Leads forum has been set up to support peer to peer learning and sharing of practice.
- Two new DPH representatives have been appointed onto the [SLI Programme Board](#) to strengthen the DPH voice.
- We hosted seven national webinars for the CGs, which were well attended by members from all regions. There was widespread agreement (4.2 out of 5) that the events identified ways to develop and improve practice.



CG outputs we have supported:

- ESHCG and ESUCG [Annual Reports](#).
 - A [PrEP insight report](#) by ESHCG outlining the barriers and facilitators to increasing PrEP uptake.
 - [Guidance](#) from ESUCG on commissioning or recommissioning Tier 4 services.
 - A [template letter of approach](#) by ESUCG to facilitate engagement with local police leaders about safer inhalation kits.
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PHocus on the PH Grant workshop

What we did

In May 2023, we delivered a workshop for members to discuss the Public Health Grant (PHG) and how to lead difficult budget conversations. The event provided an opportunity for DsPH to share local experiences to support practice improvement. Matt Pearce (SLI Lead and DPH Herefordshire Council) and Lucy Hubber (ADPH Council Member and DPH Nottingham City Council) presented their regional approaches, including an introduction to a useful [guide](#) on using the ring-fenced PHG.

The impact

- The session was attended by 92 members with feedback describing it as “timely, informative, and practical with useful learning shared.”
- The workshop provided insight to members to inform local frameworks – a number of DsPH are now adapting and applying the PH Grant tool to support planning in their local authority.

Policy

Summary

This year, we have continued to engage with members and external stakeholders on a range of topics and have:

- Refreshed our suite of policy position statements and circulated these to partners and stakeholders, including parliamentarians.
- Organised nine calls for DsPH with the English CMO, focusing on topics including ultra processed foods, as well as more urgent issues, such as the measles outbreak.
- Organised 20 policy advisory group meetings and six meetings for our Council.
- Responded to 13 consultations, providing member views to feed into inquiries and calls for evidence, such as [updating alcohol labelling guidance for no and low alcohol alternatives](#) and the [major conditions strategy](#).
- Worked with other organisations to publish '[Health of the next generation: Good food for children](#)'.
- Produced a summary of the Spring Budget, highlighting announcements most relevant to members.

PHocus on the Smokefree Generation 2030

What we did

In October 2023, the [Department of Health and Social Care](#) published [Stopping the start: our new plan to create a smokefree generation](#), and announced a consultation on proposals to protect future generations from the harms of smoking. The paper also included measures to address vaping among children and young people. Following extensive consultation with members and stakeholders, we submitted our [response](#), based on our position and recommendations established in the [ADPH Tobacco policy position](#). Following the closure of the consultation and the announcement that disposable vapes would be [banned to protect children's health](#), we published a [press release](#) reiterating the importance of this landmark legislation and its potential positive impact.

The impact

If passed, this legislation will be the greatest development in tobacco control since the ban on smoking in enclosed spaces in 2007. To ensure recognition of the vital role ADPH and DsPH have had in presenting the case for such legislation, we have worked with partners to keep the importance of proposals at the forefront of the debate. As well as strengthening our relationships with partner organisations and coalitions, such as [SFAC](#), this approach has allowed us to support members with appropriate resources to highlight the key issues to a wide range of audiences at each stage of the legislative process. For example, we developed a Q&A shortly after the proposals were announced for members to utilise with colleagues and local media, used the 40th anniversary of No Smoking Day to call on the Government to publish the bill and, more recently, have endorsed and promoted a [briefing](#), developed by [SFAC](#), urging parliamentarians to support the legislation and giving counter-arguments to industry opposition.

Advising: Our Collective Voice programme

Summary

Through implementing our new Public Affairs Strategy to amplify the collective voice of DsPH, we have:

- Met with key parliamentarians from across the political spectrum and communicated the DPH perspective at high profile meetings, including parliamentary roundtables such as the Smokefree Generation Roundtable hosted by Dame Andrea Leadsom.
- Produced a suite of public affairs documents for our members to utilise, including the [ADPH Manifesto](#), Party Conference Season Summary 2023, Guide to Parliamentary Re-Shuffle (October 2023), and our regular [Parliamentary](#) and [Consultation scans](#).
- Continued to work collaboratively with a wide range of [partners](#) including other charities and professional bodies, the NHS, local government, UK Health Security Agency, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, the UK's four CMOs, and public health bodies, to ensure the voice of local public health is represented in national conversations and decisions about key issues.

