11.M. Round table: System leadership, the pandemic & implications for the public health workforce and systems in the UK

Organised by: UK Faculty of Public Health
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The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a light on public health as never before, and highlighted the critical importance of having strong, well-resourced and well-trained workforce; public health (PH) system, leadership and the need to address continuing structural injustices in society. The purpose this workshop is to describe and reflect on the research by the UK Faculty of Public Health (FPH) to assess the impact of the pandemic on the PH workforce and systems in the UK, and the strategies to support the workforce and system and the discourse in building a fairer healthier future for all, including work by FPH to address issues around inequalities and injustices further revealed by the pandemic. FPH is the UK’s professional standards body for public health specialists and practitioners, with over 4000 members working around the world. FPH has played a leading role in assuring an internationally respected PH workforce, development of robust PH systems; and powerful advocated for the reduction of inequalities and the best conditions for health and wellbeing to flourish. FPH members have been centre stage during the pandemic and their experience and learning is of value to other countries and PH systems. There will be presentations by distinguished senior members of FPH, who have also played significant influential roles in their own professional roles during the pandemic. While the PH pandemic response has been described by commentators as “nothing less than heroic”, what is clear is that the PH systems and workforce has been under stress, pressure and scrutiny. It’s therefore important to understand the nature and impacts of the challenges so that the PH workforce is adequately supported, and PH systems are robust, resilient and fit for purpose.

The session will include presentations on:

- “the wellbeing survey” conducted by FPH on the impact of the pandemic on health and wellbeing of the public health workforce.
- an influential report produced by FPH on Functions and standards of a Public Health System as part of efforts to ensure integrated robust PH systems, recognition of the key role of the specialist PH workforce and local Directors of public health at a time when these have been under intense work pressure and scrutiny
- and explore activities, experience and learning in response to issues of inequalities, racism and injustice, brought to the fore during the pandemic, and the responses of FPH and its members. These have not been considered as optional extras to the powerful epidemiological analysis and modelling work of PH workforce and the remarkable vaccination programme, but core to the moral mandate of the profession and work of FPH.

We will reflect and consult with participants on the evidence, learnings and their implications, experiences and collaboration opportunities. These will be important not only to tackle the Covid 19 PH emergency, to build fairer healthier future, but
also to address other ongoing and emerging PH challenges and issues.

**Speakers/Panelists:**
- **John Newton**
  Public Health England, London, UK
- **Farhang Tahzib**
  Faculty of Public Health, London, UK
- **Samia Latif**
  Public Health England, Nottingham, UK

**Key messages:**
- The public health workforce and systems have risen to meet the intense challenges and pressures of the pandemic, with impacts on their health and wellbeing.
- The lessons learnt are important not only for other public health emergencies and to build back fairer but also to meet other public health challenges and issues.