

# Frequently Asked Questions (Practitioners)

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## Eligibility and application requirements

### Do I have to have 'public health practitioner' in my job title to apply?

No – 'practitioner' describes a level of experience and practice that can be demonstrated in a range of job roles. Many people work in public health without their job title directly referencing this.

### I work in a clinical/academic role, with years of experience – is this suitable?

Clinical or academic roles can provide relevant experience for the portfolio, as long as they include public health functions and demonstrate autonomous practice. For example, activities related to population health improvement, addressing health inequalities, or applying public health knowledge could be included. The portfolio must clearly link your work to the Practitioner Standards.

### I am on a temporary contract – can I still join the scheme?

Yes, being on a temporary contract does not prevent you from joining the scheme. However, you must ensure that you can complete your portfolio within the required timeline and provide appropriate references or testimonials from your public health role to support your application. Evidence should reflect your work in public health, regardless of the type of contract.

It is important to comply with organisational policies, including those relating to confidentiality, data protection, and intellectual property, when using evidence from your role.

Ensure you follow your employer's guidelines for handling documents and avoid saving work-related materials to personal systems without explicit permission.

If you anticipate challenges, such as accessing colleagues for references or testimonials after your contract ends, consider planning ahead to obtain the necessary documents while you are still in the role.

There is a lot of uncertainty with employment at the moment with redundancies on the horizon - would this impact on ability to be accepted onto/complete the scheme?

Being unemployed does not prevent a practitioner from applying for UKPHR registration. Redundancy and other career interruptions are specifically recognised in the Guidance and it states that an extended period prior to applying can be considered.

In the registration forms, you can record that you are not currently employed as long as you agree that you will update your details once you are in a new role.

Regarding the reference and testimonial, although the default is a current line manager, the Guidance allows flexibility where someone is not employed at the time of submission. In this case, the reference/testimonial can be completed by a previous manager, supervisor or another appropriate public health professional who can comment on your practice, professionalism and fitness to register.

If this situation becomes more complex or falls outside normal circumstances, we can always check with the Moderators, but based on the guidance, you would still be eligible to proceed.

### What happens if I change job/roles whilst completing my portfolio?

Changing jobs or roles does not affect your ability to complete the portfolio, as long as you can continue to provide evidence that meets the required standards. If your new role is not directly related to public health, you may still use evidence from your previous role(s), provided it meets the standards and remains relevant within the portfolio timeframe (at least 50% of evidence must be from the last five years).

It is important to ensure compliance with GDPR and your organisational policies when using documents from previous employers. This includes adhering to contractual agreements, particularly regarding the confidentiality of data and intellectual property. Saving work-related documents to personal systems before leaving a role should be avoided unless explicitly permitted by your organisation.

Additionally, if your job change affects your ability to access colleagues for testimonials, ensure you plan for this by obtaining testimonials while still in the role or

discussing alternative arrangements with your scheme coordinator. Inform your scheme coordinator about any job changes so they can provide support tailored to your circumstances.

### What happens if a job change takes me out of the Y&H Scheme's area during the process?

All the regional schemes have an arrangement that the scheme which accepted you will keep you so that you can continue to build your portfolio and achieve registration. However, if you are moving to another area with a regional scheme, the two schemes' coordinators will discuss with you whether a transfer is beneficial/possible.

### I have completed a Master's in Public Health. Am I eligible to apply for the Scheme?

While it may be useful to have completed a Master's, it is not essential, nor sufficient on its own to form an application. You need to be able to evidence 'application' of the Standards when writing your portfolio, which will be evidenced through your working experience.

### How many 'gaps' should we expect to have?

It is less about how many, and more about what is required to fill the gaps. There may be knowledge gaps or gaps in skills/experience - requiring different approaches. It may be helpful to discuss this with a line manager/supervisor and document these gaps in your PDP during supervision / appraisal if you think you need to access development opportunities. It is important to identify and close gaps prior to embarking on the Scheme. Whilst some gaps may be filled whilst working on your portfolio, if practitioners have very few gaps before embarking on the Scheme, completion of their portfolio is more straightforward and more comfortably completed in the required timeframe. The Yorkshire & Humber Scheme offers Workforce Development Training sessions for practitioners that may address gaps in learning.

