

SCOTTISH PUBLIC HEALTH NETWORK

Scottish Public Health Domains and Functions

(Adapted from US Public Health Accreditation Board: Standards and Measure 2011. In allocating the public health functions to public health domain, the major focus of the function has been used. It is recognised this has to be something of a pragmatic decision. The allocation of public health workforce and management functions to the Healthcare Quality and Effectiveness domain reflects the fact that public health is as much a service that requires continuous improvement as health care services. Whilst the public health functions have been allocated to public health domains, the original function numbering system has been maintained).

Health Improvement Domain

Function 1: Conduct and disseminate assessments focused on population health status and public health issues facing the community

Function 1 focuses on the assessment of the health of the population in the areas served by the public health department and services. The function includes: systematic monitoring of health status; collection, analysis, and dissemination of data; use of data to inform public health policies, processes, and interventions; and leading/participating in the process for the development of a shared, comprehensive health assessment of the community.

Four functional standards are defined:

- Standard 1.1 Participate in or conduct a collaborative process resulting in a comprehensive community health assessment;
- Standard 1.2 Collect and maintain reliable, comparable, and valid data that provide information on conditions of public health importance and on the health status of the population;
- Standard 1.3 Analyse public health data to identify trends in health problems, environmental public health hazards, and social and economic factors that affect the public's health; and
- Standard 1.4 Provide and use the results of health data analysis to develop recommendations regarding public health, policy, processes, programmes, or interventions.

Function 3: Inform and educate about public health issues and functions

Function 3 focuses on educating the public. This function assesses the processes used by public health teams and agencies for continuing communication as standard operating procedures. The population served should have accurate and reliable information about how to protect and promote individual and family health. They should have information about healthy behaviours, such as good nutrition, hand washing, and seat belt use. The population should have access to accurate and timely information in the case of particular health risks like H1N1, a food borne disease outbreak, or an anthrax attack. Such information should be communicated in a language and format that people can understand. Public Health teams and agencies also have a responsibility to educate the public about the value, roles, and

responsibilities of the local public health structures and arrangements, and the meaning and importance of public health. These educational responsibilities require a continuing flow of information. To be effective, delivery of information shouldn't be a one-way street. To communicate with the public accurately, reliably, and in a timely manner, public health teams and agencies must gather and use information that it receives from national regional and local sources. It also needs input from community partners and the population and sub-groups of the population that it serves. Communication requires dialogue with the target population to assure that the message is relevant, culturally sensitive, and linguistically appropriate.

Two functional standards are defined:

- Standard 3.1 Provide health education and health promotion policies, programmes, processes, and interventions to support prevention and wellness; and
- Standard 3.2 Provide information on public health issues and public health functions through multiple methods to a variety of audiences.

Function 4: Engage with the community to identify and address health problems

Function 4 focuses on community engagement. Community members are important partners in identifying and defining public health issues, developing solutions or improvements, developing policies, communicating important information, and implementing public health initiatives. Members of the community offer a unique perspective on how issues are manifested in the community, what community assets can be mobilized, and what interventions will be effective. Public Health teams and agencies can broaden its leverage and impact by doing things with the community rather than doing things to the community. This function addresses the establishment and maintenance of community relationships that will facilitate public health goals being accomplished.

Two functional standards are defined:

- Standard 4.1 Engage with the public health system and the community in identifying and addressing health problems through collaborative processes; and
- Standard 4.2 Promote the community's understanding of and support for policies and strategies that will improve the public's health.

Function 5: Develop public health policies and plans

Function 5 focuses on the development of public health policies and plans. Written policies and plans serve as tools to guide the Public Health teams' and agencies' work and bring structure and organization to the department. Written policies and plans provide a resource to health department staff as well as the public. Policies and plans help to orient and train staff, inform the public and partners, and serve as a key component of developing consistency in operations and noting areas for improvement. Policies and plans can be a vehicle for community engagement and shared responsibility for addressing population health improvement. Policies that are not public health specific may also impact the public's health. Policy makers should be informed of the potential public health impact of policies that they are considering or that are already in place. Policy makers and the public should have sound, science-based, current public health information when policies are being considered or adopted.

Four functional standards are defined:

- Standard 5.1 Serve as a primary and expert resource for establishing and maintaining public health policies, practices, and capacity;
- Standard 5.2 Conduct a comprehensive planning process resulting in a community health improvement plan (appropriate to the population served);
- Standard 5.3 Develop and implement an organisational strategic plan; and
- Standard 5.4 Maintain an all hazards emergency operations plan.

Healthcare Quality and Effectiveness Domain

Function 7: Promote strategies to improve access to health care services

Function 7 focuses on the link between public health activities and health care services. The health care sector provides many preventive services, such as immunizations, cholesterol screening, screening for breast cancer, high blood pressure management, and prenatal care. Patient counselling on health promotion, disease prevention, and chronic disease management is an important link between health care and public health. Linkages between health care and public health ensure continuity of care and management for the population. An important role of public health is the assessment of: (1) the capacity of the health care system to meet the health care needs of the population; and (2) community access to health care services. Public health also works to increase access to needed health care services.

Two functional standards are defined:

- Standard 7.2 Identify and implement strategies to improve access to health care services; and
- Standard 7.1 Assess health care service capacity and access to health care services.

