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PLANNING  
FOR THE  
PUBLIC GOOD



PUBLIC  
PRACTICE

# A PROSPECTUS FOR ASSOCIATES

Public Practice is placing a new generation of planners within local government to shape places for the public good. It will build the public sector's capacity to deliver homes and growth, make better places, and share skills and knowledge across authorities.

# WHAT WE STAND FOR

**THE PUBLIC SECTOR CAN BE BOLD AND ENTERPRISING —** There is a proud history of the public sector driving innovation and excellence. The state is not only about maintaining the status quo.

**GOOD PLANNING CREATES NEW OPPORTUNITIES —** The job of the planner is about more than saying yes or no. We create the conditions for change that would not have happened otherwise.

**THE RULES CAN BE DESIGNED —** Bureaucracy is not a constraint on creativity – it is a field for creativity in its own right. Even meeting minutes, procurement processes, or legal clauses are opportunities for better design.

**EVERYDAY PLACES CAN BE EXTRAORDINARY —** Planning has the power to build better everyday environments, for everyone. Rather than creating exceptions to the norm, we work to raise the standards of normality itself.

**SHAPING PLACES MEANS SHAPING DECISION MAKING —** There is no point designing the right answer to the wrong brief. We need design expertise further upstream to influence the decisions which have the greatest impact on places.

**PLANNING BUILDS DEMOCRACY —** Every citizen should have a say in how their city changes. Good planning gives a voice to the silent majority by advocating for broader communities, wider geographies, and longer horizons.

# HOW WE WORK

Public Practice acts as a broker, selecting outstanding Associates and matching them to Authorities in need of additional planning and placemaking expertise. As a not-for-profit social enterprise, it offers Authorities a cost-effective model to build the public sector's capacity over the longer-term. As a placement programme, it gives Associates unique place-based roles to deliver change on the ground, alongside industry-leading training and development. And as a network of leading planning practitioners, it seeks to build a body of collective knowledge and research to be shared across the sector.

## OUR OFFER

### AUTHORITIES

Public Practice offers access to a new pool of talent at a significantly lower cost than recruitment agencies, as well as opportunities for learning, networking, and sharing collective knowledge. Authorities interested in hosting a placement are supported by Public Practice to define the role and select an Associate from shortlisted candidates. Authorities employ Associates on one year fixed-term contracts, or secondments from their existing employers, for salaries of between £30,000 – £50,000. Authorities may be local or city government, combined authorities, development corporations, or publicly-led delivery vehicles.

### ASSOCIATES

Public Practice offers a unique and prestigious public sector placement, and the opportunity to be part of a multidisciplinary cohort producing collective research, developing new digital technologies, and receiving high quality training. Associates will be selected through an annual recruitment round. Successful Associates will work in place-based roles within Authorities for 90% of their time, and spend the remaining 10% carrying out collective research and development as a cohort, supported by Public Practice. Associates may be planners, architects, urban designers, landscape architects, regeneration or historic environment experts – or practitioners with backgrounds in other fields, from data science to social sciences. They will typically be expected to have a minimum of three years' experience in practice.

### SUPPORTERS

Public Practice offers a platform to invest strategically in improving the speed, certainty and quality of public planning. Supporters' sponsorship and grant funding will cover the running costs of Public Practice at a programme level, preventing any conflicts of interest. In return, Supporters will be given the opportunity to collaborate on collective research, participate in events, and receive public acknowledgement of their support. Supporters may be government bodies, grant makers, developers or built environment consultants who recognise that good expertise in Local Authorities is essential to bring about good development.

# OUR PURPOSE

Good planning creates the conditions for good growth. It engages communities, builds public support, coordinates investment, shapes development, and strengthens the character of a place. However a longstanding and widening skills gap between the public and private sectors is limiting the planning capacity of Local Authorities, and in turn constraining the delivery of homes and growth.

In the last 5 years, net Local Authority spending on planning and development in London has fallen from £259m to £148m, a reduction of nearly 60%.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, we now need to be building more than double the number of homes we were delivering five years ago. Numerous studies and reports have identified a lack of public sector planning capacity as a barrier to delivering the quantity and quality of homes London needs. A survey of London's placeshaping capacity carried out by the GLA revealed an uneven distribution of resources across boroughs, and a mismatch between current capacity and areas of planned growth. As a result 96% of London boroughs say they require more placeshaping skills in their planning departments.<sup>2</sup>

These concerns are shared by private sector developers. A recent survey of housebuilders identifies providing additional resources to Local Authority planning departments as the single most important policy measure to boost housing supply.<sup>3</sup> There is strong evidence that developers are willing to subsidise additional Local Authority capacity if it helps to de-risk the planning process and accelerate timescales.

