

Celebrating the Achievements of AHPs in Public Health

The impact report of the UK Allied Health Professionals (AHP) Public Health Strategic Framework (2019-2024) was published in January and demonstrates the significant progress made by the AHP community to embed public health into practice.

The 2019-24 UK AHP Public Health Strategic Framework was the first example of a collaborative four nation professional approach to public health for allied health professionals. It was developed by the UK nations and the AHP professional bodies to provide a vision and plan to develop the AHP role in public health, build on the evidence base, and embed the principles of public health across the AHP workforce.

Our vision for the 2019-2024 strategy was for AHPs to improve population health; public health to be a core element of all AHP roles; and the impact of AHPs on the population's health and reducing health inequalities to be increasingly recognised.

Our goals were:

1. The AHP workforce will have the skills, knowledge, and behaviours to promote, improve, and protect the health and well-being of individuals, communities, and populations.
2. AHPs will be able to demonstrate their contribution to improving population-level health outcomes through robust evaluation and research.
3. AHPs will be recognised as valuable public health experts through ongoing profile raising of the AHP contribution to public health.
4. Effective relationships will exist between AHPs and system leaders at local and national levels to make the best use of AHPs to improve public health and reduce health inequalities.
5. The expertise of AHPs will be used to protect and improve the health and wellbeing of the health and care workforce.

The impact report describes progress against each of these goals with some notable examples outlined below.

- Public health pre-registration curricula guidance for AHPs published by the Council of Deans for Health
- 100% of HEIs now include public health in AHP pre-registration education.
- 31 AHPs have undertaken population health fellowships, and 12 are part of the specialist public health training programme.
- The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) has introduced standards relating to public health.
- Increased access to public health placements in pre-registration education
- 4 evidence reviews have been published demonstrating the impact of AHPs in public health.
- More than 80 AHP public health case studies have been published.
- Profession-specific descriptors of public health have been developed with the Royal Society for Public Health to support clinicians to understand how to embed public health in the context of their role.

- Over 25 high-impact examples of AHPs leading or contributing to public health priorities, e.g. vision screening, environmental sustainability, health inequalities, falls prevention, work, and health.

These successes are a direct result of the independent and collaborative approaches taken by AHP teams, their professional bodies, and partner organisations.

This framework represented a key step in a collaborative approach to improving public health across the UK—a journey that the AHP community is both leading and being recognised for. For this leadership role and the successes demonstrated, we want to thank the AHP community for the exceptional achievements displayed both locally and nationally. The time, energy, and individual contributions made by AHPs across the UK have brought us one step closer to building a stronger public health workforce.

We recognise that more work remains, and that prevention is one of many priorities for AHPs. We know from our recent survey, undertaken as part of the development of the new AHP public health strategic framework, that a focus on public health is important to AHPs. We are therefore committed to facilitating and supporting AHPs and their teams to continue the impactful work they have delivered, the work they are capable of, and the work they aspire to achieve.

The creation of the new 2025–2030 UK AHP Public Health Strategic Framework will support the AHP community in continuing the excellent work already demonstrated. It will enable AHPs to enhance public health, promote and implement a prevention-focused approach, and reduce health inequalities in their local communities and nationally as part of their day-to-day roles.

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