### I have a disability/long term health condition or learning difference and require reasonable adjustments. Who do I talk to about this?

The nature of the assessment process of the Scheme means that we are well set-up to support individuals with a range of needs. For example, flexibility on commentary

deadlines and portfolio completion timescale, extra consideration of assessors for grammar and spelling, one-to-one meeting support with a facilitator or programme team members, support with the application and interview process.

The Scheme requires every practitioner to work with a dedicated mentor. Mentors provide invaluable support as you plan your commentaries, may be able to offer proof-reading, and can discuss assessor feedback with you. A suitable mentor would be someone with good knowledge of the Scheme, i.e. a registered practitioner or trained assessor, who has capacity to support you through the process. If you do not have a suitable mentor available to you through your networks, the Scheme will match you with a mentor from our network to ensure the right support is in place.

If you are considering an application to the Y&H Scheme and require additional support in the application process, or would like to discuss support available while on the Scheme, please email [PHPPYH@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:PHPPYH@leeds.ac.uk) to discuss your needs around this.

### Are there any costs to practitioners other than the registration fee?

The Y&H Scheme will meet all the costs of the process, including any masterclasses, workshops and learning sets offered to fill gaps in skills and knowledge. The cost of this is funded by NHSE for the development of the Y&H workforce.

UKPHR charges a one-off administration fee on first registration alongside the annual charge (see UKPHR website for current fees - <https://ukphr.org/fees-and-charges/>).

### Why is there a minimum of two years' experience required?

There can be differences in the scope and breadth of experience that individuals might acquire over time, depending on their role and capacity, and the development opportunities that have been available to them. This typically begins to be demonstrable following two years' working experience in relevant roles. The important factor is that applicants have sufficient experience to generate sufficient evidence to demonstrate all 34 indicators.

### Can volunteer roles count as experience?

Yes, experience acquired through voluntary roles can contribute towards experience and used as evidence of application.

## How many places are available for practitioners on the Y&H Scheme?

There are 15 places available on each cohort.

## What are the selection criteria for selecting the 15 practitioners (because there are more than 15 people interested in joining the Scheme)?

We will be looking for practitioners who comfortably meet the threshold of Level 5 and above, who have a rich source of experience from which to draw evidence. Ideal candidates will have few gaps of Knowledge, Understanding & Application or will have identified the gaps and noted how they are to address these within the timescale of their portfolio.

## My job description says I am a Level 4, but I have the right experience and meet the other criteria for the Scheme, can I still apply?

Yes – typically the criteria will be met from Level 5, but we know that in some councils, a practitioner level of practice is being met despite roles being described as Level 4. Your line manager will make a statement as to your readiness as part of your application and this is considered. As always, the key factor is that you have the right knowledge and experience to meet each of the 34 Standards. A carefully completed Baseline self-assessment will reflect this.

## Where can I find the PHSKF (Public Health Skills & Knowledge Framework)?

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/584408/public\\_health\\_skills\\_and\\_knowledge\\_framework.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/584408/public_health_skills_and_knowledge_framework.pdf)

## Where can I find the Skills for Health Employability Skills Matrix?

<https://www.skillsforhealth.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Employability-skills-matrix.pdf>

## Where can I find details of the 34 Standards?

<https://ukphr.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/UKPHR-Practitioner-Standards-2018-2nd-Ed.pdf>

## Scheme sessions

### What if I can't attend the workshops or portfolio sessions? Will they be recorded?

Practitioners are required to attend all Scheme sessions and agree to this in the application and interview stage. Line managers must agree to allow this time and annual leave should be planned accordingly. Sessions are not recorded as they are workshops rather than lecture format and participation in discussion of practitioners' work and evidence is key. Due to the content of discussions, it is not appropriate to record.

## Portfolio Assessment

### Can the registration process be submitted in more than 18 months?

12-18 months is sufficient time to complete this process, particularly as candidates will be offered a place on the basis that they have limited gaps in knowledge/experience and are therefore able to generate evidence for commentaries in this timeframe. For some practitioners, there are other reasons why this timeframe may need to be extended (e.g. reasonable adjustments, parental leave, extenuating circumstances), and this should be discussed with the Scheme Coordinator. There are limits on adjustments that can be made, particularly considering the need for currency of evidence.