Function 8: Maintain a competent public health workforce

Function 8 focuses on the need for health departments to maintain a trained and competent workforce to perform public health duties. Effective public health practice requires a well prepared workforce. A multi-disciplinary workforce that is matched to the specific community being served facilitates the interdisciplinary approaches required to address the population's public health issues. The manner in which services are provided to the public determines the effectiveness of those services and influences the population's understanding of, and appreciation for, public health. Continuous training and development of public health teams and agency staff is required to ensure continued competence in a field that is making constant advances in collective knowledge and improved practices.

Two functional standards are defined:

- Standard 8.1 Encourage the development of a sufficient number of qualified public health workers; and
- Standard 8.2 Assess staff competencies and address gaps by enabling organisational and individual training and development opportunities.

Function 11: Ethically maintain administrative and management capacity

Function 11 focuses on the ethical management and administration capacity of public health teams and agencies. Public Health leaders and staff must be knowledgeable about the

structure, organisation, and financing of their own public health department and other agencies and organisations that provide public health services.

Two functional standards are defined:

- Standard 11.1 Develop and maintain an operational infrastructure to support the performance of public health functions; and
- Standard 11.2 Establish effective financial management systems.

Health Protection Domain

Function 2: Investigate health problems and environmental public health hazards to protect the community

Function 2 focuses on the investigation of suspected or identified health problems or environmental public health hazards. Included are the epidemiological identification of emerging health problems, monitoring of disease, availability of public health laboratories, containment and mitigation of outbreaks, coordinated response to emergency situations, and communication.

Four functional standards are defined:

- Standard 2.1 Conduct timely investigations of health problems and environmental public health hazards;
- Standard 2.2 Contain / mitigate health problems and environmental public health hazards;
- Standard 2.3 Ensure access to laboratory and epidemiological / environmental public health expertise and capacity to investigate and contain / mitigate public health problems and environmental public health hazards; and
- Standard 2.4 Maintain a plan with policies and procedures for urgent and non-urgent communication.

Function 6: Enforce public health laws

Function 6 focuses on the role of public health teams and agencies in the enforcement of public health related regulations, executive orders, statutes, and other types of public health laws. Public health laws are key tools for health departments as they work to promote and protect the health of the population. Responsibilities related to public health laws do not start or stop with enforcement. Health departments also have a role in promoting new laws or revising existing laws. Public Health related laws should be science-based and protect the rights of the individual, as they also protect and promote the health of the population. Health departments have a role in educating regulated entities about the meaning, purpose, compliance requirements, and benefit of public health laws. Health departments also have a role in educating the public about laws and the importance of complying with them.

The term “laws” as used in these standards and measures refers to ALL types of statutes, regulations, and local directives that are applicable to the jurisdiction covering the population served. Public health laws include such areas as environmental public health (food sanitation, lead inspection, drinking water treatment, clean air, waste-water disposal, and animal and vector control), communicable disease (outbreak investigation, required newborn screenings, immunizations, communicable disease reporting requirements, quarantine, tuberculosis enforcement, and STD contact tracing), chronic disease (sales of tobacco products to youth, smoke-free regulations, etc.), and injury prevention (seat belt laws, helmet laws, and speeding

limits). Clearly, Public Health teams and agencies are not responsible for the enforcement of many or most of these laws. The adoption and implementation of such laws, however, have enormous public health implications. It is important for those involved in their adoption, monitoring their enforcement, providing follow up services and/or education, and educating the policy makers and the public about their importance and impact.

Three functional standards are defined:

- Standard 6.1 Review existing laws and work with governing entities and elected / appointed officials to update as needed;
- Standard 6.2 Educate individuals and organisations on the meaning, purpose, and benefit of public health laws and compliance; and
- Standard 6.3 Conduct and monitor public health enforcement activities and coordinate notification of violations among appropriate agencies.

Function 12: Maintain capacity to engage with statutory and other agencies that have Public Health system responsibilities

Function 12 focuses on the public health team's capacity to support and engage with statutory and other agencies that have public health system responsibilities locally, regionally and nationally. Such bodies both directly and indirectly influence the direction of public health teams and agencies, though much variation exists regarding the structure, definition, roles, and responsibilities of such statutory and non-statutory organisations.

Three functional standards are defined:

- Standard 12.1 Maintain current operational definitions and statements of the public health roles, responsibilities, and authorities;
- Standard 12.2 Provide information to statutory and non-statutory organisations regarding public health and the official responsibilities of the public health team or agency and its own governing body; and
- Standard 12.3 Encourage statutory and non-statutory organisations engagement in the public health team's / agencies overall obligations and responsibilities.

Health Intelligence Domain

Function 9: Evaluate and continuously improve health department processes, programmes, and interventions

Function 9 focuses on using and integrating performance management quality improvement practices and processes to continuously improve the public health workforce's practice, programmes, and interventions.

Two functional standards are defined:

- Standard 9.1 Use a performance management system to monitor achievement of organisational objectives; and
- Standard 9.2 Develop and implement quality improvement processes integrated into organisational practice, programmes, processes, and interventions.

Function 10: Contribute to and apply the evidence base of public health

Function 10 focuses on the role that health departments play in building and advancing the science of public health. Public health is strengthened when its workforce continually adds to the body of evidence for promising practice (practices that have the potential to become evidence-based over time). Public Health teams and agencies should employ evidence-based practices for increased effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, and credibility. They also have important roles in developing new evidence. Public health systems should apply innovation and creativity in providing public health services appropriate for the populations served.

Two functional standards are defined:

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| Standard 10.2 | Promote understanding and use of research results, evaluations, and evidence-based practices with appropriate audiences; and |
| Standard 10.1 | Identify and use the best available evidence for making informed public health practice decisions. |