**Cumbria County Council: Public Health Training**

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 499,100 people. It is primarily a rural county (51% of the population live in rural areas) that includes a number of market towns and the city of Carlisle. Most of these settlements are located around the outskirts (or edge) of Cumbria, with the large central land mass being the beautiful Lake District National Park. The National Park provides lots of opportunities for outdoor activities.

Cumbria has a two-tiered local government structure with six district councils (Barrow-in-Furness, Allerdale, Carlisle, Copeland, Eden and South Lakeland) which sit beneath the county council. The district councils make up 166 electoral wards.

There is one Clinical Commissioning Group in Cumbria, which is co-terminus with the county’s boundaries. There are two acute NHS trusts within Cumbria and one community based NHS trust.

Cumbria faces a number of interesting and diverse public health challenges and can therefore offer a varied training experience. Across the county, there are significant social and economic differences including areas of severe deprivation in West Cumbria, Barrow-in-Furness and Carlisle. Life expectancy varies significantly across the county with a nearly 18 year gap in females and a 16 year gap in males between the wards with the lowest and highest life expectancy. The geography of Cumbria, rural and urban health issues, and nuclear, tourism, and agricultural industries make Cumbria one of the most interesting and diverse areas to undertake public health work in England.

Public Health Team

The team is led by Colin Cox, Director of Public Health (DPH), and he is joined by a consultant in Public Health, Jane Mathieson. They are both trainers; however, Jane is the educational supervisor for public health speciality registrars on placement with Cumbria County Council. The public health team consists of a small group of employees; a mixture of management positions and project officer roles. The team is spread across the whole of the county with primary locations being Carlisle, Penrith, Barrow-in-Furness and Kendal.

The DPH is part of the senior management team at Cumbria County Council and in addition has the role as the Assistant Director of Health and Well-being. This means that the DPH in Cumbria manages two other teams; Active Cumbria and CAST (Cumbria Advice and Support Team), importantly these teams have strong links to health and health outcomes.

The public health team in Cumbria is responsible for commissioning health improvement, prevention, health promotion and treatment services and therefore can offer experience across the range of commissioning activities including needs assessments, service reviews, procurement, performance management and contract monitoring.

The Practicalities

Cumbria County Council operates a flexible working policy which means no one in the team has a permanent desk. The team instead uses ‘hot desk’ locations across the county located within offices that have set aside work space for the public health team. All staff, including trainees, are provided with a laptop, a work mobile and secure remote access, which allows you to work from home. Travel by road can be challenging in some parts of the county, particularly to the west coast (due to the central located and mountainous region of the National Park). Rail travel is easiest on the north-south mainline with stations at Oxenholme (Kendal), Penrith and Carlisle providing easy access between these market towns and Carlisle or south to Lancashire, Liverpool and Manchester.

For more information:

**Cumbria Intelligence Observatory:**

http://www.cumbriaobservatory.org.uk/

**Annual Public Health Report:**

http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/elibrary/Content/Internet/536/6181/42016122644.pdf

**Cumbria Council Website**:

http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/