

Programme co-ordinators work on a wide range of public health issues and are based in many different settings.

While much of the detail of their work is different, most programme co-ordinators will be involved in researching, planning, implementing and evaluating programmes and in community networking. Many will work in a specific, issues based programme.

A travel planner is just one example of a programme co-ordinator role in public health. Travel planners work with schools and workplaces to develop sustainable travel plans. Public health concerns being addressed here are cleaner air, injury prevention and improved physical activity for children and adults.

ACTIVITIES TRAVEL PLANNERS MIGHT DO:

- survey current travel patterns for a school
- help to establish a walking school bus
- take action to reduce chaos at the school gate
- help young people set up a cycle club.

Programme Co-ordinator



What school subjects do you need?

There is no typical profile of school subjects. English, mathematics and information technology would lay a sound foundation for a range of programme co-ordinator roles.

What qualifications will you need?

Most programme co-ordinators will need two sets of skills – knowledge in their particular area of work and generic skills such as project management, planning, evaluation and communication skills.

Many qualifications mentioned elsewhere in this booklet will be relevant for their work, particularly qualifications in health promotion and public health.

Like most public health roles, ongoing training in specific areas of need is likely to be required over time.

Who employs programme co-ordinators?

Programme co-ordinators are employed in nearly all agencies undertaking public health work. This includes local and regional government, non-government organisations, public health units, primary healthcare organisations and iwi providers.

CAREER 6:

PROGRAMME CO-ORDINATOR

HANNAH, Travel Planner, Auckland Regional Transport Authority

WHILE MOST PUBLIC HEALTH WORKERS ARE BASED IN PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES in district health boards or non-government organisations, some programme co-ordinators like Hannah Mitchell work within local and regional councils.

A key objective for travel planning is to get people to use active and sustainable transport options and use cars less frequently. This, Hannah says, will have a direct bearing on the health of the population because air and water quality will improve, roads will be safer and people will get more physical exercise. Hannah engages a number of people and organisations in her travel planning work, including schools, local councils, local residents, community boards, sports trusts and police education officers.

Hannah developed her interest in travel planning during her study toward a Masters Degree in Human Geography where she wrote her thesis about removing barriers for children to use public space. She believes children are often overlooked in travel planning and need to be given more acknowledgement as citizens so that their right to safety, independence and experience is protected. Hannah and her colleagues have had recent successes in primary schools where walking buses have cut the number of children who are driven to school, increasing their level of physical activity and getting cars off the road at rush hour.

Hannah loves her role. She says innovation, communicating, promoting ideas and problem solving are really important aspects to manage diverse individual and organisational relationships. You also have to be well organised. Hannah says she could take many paths in her future career, but wants to remain in environmental and sustainable planning.

“One of the best things about the walking bus project is that they are community-owned and operated. This is what I love about public health – communities solving their own problems”

