

Job title: Public Health Intelligence Manager

Current employer: Wakefield MDC and NHS Wakefield CCG

Tell us about your current role and organisation

I deliver statutory duties for the Local Authority and Clinical Commissioning Group around the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), Health Inequalities and Health and Well Being Board. In a nut shell, myself and team of analysts study the population's health and wellbeing looking for trends/patterns, reporting them to commissioners and/or providers of service to facilitate change in services. The JSNA for Wakefield, is a public facing repository for this analysis www.wakefieldjsna.co.uk which demonstrates the needs for services to tackle disease and improve wellbeing. A big part of my role is using this intelligence to influence other people agendas, reminding them that inequalities are an issue, demonstrating the social gradients in people's experiences of health and care services.

What sort of person would this role suit?

(i.e. personal skills, qualities and values)

To succeed in Public Health Intelligence people need to be, conscientious, focused and numerate. They also need to be able to write to a high standard as much of the role is taking complex analysis and translating that knowledge into understandable JSNA/policy content. Confident in talking to large groups as much of what is analysed, will ultimately be presented to a project group or board. Public Health is a broad campus of activity, having the vision for what true prevention is important for Public Health Intelligence. As one of the seven disciplines of Public Health, is key to be able to see how influence with knowledge can support to achieve the aims of Public Health, keeping people alive as long as possible and as healthy as possible whilst they are here.

What does a normal working day look like for you?

I guess one of the positives is that rarely are two days ever the same. If a person wants consistently planned out analytical role, where they are left to perform one task and complete it to its fullest. Public health Intelligence is not for them. The expectation is to produce high quality work, having parallel multiple projects and being able to present findings to a variety of audiences.

A day is a mixture of producing analysis, whether that be a topic from the JSNA, a piece of analysis for a partner agencies such as the CCG or to be talking about analysis completed in a project group. A good current example is a piece of evaluation that I am currently doing in to cancer. Locally we have three facilitators working in general practice who are intervening with patients who haven't responded to cancer screening programmes. Simultaneously I am working through the operational issues to support the facilitators to identify the cohorts, cleanse patient lists and gather data around the interventions, whilst evaluating the ongoing effectivity of the interventions in encouraging people to have a screening. All of this involves time to analyse and then report to the various levels of project groups/boards around the partnership of organisation in Wakefield, who want to know progress of this project.

How did you get to where you are now?

(i.e. what are the entry-level roles graduates would apply for to get where you are?)

I have a degree in Biomedical Science and a Master in Public Health, I graduated from my undergraduate right in time for the recession of 2008. Subsequently I did some time in retail management, which I only mention as there was various analytical elements of performance information that served me well. I was fortunate to secure a trainee analyst position, in 2009, one of seven recruited in my region of Yorkshire and Humber. The real world retail experience I felt helped me here over some of the new graduates who applied, there were some 300 applicants in total. Part of this trainee post was a part-time master's degree in Public Health and a rotation between two Primary Care Trust's, now CCG's. I then secured a permanent role as a senior analyst in North Lincolnshire at the end of my trainee ship, after 18 months of working as a senior analyst I was successful in applying for the Principle analyst role in North Yorkshire. Two and a half years on from starting in North Yorkshire, I took the equivalent role here in Wakefield Council and have been the Public Health Intelligence Manager for a little over 4 years.

How would you go about getting experience (*placements, work experience, internship*) in the industry you work in?

Local Authority (LA) Public Health Intelligence managers would gladly welcome internships/work experience placements, indeed we have had several via colleague's links with us or via our university networks. There are one hundred and fifty two upper tier local authorities in the country, all of which will have a Public Health Intelligence team in some form or another, due to the legal requirement to produce the JSNA. Seeking out these team or via Public Health England's Knowledge and Intelligence Service, who offer regional support to LA's would be the best place to start for anyone seeking work experience.

What are the biggest challenges you face in your work?

Capacity. NHS England have woken to the importance of Population Health, after decades of ignoring Public Health and focusing on pathway design being the cure for the NHS. NHS E have accepted that the NHS is only about 10% of the determinants of a person's ill health and wellbeing, money, housing, loneliness etc. have greater impacts on a person's wellbeing than whether a NHS pathway is optimised.

What's the progression like/where do you see yourself going from here?

Progression in the field is good, the skill set gain is applicable to many areas and interchange between government departments, Business, NHS commissioners and providers, local government, Public Health England and academia.

In terms of my own career, there are various routes I am considering. The changing organisational arrangements in the Integrated Care Systems is presenting opportunities to work differently with greater influence to improve health and wellbeing for the population I serve. I am also considering the more traditional Public Health route, of becoming a Consultant in Public Health.

What top tips would you pass on to students interested in this type of work?

(i.e. any particular skills, knowledge, experiences, volunteering, extracurricular activities)

The field is diverse and doesn't really communicate this diversity very well to the outsider, so if you can try to get some experience on a Local Authority Public Health team. Be prepared to assimilate a vast amount of knowledge, in an organisation. Public health Intelligence I feel is particular unique in a Local Authority setting because of the expected breadth of knowledge and equal depth. In a day you may be asked to understand the poor data quality of the local hospital data, requiring an in-depth understanding on the working practice of a clinical profession, the system they use and its limitations in one moment, to stand before a group of elected members asking what are the economic benefits of recommissioning a breast feeding peer support service.