

Public health reform

Scotland's public health priorities

Update
April 2018



Introduction

Scotland's public health priorities will be an important milestone in the programme of public health reform. They are intended to be shared priorities and provide an important catalyst for working together, nationally and locally to improve the public's health.

They will provide a focus for closer collaboration on those issues that are likely to have the most significant impact on improving the public's health and sustainable economic growth. This briefing provides an update on progress and next steps in agreeing public health priorities for Scotland in advance of their publication in spring 2018.

Vision for public health reform

The vision for the public health reform programme is "a Scotland where everybody thrives". The ambition is for Scotland to be a world leader in improving the public's health.

The reform programme is being led in partnership by Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), but our ambition for Scotland cannot be achieved by any one body or organisation alone.

It will require the combined efforts of partners from across the public, private and third sectors and importantly, from within local communities as well. This whole system approach to improve the public's health emphasises the importance of early intervention and developing different ways of working that focus on preventing ill health.

Scotland's public health priorities

Agreeing Scotland's public health priorities will be an important first step in the public health reform programme. Having a set of jointly agreed and owned public health priorities will enable partners to focus together on the things which will have the greatest potential to improve healthy life expectancy and reduce inequalities. These will be priorities for the whole system and are not intended to reflect all of the activities of public health in Scotland, including incident management, protecting health or health care public health. These essential activities will continue and will be reflected in the activities of the new public health body.

Engagement to date

The priorities have been built from the bottom-up, developed through a process of engagement with national and local stakeholders. The project team has met with a range of organisations, attended events and held engagement sessions in Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Glasgow as well as a virtual engagement event, bringing together partners from national and local government, the NHS, the wider public sector, third sector and community organisations.

This engagement has helped inform how we should decide Scotland's priorities and provided the opportunity to identify and discuss together a wide range of potential priorities.



Emerging priorities

Following a comprehensive review by an independent expert group of all engagement activity and the evidence collated by the programme team, a clear set of related and inter-dependent themes are emerging. These are:

- Place and Community
- Early Years
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Harmful substances (including tobacco, alcohol and other drugs)
- Poverty & Inequality
- Diet and Physical Activity

The reform team will undertake further analysis of the emerging themes and also consider how these fit within the wider reform programme.

Once complete, a recommendation will be made to Scottish Government and COSLA on a final set of priorities for agreement.

How can you get involved?

We will all need to think differently about how we plan and deliver services that contribute to improving the public's health. Scotland's public health priorities will provide the catalyst to deliver this change.

This will only be possible if we can continue to build support and consensus across Scotland to work differently and focus on making a real difference to Scotland's health. This will require effective leadership and commitment from national and local government, the NHS, third sector, private sector and within communities.

To get involved, follow us @phrscot for the latest news on Scotland's public health priorities or email: publichealthreform@gov.scot

What happens next?

Subject to agreement by Scottish Government and COSLA, Scotland's public health priorities will be published in spring 2018.

The reform programmes aspirations are these are Scotland's priorities. They will be the focus of our collaborative effort, nationally and locally, to improve the public's health and reduce health inequalities, therefore it is important that they are owned and shared by everybody in Scotland.

The focus of engagement moving forward will increasingly be on building further consensus and commitment to Scotland's public health priorities from across the public, private and third sector and importantly, communities.

The emerging themes will also provide an opportunity to engage with communities to further develop what the priorities mean for their areas and create the momentum to deliver the vision for public health reform.

