

### **UKPHR response to the Advisory Committee on Clinical Excellence Awards consultation, 16 June 2021**

The ACCEA is consulting on Clinical Excellence awards. UKPHR wishes to see a change the eligibility criteria to ensure equal access for all Directors of Public Health and public health specialists.

The purpose of the ACCEA consultation is to reform the awards to:

- a) Broaden access to the scheme;
- b) Make the application process simpler, fairer and more inclusive; and
- c) Ensure the scheme rewards and incentivises excellences across a broader range of work and behaviours.

The eligibility criteria for the Awards state that health professionals can access the awards if they are, among other criteria, “(5) a fully registered public health consultant on the GMC specialist register or on the GDC specialist list, with a licence to practise”.

Public health is a multi-disciplinary profession. Among Directors of Public Health and public health specialists working at consultant level, around 60 percent have a background in medicine or dentistry and are registered with the GMC or GDC. The remaining 40 percent – around 650 individuals – come from a different professional background and are registered with the UK Public Health Register (UKPHR), which operates regulatory policies aligned with the GMC and GDC.

Of those working at specialist levels and above in public health, 73 percent are women, with many from diverse backgrounds. They have all worked exceptionally hard during the COVID-19 pandemic, often above and beyond what has been expected, contributing substantially to health protection, health improvement and in mitigating the devastating impact of the pandemic on local communities.

UKPHR hopes that the ACCEA might amend its eligibility criteria 5 so that the Awards do not exclude the 40 percent of senior public health staff who are working in identical roles to medics and dentists but who are regulated by the UKPHR rather than by the GMC or GDC. Enabling these 650 senior public health staff to become eligible would clearly meet the purpose of the consultation by ‘broadening access to the scheme, making it more inclusive and incentivising a broader range of work and behaviours’. Indeed, some GMC-registered Directors of Public Health have refused to apply for ACCEA awards as doing so may be unfair on their UKPHR-registered colleagues.

Making this inclusive change so that those “fully registered on the UKPHR specialist register” may also be eligible for these awards would be an important and welcome vote of confidence in senior public health professionals who have done so much to improve UK health outcomes through the difficult last 12 months.

[ends]