



Stage 5A – Public Health Planning

Frequently Asked Questions

What support is available for local governments to develop their plans?

Local governments are encouraged to approach their Health Service Provider (HSP) for support and guidance with the public health planning process. Contact details can be found at the end of this document.

What resources are available for local governments to develop their public health plans?

The Public Health Planning Guide for Local Government (local government guide) is currently being updated and is planned for release in October 2024. The guide will provide a suggested planning process and links to available resources including:

- sources of health data.
- information about the determinants of health.
- related legislation and policies
- examples of local government public health plans.
- other planning tools and guidance documents.
- government and non-government stakeholders (potential partnership opportunities).
- potential grant and funding opportunities.

A range of additional resources are available on the [Department of Health website](#). This website is updated on a regular basis.

How do local governments ensure that their public health plans are consistent with the State Public Health Plan?

The State Public Health Plan will identify the objectives and policy priorities for the whole of the State and provide a framework for local government to consider and adapt as necessary. Local public health plans should reflect the local context and priorities identified by their community. It is not expected that all priorities identified in the State Public Health Plan will be relevant for local public health plans.

When deciding on which policy priorities are applicable to a local government area, information collected on the health status and health determinants of the local district, as well as through community consultation, will be important.

Given the specific requirement in the *Public Health Act 2016* for local public health plans to be consistent with the State Public Health Plan, it is recommended that local governments demonstrate how the State objectives and priorities were considered in the formulation of their plans.

If we have already developed a local public health plan, will we need to re-write it once the State Public Health Plan is released to be consistent?

For local governments with a current public health plan that does not expire for several years, it is not expected that it be replaced before the end of a five-year period. Saying that, it is a requirement for local public health plans to be reviewed annually to ensure they remain relevant and fit for purpose. Once the State Public Health Plan is released,

local governments are expected to review the plan and ensure their local plans align where appropriate. To help with planning, the Department of Health plan to release the draft State Public Health Plan objectives and priorities shortly. This enables local governments who are developing or renewing their local public health plans to consider the priorities and plan ahead.

If we do not yet have a local public health plan, should we wait until the State Public Health Plan is released to begin development?

Other than the requirement for local public health plans to be published by 4 June 2026, the timeline for development is at the discretion of each local government. Some local governments may wish to wait until the State Public Health Plan is released (anticipated for late 2024) to begin development of their own plans, while others are already well underway. To help LGAs plan this process, the State Public Health Plan objectives and priorities will be released in coming months.

What reporting will be required of local governments to the Department of Health under part 5 of the *Public Health Act 2016*?

The Public Health Act requires a local public health plan is publicly available without charge. If requested, local governments must also provide a copy of their plan, or plans amendments, to the Chief Health Officer.

Is there training available to local governments in public health planning?

Some HSP's offer training sessions to local governments in their region. Please contact your relevant HSP for more information. We acknowledge not all local governments currently have training available to assist with public health planning. Work is underway to offer more training opportunities, as well as additional support to HSPs delivering the service.

Do local governments have to engage a consultant to do their plans?

No. The Public Health Act does not specify who should develop the plan. Local governments can allocate the task of developing the local plan to anyone. This may include:

- allocating the task to existing staff or any other person with the skills and knowledge of public health and strategic planning
- or
- engaging a consultant.

You may wish to consider establishing a steering committee of relevant stakeholders to guide the process. This could include councillors, community representatives, local businesses or government agencies. If local governments choose to hire an external consultant to develop their public health plan, it is recommended the following points be considered:

1. **Define clear objectives.** Establish specific, measurable goals for the public health plan to ensure the consultant's efforts align with your community's needs.
2. **Choose expertise wisely.** Select a consultant with proven experience in public health planning and a strong understanding of similar community profiles.
3. **Ensure community involvement.** Engage diverse community stakeholders in the planning process to gather broad perspectives and ensure local buy-in.
4. **Set transparent communication.** Arrange regular updates and check-ins to keep the project on track and adjust as needed.
5. **Review past work.** Examine the consultant's previous plans to assess their quality and relevance to your objectives.

Is there any funding available for LGAs to create their public health plans?

No, there is no specific funding allocated for the development of public health plans. As part of the public health planning process LGAs may identify a priority issue and decide to undertake a project or initiative that addresses that topic. There are several sources of grant funding available for specific projects from Healthway, Lotterywest, and GrantsConnect. The Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries also provides one-off grants for which local governments may be eligible.

To minimise the burden placed on local government, local public health plans may be integrated with the existing planning processes under the *Local Government Act 1995*. However, the timelines for review and replacement of public health plans must align with the legislative requirement of an annual review and 5 yearly replacement.

How do LGAs access a health profile for their area? How much does this cost?

Local governments can request health and wellbeing data, free of charge, in two ways:

1. Contact your local HSP who will coordinate the data request on your behalf.
2. Submit a [data request form](#) to the Epidemiology Branch of the Department of Health.

Can smaller LGAs work together to develop a joint public health plan?

No. Each local government must produce their own plan. However, there is nothing preventing smaller LGAs from collaborating and sharing resources in the development process.

Where can I go if I have more questions about public health planning?

In the first instance, local governments should contact their local HSP.

Health Service	Local government map	Email
North Metropolitan Health Service (NMHS)	NMHS map (PDF 500KB)	NMHSHealthPromotion@health.wa.gov.au
South Metropolitan Health Service (SMHS)	SMHS map (PDF 500KB)	southmetropolitanhealthpromotion@health.wa.gov.au
East Metropolitan Health Service (EMHS)	EMHS map (PDF 500KB)	EMHS.HealthPromotion@health.wa.gov.au
WA Country Health Services (WACHS)	WACHS map (PDF 500KB)	South West WACHS-SW.healthpromotion@health.wa.gov.au Pilbara WACHS-Pilbara.healthpromotion@health.wa.gov.au

pilbarahealthpromotion@health.wa.gov.au
Great Southern
GS.healthpromotion@health.wa.gov.au
Wheatbelt
wheatbelt.phu@health.wa.gov.au
Kimberley
KPHU.healthpromotioncoordinator@health.wa.gov.au
Goldfields
kqhealth@health.wa.gov.au
Mid-west
WACHSMidwestCommunicablediseasecontrol@health.wa.gov.au

Queries about public health planning processes should be sent to DOH.PHPlanning@health.wa.gov.au

Questions about Stage 5 of the Public Health Act should be sent to publichealthact@health.wa.gov.au.

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with disability.

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