There are many examples of excellent practice within planning departments, but in the context of economic constraints, Local Authorities are finding it more difficult to attract the most talented planning professionals, and harder to keep those with the ambition

<sup>1</sup> Centre for London (2015). *Running on Fumes: London Council Services in Austerity*. Retrieved from: [www.centreforlondon.org/publication/council-services-in-austerity](http://www.centreforlondon.org/publication/council-services-in-austerity)

<sup>2</sup> Greater London Authority (2016). *Planning & Regeneration Capacity Survey 2016*.

<sup>3</sup> Knight Frank (2016), *Housebuilding Report 2016* (<http://content.knightfrank.com/research/297/documents/en/2016-3851.pdf>)

and capabilities to find jobs elsewhere. 100% of London boroughs have difficulty attracting appropriately qualified or skilled planning and placeshaping practitioners.<sup>4</sup>

As a result, Authorities are increasingly turning to external consultants and private agencies as a short-term measure to fill the gap. All London boroughs cover their capacity needs by procuring external consultants, and 91% by recruiting agency staff.<sup>5</sup> While this approach offers more flexibility, over the longer term it can erode local knowledge and capacity, and cost more than twice as much as traditional recruitment.

These issues are not confined to London. A recent study by the East of England LGA found that Local Authorities are significantly lacking the capacity and skills to deliver the region's growth agenda. Issues identified include a lack of resources, an ageing workforce, high staff turnover, difficulties with retention, and a lack of flexibility in local government recruitment processes and job design.<sup>6</sup>

There is a range of programmes offered by organisations such as Urban Design London and Future of London to support existing staff which continue to nurture skills successfully within Local Authorities. However, it is clear from feedback that training is not sufficient on its own. Alternative, cost-effective models are needed to bring new talent into the public sector, and to share skills and develop technologies to support growth in a more targeted and strategic way.

At the same time, there is a new generation of planners, architects and urbanists – and practitioners from emerging fields who don't fit comfortably into any of these categories – with an appetite for doing more socially engaged work for the public good, and an interest in rediscovering the civic purpose of planning. Public Practice is one way of harnessing their talent, not by resurrecting old models, but by helping to build a new form of proactive planning that crosses departments, disciplines and sectors.

It has the potential to transform perceptions of the profession, and help to create a more equal and diverse industry by improving

<sup>4</sup> Greater London Authority (2016). *Planning & Regeneration Capacity Survey 2016*.

<sup>5</sup> Greater London Authority (2016). *Planning & Regeneration Capacity Survey 2016*.

<sup>6</sup> East of England Chief Executives Forum. *Recruitment & Retention of planners in the East of England*. Retrieved from: [www.eelga.gov.uk/documents/publications/east\\_of\\_england\\_chief\\_executives\\_forum\\_final.pdf](http://www.eelga.gov.uk/documents/publications/east_of_england_chief_executives_forum_final.pdf)

access for women, ethnic minorities, and people from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. It will build the public sector's capacity to deliver homes and growth, make better places, and share skills and knowledge across authorities.

The development industry is united about the need to improve public sector planning capacity and capability. Public Practice is one practical way of starting to make an immediate difference.

Jules Pipe

Deputy Mayor of London for Planning,  
Regeneration & Skills, and Chair of Public Practice

