

Blackpool Council Training Location

The Town

Blackpool, Britain's favourite seaside resort, is a unitary local authority on the North West coast with a population of approximately 142,000. It is a town famous for its spectacular Illuminations, the Blackpool Tower and the Pleasure Beach theme park to name just a few of the attractions.

But Blackpool also faces a number of interesting and diverse public health challenges and can therefore offer a varied training experience. Blackpool has a smaller population of ethnic minorities than other areas in the North West but it also has a large LGBTQ+ community, large number of tourists and a highly transient population. Blackpool experiences considerable levels of disadvantage. The 2015 index ranks Blackpool as the most deprived of 326 Local Authority areas in England, based on both the average LSOA score and concentration of deprivation measures. 36 of 94 Blackpool LSOAs are in the 10% most deprived in the country. Life expectancy for men in the town is the lowest in the country and Blackpool ranks poorly in most public health outcome indicators – so there are plenty of public health challenges to work on!

The main causes of our poor life expectancy include drug related deaths, suicide and self-harm, smoking related conditions and alcohol.

The Directorate works closely with the four Primary Care Networks and the ICB to develop strategies responding to these health issues and particularly works with other Directorates and partner organisations in tackling the underlying causes of poor health locally particularly poor housing, transience and houses of multiple occupation, poor educational attainment, high levels of worklessness, low aspirations and consequent poor mental health.

The Directorate leads work on domestic energy and green infrastructure.

Public Health Team

The public health directorate comprises around 25 people and is led by Dr Arif Rajpura, the Director of Public Health (DPH). As DPH, Arif is member of the council's corporate leadership team. There are 3 Consultants within the team – Judith Mills, Dianne Draper and Liz Petch. All 3 are educational supervisors along with Arif. The public health directorate can offer experience across the range of public health areas. This includes the opportunity to work on commissioning activities including needs assessments, equity audits, service reviews, procurement, performance management and contract monitoring, in addition to strategic health protection functions, strategy and policy development.

Involvement in research projects is encouraged within the team and department is an active member of a number of research networks. Blackpool Council is the first Council in the North West to receive NIHR funding to establish a Health Determinants Research Centre with the aim of building research capacity in Local Government. The centre includes a Consultant in Public Health, Hannah Maiden who is also an Educational Supervisor.

There are plenty of opportunities for project work including health impact assessments, as well as the chance to get involved with a range of community based projects. There are a number of major projects in the town in which members of the team are involved including the Government's Levelling Up agenda.

ST5s sit on the senior management team of the Directorate and also the Council's Senior Leadership Team and are given line management, portfolio and budgetary responsibility.

The Practicalities

Blackpool Council operates a clear desk, flexible working policy (and it actually is!). All staff, including SpRs, are provided with a laptop, smart phone and secure remote access so working from home is possible. The public health team is based on the 4th floor of Number One Bickerstaffe Square, a new council building located directly opposite Blackpool North Train Station.

The mainline station at Preston is 20 mins journey and there are several trains an hour. For those travelling by car, the town has easy access to the motorway network via the M55. SpRs can also apply for staff parking permits for a variety of car parks in Blackpool, charges apply or purchase day parking permits priced at £1.50 which are valid for a car park a short walk away from the council building.

Blackpool is a bicycle friendly town and safe storage and changing facilities are available at Bickerstaffe.

Blackpool takes the wellbeing of staff seriously. Pilates classes are available on site with an opportunity of joining the Council choir. The Public Health Directorate organises regular social events for the whole team including attending plays, musicals, meals out, walking the Blackpool illuminations, sporting/leisure activities. Registrars are welcomed into the team.

Further Information

SpRs considering a placement in Blackpool are very welcome to visit the department to find out more about how a placement here could be tailored to meet their training needs. To arrange a visit, or for an informal chat please contact Judith Mills on 07712887679 or email Judith.Mills@blackpool.gov.uk.

Public Health Annual Reports available from www.blackpooljsna.org.uk

Blackpool Council Website www.blackpool.gov.uk

Visit Blackpool www.visitblackpool.com