



The Association of Directors of Public Health

eDPH March, 2026

ADPH Activity

Membership news | March

We are pleased to announce the following membership welcomes and updates:

DsPH: Claire McIver (DPH Cheshire East), Derek Ward (DPH Norfolk), Trudi Grant (Interim DPH Lincolnshire)

Associates: Janani Arulraja (CPH GLA), Michelle Stamp (CPH Middlesbrough), Nicola Dennis (CPH Isle of Wight), Nicole Ahmed (CPH Middlesbrough)

ADPH Chief Executive to retire

Our Chief Executive, Nicola Close MBE, will be retiring later this year, following over 30 years of working in public health.

Her decision comes at a time when support from, and engagement with, our membership is stronger than ever and Nicola would like to thank everyone for their continued support, both to her personally and to the rest of the ADPH team.

Nicola will remain in post until the summer, and we will share updates on the recruitment of her successor as soon as we can.

In the meantime, please join us in expressing our gratitude to Nicola for her exceptional leadership, guidance, and for steering ADPH since 2007!

ADPH Board election

We are delighted to announce that Ansaf Azhar (DPH Oxfordshire) has been re-elected as Honorary Secretary (Governance) on the [ADPH Board](#). Congratulations Ansaf!

ADPH submissions of written evidence

Our submissions of written evidence to the following parliamentary committee inquiries have now been published:

- [Physical activity in an ageing society](#)
- [New towns: creating communities](#)
- [Joined-up journeys: achieving and measuring transport integration](#)
- [Food and weight management](#)
- [Youth employment, education, and training](#)

Visiting No. 10 | 23rd March

Greg Fell OBE (ADPH President and DPH Sheffield) met with Isabel Abbs, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister on Health and Social Care, to talk about how DsPH and their teams can support the Government's ambition to improve health.

ADPH signs sector statement on civility | 26th March

We have joined organisations from across the local government sector in a [joint statement](#) on civility in public life in response to concerns about the abuse council workers are facing whilst doing their jobs.

ADPH Commercial determinants of health and gambling position statements published | 27th March

We are pleased to share copies of our [position statements](#) on [CDOH](#) and [gambling](#), which are both new additions to our suite of policies outlining our members' views and recommendations on a wide range of key public health topics.

Our paper on CDOH outlines the influence health harming industries have on the population's health, exploring the pathways through which they cause harm and the common tactics they employ. It outlines evidence-based approaches to mitigate this harm and why action to limit negative commercial influence is so necessary.

Our position statement on gambling outlines the extent of gambling harms in the UK and the current environment which continues to drive them. It lays out evidence-based recommendations for national and local government to tackle the population-wide harms, highlighting opportunities for policy action which would protect public health and limit this commercial influence.

Please share these papers amongst your networks to help build awareness and support for action.

ADPH in the news

This month:

- Greg Fell OBE (ADPH President and DPH Sheffield) was featured in both the [Financial Times](#) (paywalled) and [The Observer](#) (paywalled), where he discussed barriers to vaccination. He was also featured in the [first episode](#) of the [BBC Radio 4](#) series [Money, Influence, and the NHS](#). In addition, his appearance in front of the Health and Social Care Committee on vaccinations is mentioned in [Nursing in Practice](#).
- The [latest episode of PH Spotlight](#) was released featuring Charlotte Pavitt (DPH Bracknell Forest), who explains the complexities around tackling obesity and why a whole systems approach is needed.
- Nicola Close MBE (ADPH Chief Executive) was quoted in the Government's [press release](#) on the rollout of neighbourhood health centres, with her comments featured in several news articles, including [The UK Times](#), [The Bolton News](#), [The Bury Times](#), and [The Mail](#).

Meet our Members



Dr Sakthi Karunanithi | Director of Public Health | Lancashire County Council

People often ask what drew me into public health, and the answer starts well before I held any senior title. I began my career as a medical officer in a tea plantation in India, where daily life made it impossible to ignore how health is shaped by housing, income, work, and the environment. That early experience turned my attention from treating illness to understanding the causes and the conditions that create them.

I moved to the UK in 2005, and I often describe myself as, “proud to be born in India and made in Lancashire” because Lancashire has shaped me both personally and professionally. I became Director of Public Health for Lancashire in 2013, with a clear mission to help make the county a safer, fairer, and healthier place for all.

Read more from Sakthi in his blog, which will be published on [our website](#) on 1st April.

News from around the UK

Cheshire and Merseyside | All Together Fairer Neighbourhoods framework | 12th March

Cheshire and Merseyside’s Directors of Public Health and the Director of Population Health, have published [All Together Fairer Neighbourhoods](#), an evidence based framework for Cheshire and Merseyside to support the creation of local neighbourhood health plans.

The framework, which has been developed to support Health and Wellbeing Boards and system partners, builds on the All Together Fairer commitment to reducing health inequalities across the life course. It sets out six guiding principles, which are co-production and community power, prevention and tackling inequalities, ‘one team’ system leadership, outcomes-focused delivery, alignment across strategies, and the effective use of local data and intelligence.