# OUR IMPACT

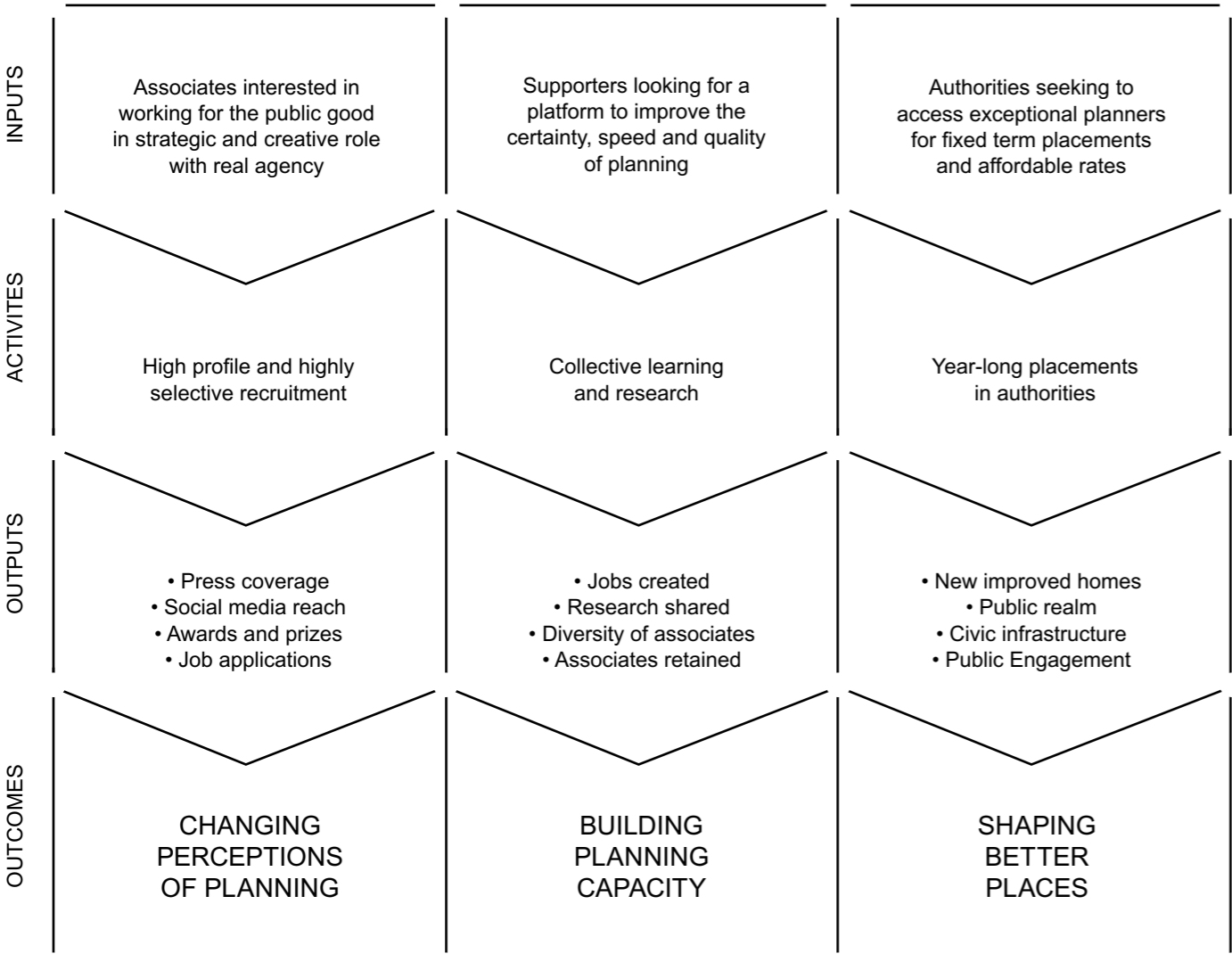
Public Practice's mission is to shape better places by building public planning capacity and changing perceptions of the profession.

Good public planning shapes the built environment for the public good. However the status of the planning profession along with the idea of public service has reached its lowest ebb at a time when it is needed the most. Public Practice aims to address the situation by rebuilding the agency of the profession and by finding a new purpose in public planning.

We will start by building public planning capacity; placing talented and diverse Associates within Authorities, and sharing collective research and knowledge. The Associates will represent a new approach to planning, which we will publicise to help change perceptions of the profession. Their work will shape better places through tangible improvements that make a higher quality built environment that is more socially inclusive, environmentally sustainable and economically successful.



# THE OFFER FOR ASSOCIATES



## What does Public Practice offer ASSOCIATES?

**WORK FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD** – A unique opportunity to work further upstream for the public sector in place-based roles with cross-cutting agency.

**LEARN THROUGH DOING** – Work on challenging projects in a supportive environment and benefit from a high quality training programme.

