

Public Health Training at Westmorland & Furness Council

Introduction

Westmorland and Furness (W&F) Council is a brand new Unitary Local Authority in the Northwest of England, which will come into authority on 1st April 2023. It was formed from the division of Cumbria County Council region and covers the geographical footprints of the predecessor District Councils of Eden, South Lakeland, and Barrow Borough.

The area

Westmorland and Furness (W&F) is a geographically large local authority area covering some 375,573 hectares and home to approximately 226,592 people. Many of the population live in rural and coastal isolated communities, but there are several large conurbations such as the towns of Barrow in the South East, and Penrith and Kendal nearer to the M6 motorway in the East. Most of these settlements are located in the South and East of the county, with the large Lake District National Park (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) to the North West. W&F is a lovely place to live and provides plentiful opportunities for outdoor activities and enjoyment of the beautiful national park. It is well situated to commute using the M6 motorway.

The Council

Westmorland & Furness is a new unitary authority, which brought together three district areas, and split the former Cumbria County Council. There is also the Lake District National Park Authority governing the national park, a large part of which sit within W&F.

Westmorland and Furness is a forward-looking LA that is seeking to build health into the core of it's activities through the Westmorland and Furness Council Plan. Check out the link to the Westmorland and Furness Plan at the end of this document for more information.

Westmorland and Furness is included within two separate NHS Integrated Care System (ICS) geographies. North East & North Cumbria ICS covers most of the region. Westmorland and Furness faces a diversity of 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 W&F one of the most interesting and diverse areas to undertake public health work in England. While the region, on average, appears to be relatively healthy, many health issues and inequalities become very stark at a more granular level of analysis, and inclusion of local people in public health activity is key to understanding this and effecting change.

The Public Health Team

The team is led by a Director of Public Health (DPH) who is joined by one consultants in Public Health, Matthew Saunders. Matthew is the lead trainer for Public Health Speciality Registrars on placement with W&F Council and was Lead Trainer of the former Cumbria County Council. The wider public health team includes several public health managers and two public health project officers. The team is spread across the whole of the region with primary locations being in Kendal, Barrow, and Penrith. Westmorland has capacity for one to two Specialist Registrars.

The public health team will continue to work closely, on several areas of work, with the neighbouring LA of Cumberland. A placement with W&F should provide opportunities to work in partnership with trainers and colleagues across both LAs, offering additional opportunities to gain relevant competencies. There is also initial agreement between the two LAs to share office locations, potentially allowing W&F trainees to make use of Cumberland desk space and WiFi access, and visa versa.

Both teams are welcoming, friendly, and supportive, and value the contribution of registrars while always looking to support registrar development.

As part of the public health team in W&F, 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.

There are plentiful opportunities for registrars to take a lead on key areas of work, and the team is an excellent option for more senior trainees, who may wish to act at the level of consultant.

The practicalities

W&F 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.

Public Health Registrars will be considered to be in the 'Work Anywhere' category, which allows a significant amount of homeworking, although there will be times when in-person attendance will be required and/or expedient to the work being carried out.

Registrars are 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 mountainous region of the National Park. The west coast mainline trains run up to Penrith providing easy travel through the West of the county and access to major cities such as Lancaster, Preston, Liverpool and Manchester. Branch lines also provide rail links to the Barrow region and centre of the national park. The main Council will be located at Kendal.

Further information

For an informal chat to explore W&F as an option, please do not hesitate to contact matthew.saunders@cumbria.gov.uk

Cumbria Intelligence Observatory: <http://www.cumbriaobservatory.org.uk/>

Westmorland and Furness website: [Westmorland and Furness](#)

W&F Council Plan : [Westmorland and Furness](#)