PHocus on the ADPH Manifesto for a Healthier Nation

What we did

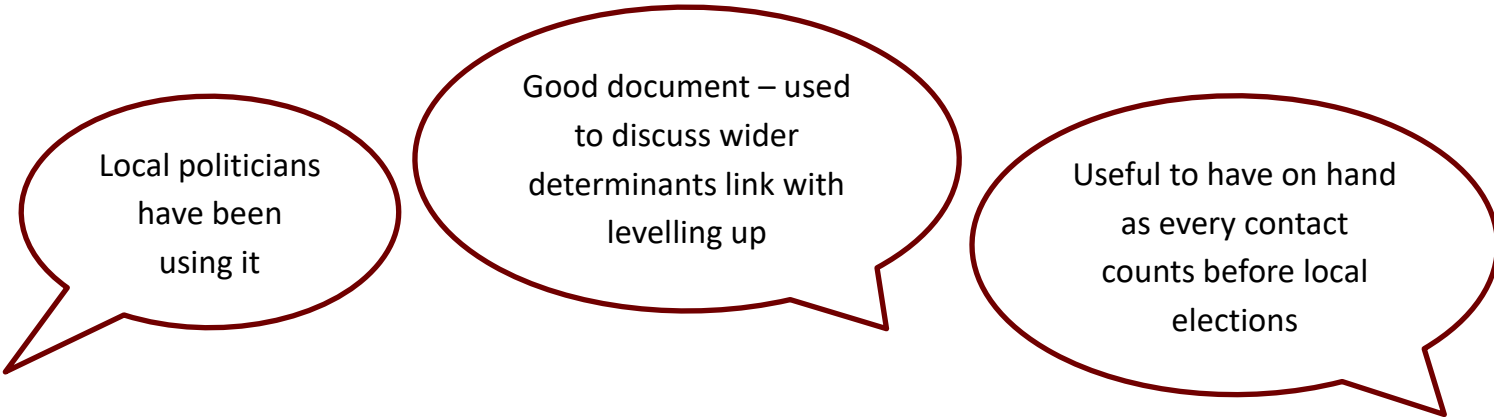
In May 2023, we published the [ADPH Manifesto](#), to take advantage of the key influencing window ahead of the next General Election when political parties are drafting manifesto policies. The document includes four key recommendations:

- to develop and pass a new Public Health Act
- to reduce health inequalities
- to end child poverty
- to invest in public health

We shared the Manifesto with parliamentarians and key stakeholders and wrote a comment piece about our calls on [politics.co.uk](#). The document was also published via our website and social media.

The impact

Publishing the Manifesto has strengthened our relationships with stakeholders and facilitated multiple meetings with individuals and organisations. The document is a key resource for members to refer to and share when meeting partners and local politicians.



Local politicians
have been
using it

Good document – used
to discuss wider
determinants link with
levelling up

Useful to have on hand
as every contact
counts before local
elections

Communications and engagement

Summary

Working to improve the way we communicate with our members and continuing to cement ADPH as a trusted voice of public health, as well as broadening public understanding of the DPH role, we have:

- Secured around 700 [media mentions](#), with quotes in most national newspapers, television stations, commercial radio, trade press and magazines, including the [Daily Mail](#) and the [New Statesman](#).
- Issued over 60 statements on a range of topics and led on the publication of consensus statements, including a joint [response to London's extension of the free school meal scheme](#).
- Published a monthly Presidential [blog](#), which continues to be widely 'liked' on social media.
- Published a [collection of explainers](#) to mark the 175th anniversary of the Public Health Act.
- Attracted 27.9K visitors to our updated ADPH [website](#).
- Secured 17.8K followers on our [X \(Twitter\) feed](#), with an average of 5,000 impressions a day – our [LinkedIn account](#) also continues to grow in popularity with over 3,000 followers.
- Held the second [ADPH Awards](#), recognising and celebrating the work of DsPH and their teams.
- Refreshed BriePH, our weekly members' newsletter and our monthly external newsletter, [eDPH](#).
- Reviewed and improved our member induction processes to ensure seamless onboarding.
- Held brainstorming and interview sessions with alumni members to inform new engagement offer.
- Began sending a monthly email bulletin to Scotland and Wales to ensure members are kept informed of ADPH news and engagement opportunities.



PHocus on WeDPH

What we did

We have introduced a new secure online platform for members to:

- Share confidential information and increase the sense of connectedness among ADPH members.
- Improve communication between ADPH staff and members.

The impact

WeDPH has developed into a very effective communications tool, with two thirds of our members engaged with the platform. By adding groups of members in phases, we have been able to manage its development, creating a range of groups in line with demand. As well as groups for our Board, Council and each of our Policy Advisory Groups, we now have active member groups to discuss a range of public health issues, including the implications of Section 114 notices and Islands' approaches to public health. WeDPH has also enabled staff to communicate more efficiently with members, resulting in increased opportunities to represent member experiences in our external communications. Distribution of resources, event materials and important updates from external agencies has also improved through use of the platform.