**DEVELOP CUTTING-EDGE RESEARCH** – Participate in and produce collective research and development together with a multi-disciplinary cohort.

**BUILD YOUR CAREER** – Gain access to a high profile professional network and routes in public sector leadership.

**WORK FLEXIBLY** – Benefit from more independence and flexibility than employment in traditional public or private sector roles recommendations leading to a change in policy.

**WHO YOU ARE** Public Practice is recruiting a new generation of public planners who are entrepreneurial, civic-minded, interdisciplinary and creative. You may be a planner, architect, urban designer, landscape architect, regeneration or historic environment expert – or you may have a background in other fields such as data science or social sciences and not fit into any one of those categories. We have no fixed requirements in terms of your qualifications, background or age, but we typically expect Associates to have a minimum of 3 years post-graduate experience. There is no upper limit. You may be looking for a career change, for a temporary secondment to experience planning from a different perspective, or to give something back towards the end of your career. We want our cohorts to be diverse in terms of skills, experience, and backgrounds. We are keen to encourage applications from sections of the community that are under-represented in the built environment sector, in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, faith or disability.

**WHAT WE OFFER** Public Practice offers you strategic and creative roles within the public sector under flexible conditions; an alternative route into working for the public good, and a supportive culture to do innovative public work. Selected Associates will be given 12 month placements on the frontline of public planning, with a salary of £30,000-£50,000 depending on the Authority and role. The first cohort in 2018/19 will be focused on London, the East and the South East of England. Following cohorts will look to expand to a wider geography, based on the level of interest. 90% of your time will be spent working for your host Authority, with the remaining 10% dedicated to working as a cohort on collective research and development, overseen by Public Practice. This will include a week-long induction course, a cutting-edge research programme, live projects, personal development and mentoring from leading practitioners. At the end of your placement you will be offered opportunities to participate in another year of Public Practice, or routes into permanent employment within the public sector and membership of an alumni network.

**WHAT WE ASK FOR** We ask for our Associates to make a 12 month commitment to Public Practice, from 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019. As a member of the first ever cohort, we want you to be open to taking on new challenges, and up for helping us to co-design Public Practice as it develops. You must be prepared for the work to not always be easy – but that is exactly why it will be worthwhile.

# WHAT WE DO

Associates will work in place-based roles with cross-cutting agency. A tailored job description for each placement will be developed together with the host Authority based on an open-ended menu of potential tasks, summarised below:

## POLICY & STRATEGY

- Asset mapping
- Capacity studies
- Cultural & economic strategies
- Design policy & guidance
- Masterplans
- Socio-economic research
- Local plan evidence

## ENGAGEMENT & ADVOCACY

- Community engagement
- Digital participation & inclusion
- External events
- Inward investment
- Public consultation
- Quantitative & qualitative evaluation
- Visual communication e.g. presentations, publications

## ENABLING & FACILITATION

- Cross-departmental working
- Cultural programming
- Design review
- Design workshops
- Funding bids
- Place-based coordination
- Training sessions

## DESIGN & DELIVERY

- Brief-writing
- Feasibility studies
- In-house design  
e.g. architecture, public realm
- Intelligent clienting
- Meanwhile projects
- Procurement
- Project management

## DIGITAL INNOVATION

- Data collection, mining and analysis
- Digital visualisation
- Software prototyping
- Automating processes
- Urban analytics

## PLACE MANAGEMENT

- Conservation area appraisals & management plans
- Design & conservation advice
- Local list review
- Place-based development management
- S106 negotiations
- Strategic planning applications
- Town centre management

# WHO WE ARE

## TEAM (Further team members to be appointed)

Finn Williams Chief Executive Officer, Public Practice

## BOARD (Further board members to be appointed)

Jules Pipe Deputy Mayor of London for Planning, Regeneration & Skills (Chair)

Danna Walker Founding Director, Built by Us

Lucy Musgrave Founding Director, Publica

Sarah Cary Head of Sustainable Places, British Land

Vincent Lacovara Placemaking Team Leader, Croydon Council

Debbie Jackson Assistant Director, Regeneration, Greater London Authority (Observer)

Pooja Agrawal Senior Project Officer, Regeneration, Greater London Authority (Observer)

