



Public Health Registrars
East of England

Mapping climate change and local authority public health teams in the East of England

— 22.09.22 —

‘Climate change is the **greatest global health threat** facing the world in the 21st century, but it is also the greatest opportunity to redefine the social and environmental determinants of health’ - **Lancet Countdown**

Who, what and why?

Who? Group of public health registrars from East of England (PHREE) keen on environmental sustainability, including sustainability reps

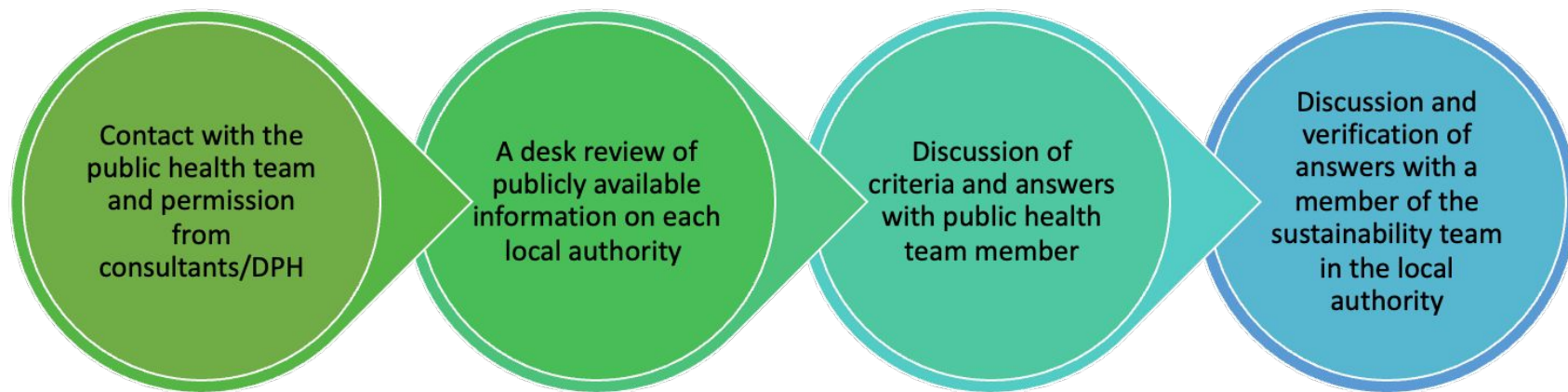
What? A mapping/audit exercise (internally focussed)

Why? To understand the position of climate change and health within LA PH teams, to highlight good practice and also possible projects (primarily for registrars) for action and improvement. Survey showed that EoE registrars wanted to do more on sustainability but weren't sure how or who was responsible; also many had yet to sign off 5.7. ***We wanted to know how involved LA PH teams were in the environmental agenda, advocate for increased involvement, and identify registrar opportunities.***

When? Started work in Oct 2021, data collection Jan-May 2022.

Methodology

Our process included:



Questions included in the audit

Section 1: Wider local authority action on the environment and climate change

1. LA has declared a climate emergency.
2. LA has assigned an elected member lead for climate change.
3. LA has assigned a council officer for climate change/sustainability.
4. LA has established a clear link with sustainability leads in public sector organisations locally, incl. NHS, and are exploring collaboration opportunities.
5. LA has calculated and accurately reports the LA's carbon footprint.
6. LA climate change plan exists and is being monitored
7. LA has a policy not to invest in fossil fuels.
8. Staff training on the importance of climate change on public health.
9. Travel / commuting policies recognising the importance of sustainable travel / remote working.
10. Office factors (if relevant) – lights / computers off at end of day, recycling, use of renewable energy.

Section 2: Public health directorate actions on the environment and climate change

1. One or more staff members of public health directorate with a responsibility for promoting / considering environmental sustainability.
2. Process to consider environmental impact whilst developing new policies, strategies and programmes.
3. Process to consider environmental impact in signing off new policies, strategies and programmes.
4. Environmental impact considered in writing service specifications.
5. Environmental policies of providers considered as part of commissioning processes such as mentioned within the social value statement.
6. Specific mention of environmental sustainability or becoming carbon neutral as a strategic priority by PH and actions set to achieve this.
7. Most important PH impacts of climate change for local authority have been identified in strategy and links to other departments/services have been made.
8. PH taken action to raise profile of importance of climate impacts on health within LA
9. PH input into LA climate change plan (if applicable).
10. PH represented on LA climate change committee.
11. LA climate plan recognises and proposes actions on key impacts of climate change on health locally e.g. air pollution / transport / active travel, housing / insulation / fuel poverty, cold snap/ flooding / heat waves.

1. What are local authorities responsible for?

2. What can we assess in an efficient way?

3. What are we actually likely to be able to influence as a public health registrar?

4. What are the most important parts of public health and sustainability?

Results

We completed the full audit with 5 out of 11 local authority PH teams in the East of England (EoE).

We completed the first part of the audit looking at publicly available information on the wider local authority for 6 out of 11 local authorities in the EoE.

The remainder we had difficulty in finding the correct people to contact, or it was not considered a good time for the team to be engaging with this project. This could indicate that capacity is a challenge and this issue may not often be a priority.

Results: good practice + areas for improvement

COUNCILS (6)

- ♥ 4 declared a climate emergency
- ♥ 4 had elected member for climate change
- ♥ 5 had sustainability council officer
- ♥ All calculated and reported carbon footprint
- ♥ All have a climate change plan

PH TEAMS (5)

- ♥ Some involvement with LA sustainability forums and committees
- ♥ Some use of social value in commissioning
- ♥ Some relevant workstreams around 'healthy places', for example

COUNCILS (6)

- ✗ Divestment from fossil fuels
- ✗ Health impacts not prominent in sustainability plans

PH TEAMS (5)

- ✗ No climate and health/ net zero strategies
- ✗ Only 1 had ever included climate in JSNA
- ✗ Only 1 had formal champion/rep in PH to connect with LA sustainability work
- ✗ Only 1 had permanent representation on LA sustainability committee
- ✗ No connections with ICS/NHS on green plans
- ✗ Inconsistent/weak use of environmental part of social value in commissioning

Recommendations + opportunities

Within PH teams:

- Formally named person within PH to link in with LA sustainability teams and feed back.
- Training for all PH staff on health, inequalities and climate change.
- Include climate change and health in JSNA.
- Embed net zero into service specifications e.g. NHS net zero procurement guidance.
- Embed environmental sustainability into public health policy and strategy.
- Create/support PH climate and health staff group to create space + push for change

As system advocates for climate and health:

- Meet with the sustainability teams regularly and/or getting a seat on the climate change committee (or equivalent).
- Connect with Greener NHS plans and ICS net zero work, for example, by engaging with the ICS sustainability leads and engaging with their working groups/committees.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to public health registrars sustainability working group who have supported this project, in particular Becky Best, Ramya Ravindrane, Lee Watson who have engaged with local authority PH teams to complete this audit.

Thanks also to the local authority public health teams who engaged with this project.

Questions?

Happy to share criteria if anyone wants to repeat in their area.

Contacts:

Gabrielle Woolf gabrielle.woolf@nhs.net

Emily Loud emily.loud@nhs.net