### Can you fail this?

The portfolio-writing and assessment process, and provided support, is set up so that practitioners are highly unlikely to 'fail'. Our application requirements mean that practitioners commence the Scheme with a clear picture of how they meet the criteria for each standard and are prepared to address these. However, some practitioners may still struggle to identify the appropriate evidence, understand the indicators, manage the process, or manage their time. This will be addressed in a supportive manner in dialogue with their line manager and the Scheme Coordinator, to identify a suitable plan for development opportunities to support completion of the portfolio.

### How am I assigned an assessor?

The Scheme Coordinator will allocate assessors to practitioners. The key criteria is that the assessor has no/little knowledge of the practitioner and should not work in the



same organisation. As the main assessment mechanism is the E-Portfolio, the assessor and practitioner do not need to be from the same area within the Scheme's footprint.

### As a practitioner, how do I communicate with my assessor?

Your main communication would be through the E-Portfolio records; however, it is advised to communicate via email when you or your assessor have completed submissions or assessments. Assessors cannot 'coach' a practitioner and therefore need to be careful how they communicate the results of an assessment to the practitioner. The Scheme email (PHPPYH@leeds.ac.uk) should always be Cc'd for transparency. The assessor can communicate assessment decisions via the Scheme Coordinator or mentor of the practitioner if necessary. The assessor comments in the assessment log should provide clarity on why a standard has not been accepted and signed off.

If you do not understand your feedback, the first port of call is to discuss it with your mentor, and secondly the Scheme Coordinator who can liaise with the assessor.

### If my work is specialised, might the assessor be unable to understand it?

It is your responsibility to explain how the work you are describing meets the relevant standards

### Are there any worked examples of commentaries we can see that are good practice, explaining why it is good?

Commentaries will be looked at during the Scheme sessions and will be made available on the group's Knowledge Hub.

## Portfolio Evidence

### What constitutes 'evidence'?

Evidence is anything that 'proves' the practitioner's role in the activity being described; their contribution, source of knowledge, actions, etc., and evidence can take many forms e.g., emails, policies/protocols authored by the practitioner, reports, reflective piece, minutes of meetings, videos, recorded observation, etc. If you are unsure whether a piece of evidence might be accepted, your mentor can advise in the first

instance, or you can bring the example to a Scheme session to discuss with the facilitator and your peers.

### Is it possible to use evidence that is confidential in portfolios?

There must be no breach of confidentiality in any of the material contained throughout the portfolio. A breach of confidentiality of patient information (or private information such as home telephone numbers for work colleagues or clients), wherever it occurs, will require resubmission with new evidence of the indicator on confidentiality. The identifiable information should be removed.

### What is your advice if I already have evidence that may be useful later when I am accepted onto a cohort?

Your evidence will be usable (subject to rules on currency of evidence) so you should keep it safe and use it when you build your portfolio.

### Can I use examples of work from a previous role?

Examples of work from a previous role can only be included if you are able to provide the supporting evidence. When working on projects which may be used in your portfolio, we would encourage you, where appropriate, to save emails which could be used as evidence.

### I have worked overseas – does this count towards my portfolio?

Yes, overseas work experience can contribute to your portfolio provided it is relevant to public health practice. Evidence from overseas should be complemented by UK-based knowledge or experience to meet Practitioner Standards. This ensures alignment with UKPHR's focus on protecting the public within the UK context.

### What is the requirement for currency of evidence?

50% of your items of evidence must be within 5 years of your date of registration with UKPHR (this date will be within 3 months of your verification panel).

### How much evidence can be drawn from recent/current work (for example, if, because of reorganisation, past evidence has been lost)?

It is often easier, and more helpful in professional development, to collect evidence during current projects and areas of work. Current projects ought to give you sufficient evidence for meeting the standards. However, the 50% currency rule allows the practitioner to write about historic work. It is recommended that no more than one commentary is from work undertaken more than 5 years previously, with the remaining two (or more) commentaries depicting more recent work undertaken.

### How extensive must a portfolio be?

Guidance is given on the minimum evidence and commentaries required in portfolios. The Yorkshire & Humber Scheme requests that portfolios are submitted electronically and offer E-portfolio access from the outset as this provides advantages in terms of ease of use and reference, transfers between practitioners and their assessors and maintains confidentiality.

