**Public Health Training at Cumbria County Council**

**The area**

Located in the North West of England, Cumbria is the country's second largest local authority area by geographical size and has a population of 497, 996 people. Just over half of the population live in rural areas, but there are a number of large towns such as Kendal, Barrow-in-Furness, and Workington as well as the city of Carlisle. Most of these settlements are located around the outskirts of Cumbria, with the large central land mass being the Lake District National Park (now a UNESCO World Heritage Site). Cumbria is a lovely place to live, and provides plenty of opportunities for outdoor activities and enjoyment of the beautiful national park.

Cumbria has a two-tiered local government structure. Sitting beneath Cumbria County Council, there are six district councils (Barrow-in-Furness, Allerdale, Carlisle, Copeland, Eden and South Lakeland) which are made up of 166 electoral wards.

There are two Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in Cumbria. North Cumbria CCG covers the districts of Copeland, Carlisle, Allerdale and Eden, whilst Morecambe Bay CCG covers South Lakeland, Furness and North Lancashire. Cumbria is also covered by two Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) footprints, and served by two acute NHS Trusts (running four hospitals) and one community based NHS trust which provides community and mental health services.

Cumbria faces a number of interesting and diverse public health challenges and can therefore offer a varied training experience. In fact, the geography of the county, its rural and urban health issues, and its nuclear, tourism, and agricultural industries make Cumbria one of the most interesting and diverse areas to undertake public health work in England. As a county, it ranks 86th out of 152 upper tier local authorities nationally for overall deprivation, but there are significant social and economic inequalities across Cumbria and there are areas of severe deprivation on the west coast and in Carlisle. Barrow-in-Furness falls within the 10% most deprived districts in the country, where-as South Lakeland falls within the 25% least deprived, and life expectancy at birth varies by as much as 16 years between wards.

**The Public Health team**

The team is led by Colin Cox, Director of Public Health (DPH), and he is joined by consultants in Public Health, Jane Mathieson and Claire King. Jane is the educational supervisor for Public Health Speciality Registrars on placement with Cumbria County Council, and is based largely in the south of the county. The wider public health team consists of a small group of area and locality managers and project officers. The team is spread across the whole of the county with primary locations being in Carlisle, Penrith, Barrow-in-Furness and Kendal. There are often two or three Specialist Registrars attached to Cumbria County Council and one Foundation Year two doctor.

As part of the public health team in Cumbria, there are plenty of opportunities for registrars to become involved in a wide variety of projects and activities. This can include health needs and impact assessments, service reviews, procurement, performance management, commissioning of services, contract monitoring and evidence reviews.

**The practicalities**

Cumbria County Council operates a flexible working policy which means that no one in the team has a permanent desk, but instead can use ‘hot desks’ which are located within council offices across the county. There are plenty of desk spaces available, and registrars can choose to work at the most convenient location for them. Trainees are also provided with a laptop, a work mobile and secure remote access, which allows working from home. Travel by road can be challenging in some parts of the county, due to rurality and the centrally located mountainous region of the National Park. The west coast mainline trains run north and south through Cumbria, and there are stations at Oxenholme (Kendal), Penrith and Carlisle providing easy travel through the county and access to major cities such as Lancaster, Preston, Liverpool and Manchester. Branch lines also provide rail links to Barrow-in-Furness, Kendal and Windermere.

**Further information**

*Cumbria Intelligence Observatory:* http://www.cumbriaobservatory.org.uk/

*Annual Public Health Report:* https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/publichealth/annualreports.asp

*Cumbria County Council website:* http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/