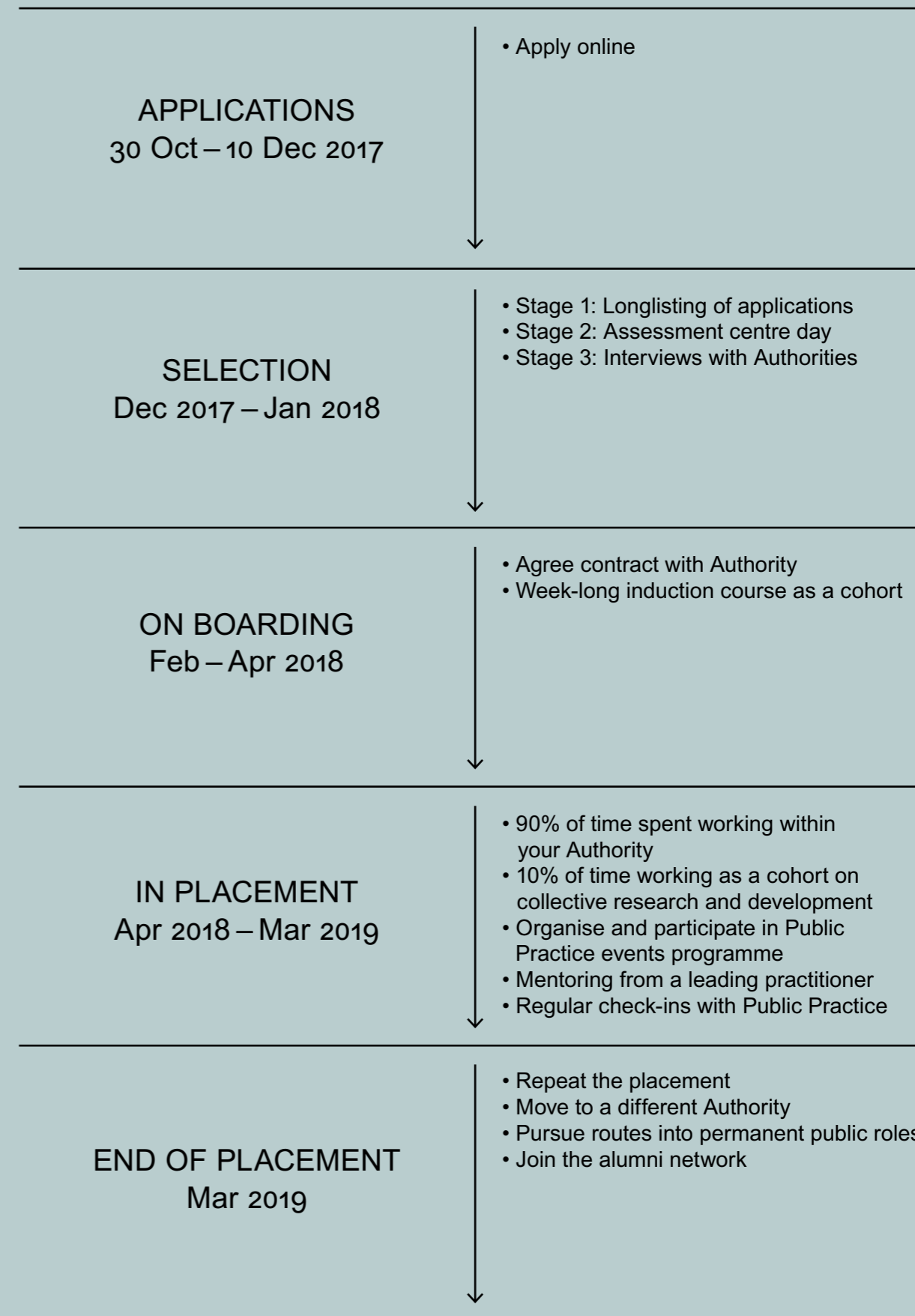
## PATRONS (Further patrons to be appointed)

Lord Kerslake Chair, Peabody

## FOUNDING PARTNERS



# TIMELINE



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# A PROSPECTUS FOR ASSOCIATES



## BECOME AN ASSOCIATE

Apply to become an Associate at  
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Follow us @PRACTICEPUBLIC

Or for more information, contact  
[info@publicpractice.org.uk](mailto:info@publicpractice.org.uk)