### Can evidence be a relatively small piece of work or intervention? E.g. a family or community?

The commentary template asks the practitioner to give context to the work and describe your own role and this helps the assessor to understand how the work fits into a public health context and fully understand your role within the area of work undertaken. It is not a requirement that the practitioner leads on the work being described, although it is fine if you are/were the project lead.

### Clarification over the differences between knowledge and understanding?

Knowledge can be sourced from a range of places e.g., academic lectures, formal training, books, e-learning, on the job, department-led workshops, etc. and may be presented in a theoretical context. The understanding is where the applicant explains to the assessor how the knowledge identified relates to the specific requirements of the indicator under discussion - which requires the applicant to understand what the indicator means, and what the most relevant knowledge base would be to demonstrate that indicator.

### How would you demonstrate anecdotal evidence?

You may need to request confirmation through an email, or a testimonial from a senior member of staff. Sometimes, if the evidence is not forthcoming, applicants may need to find a different example in their work which they can evidence more easily.

### How narrowing focused can the evidence be? Can commentaries all be about one project?

Commentaries can be about one project, or one part of a project. You will be supported in the planning and mapping of your portfolio through the Portfolio Development Support Groups, and you will also learn more about what is required through the Induction Day.

### Quality of evidence (i.e. is one email enough, how many pieces of evidence do you need, or can you use just one piece of (good) evidence)?

As you develop your portfolio you will come to recognise what will be required to demonstrate the different indicators in relation to your chosen piece of work. You can use the same piece of evidence for several indicators if it can demonstrate what is required, but you will need to discuss the different parts of the evidence in relation to each of those indicators and signpost the assessor to the relevant parts.

### How do you demonstrate the evidence - do you need to write it down?

Evidence can come in many forms, but often it is written evidence. A video may not be 'written down', but the applicant would need to explain to the assessor what it is about the video that demonstrates the indicator being claimed against that evidence.

### If a piece of work has more than one author, how do we demonstrate our own involvement?

You may have a manager or team leader who can provide a testimonial that explains your involvement in the production of the document, or email correspondence that tracks or talks about your contributions.

## Does each Standard have to have Knowledge, Understanding and Application? How do we evidence the understanding of knowledge effectively?

Every Standard must be addressed in relation to knowledge, understanding and application. Often the understanding is demonstrated through the narrative in the commentary where the applicant explains what they learned from the source of their knowledge in relation to the indicator under discussion, and how the knowledge was applied in this piece of work.

## How much reflective evidence do you need to do per commentary (dissertation or paragraph)?

Each commentary will have a reflective piece at the end where the practitioner looks back on the piece of work they have described and discussed. The length of the reflection could depend on the complexity of the work, its relative success or otherwise, and what has been learned. It would generally be paragraphs rather than pages.

The portfolio is not like an exam or an academic assessment, so the term ‘question’ does not really apply. Applicants are asked to demonstrate their competence against a standard or an indicator, and this is demonstrated through their knowledge, understanding and application. The practitioner can submit a personal reflection as evidence against their understanding of acquired knowledge or against specific standards such as ‘their impact on others’. Support will be given on when and where this is appropriate.

## UKPHR

### What is Professional Regulation and why do public health professionals need to be regulated?

Professional Regulation is necessary to protect the public from individuals whose practice is below the required standard (incompetent) or unethical.

The main purpose of the regulation of professionals, including public health professionals, is to "protect, promote and maintain the health and safety of the public".

This is achieved by ensuring professionals are competent, sufficiently experienced and adhere to agreed standards of ethical practice.

### What work has UKPHR done to engage with employers in England, for example local authorities and the Association of Directors of Public Health?

UKPHR engages in all the national forums where public health partners meet and sits alongside the Local Government Association (and its equivalents in N. Ireland, Scotland, and Wales) and the Associate Directors of Public Health.

UKPHR has regular meetings with these stakeholders and shares conference platforms with them. UKPHR has its own widely drawn Consultative Forum which includes these stakeholders and many others. UKPHR is conscious of the need to engage with individual employers (including local authorities and Public Health England) to ensure that practitioner registration and its benefits is understood.