

Public Health consultants

Five Public Health consultants have been appointed to increase capacity in public health across the North East and North Cumbria.

Funded by NECS, the consultants are working across region's health and care system and providing population health expertise within NECS.

The role of the consultants varies between different Trusts, flexing to meet the Trusts' priorities and the skills and experience of the individual consultants. The consultants have been supporting Trusts in their response to the Covid-19 pandemic in a variety of ways.

The Challenge

Five Public Health consultants have been appointed to increase capacity in public health across the North East and North Cumbria. Funded by NECS, the Public Health consultants are working across the North East and North Cumbria health and care system, as well as providing population health expertise within NECS.

The consultants bring strong health intelligence and technical skills to their roles, as well as population health insight into the planning and delivery of care, and the ability to support the delivery and development of the best value services.

The Tasks

The role of the consultants varies between different Trusts, flexing to meet the Trusts' priorities and the skills and experience of the individual consultants. There are areas of common work across all consultants and work towards a common approach across the system for some areas. Regular networking meetings between the five consultants and colleagues in similar roles in other Trusts also provide significant shared learning.

In particular, the consultants have been supporting Trusts in their response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In North Tees, Peter Acheson, with previous health protection and pandemic experience, has provided testing and infection control advice, including PPE, together with general sense checking and horizon scanning.

In Sunderland and South Tyneside, Ryan Swiers chaired the Trust's psychological support group and provided research, modelling and bed planning, as well as a health and wellbeing strategy.

In County Durham, consultant Edward Kunonga has been working with colleagues in NECS to support CCGs, Public Health and Social Services in a joint response to Covid-19, addressing the interdependent issues that affect vulnerable and at risk people's health and wellbeing. The initial pilot work was completed in County Durham covering a population of over half a million and linked primary care data to social care data. A population health management approach was used to design and target multi-agency interventions to protect and meet the immediate and ongoing health and wellbeing needs of the most vulnerable people.

In addition, the consultants spend a small portion of their time for the first year working with NECS colleagues to support the system. For example, the consultants are working in partnership with the local Public Health teams and supporting the development of the North East and North Cumbria ICS Population Health Management programme.

The Results

Working with senior clinicians, managers and healthcare professionals on complex issues where public health input is required, the consultants provide recommendations regarding services, patient care, estate and the wider determinants of health. These include the innovative use of clinical information and implementation of new tools to assist in decision making, forward planning and service monitoring and evaluation.

The key priorities and deliverables may include, depending on Trust priorities and the consultants' expertise:

- *Providing input into the trusts' response to the current COVID crisis.*
- *Delivering the public health strategy for participating Trusts, with a clear work plan for implementation. This includes actions to address priority areas including tackling smoking through all service contacts, raising awareness and intervening on alcohol, supporting action to address obesity, diet and physical inactivity; and implementing secondary preventive actions to reduce mortality and morbidity, particularly in CVD, cancer, COPD and diabetes.*

- *Developing health improvement by leading and supporting the evidence based public health programmes for patients, carers and staff ensuring effective dissemination of good practice.*
- *Providing scrutiny on tackling and reducing health inequalities.*
- *Developing public health capacity through contributing to education and training and development within the organisation workforce and networks*
- *Effective working with local authority Public Health teams, local Health and Wellbeing Boards, Public Health England, and NHS England and NHS Improvement.*

Stephen Childs, Managing Director of NECS, said, "The NECS Customer Board is delighted to have been able to invest its Transformation Fund in the appointment of five new Public Health Consultants to support hospital and mental health Trusts to further develop their prevention and health improvement programmes for patients, their families, their staff and the wider population."

"The Public Health consultants provide expert public health advice and leadership to support and inform an evidence-based approach to enable Trusts to fulfil their role as key partners in delivering services, in collaboration with primary, secondary and social care, commissioning agencies, local authorities and the voluntary sector. This expertise has been particularly timely and vital in supporting the NHS's response to the Covid-19 pandemic."

The Public Health consultant's posts are being funded by NECS for the first twelve months and participating Trusts will then continue funding the posts after this period.

The programme is being evaluated by Newcastle University and the results of the evaluation will be shared once completed.

Find out how NECS can help your organisation

 01913011300

 www.necsu.nhs.uk

 necsu.marketing@nhs.net

 @NHSnecs