



# Public Health News

## in Ireland

Volume 1 Issue 1  
January 2007

The newsletter of the Institute of Public Health in Ireland  
[www.publichealth.ie](http://www.publichealth.ie)

### Welcome to the Institute of Public Health's newsletter

The Institute leads cooperation for public health across the island of Ireland and we have made tackling inequalities in health the focus of all our work.

We act in a number of areas including;

- Providing public health information and surveillance
- Strengthening public health capacity
- Advising on policy

This first issue highlights some of our work and future events. We would welcome any feedback you may have and are always happy to discuss any of our work with you directly.

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### Closing the Gap – new European website on health inequalities

This new website provides information on what countries are doing throughout Europe to tackle health inequalities. It contains a *National Level Policies* section which provides an overview of what EU member states are doing to tackle health inequalities and a *Good Practice Directory* with examples of local interventions from 15 countries, including Northern Ireland and Ireland. The website can be accessed at [www.health-inequalities.eu](http://www.health-inequalities.eu) or through the link on the Institute's website.

The Institute is a partner in this European project and supplies details of Irish interventions to be included in the *Directory*. If your organisation has an intervention you would like to include please contact [helen.mcavoy@publichealth.ie](mailto:helen.mcavoy@publichealth.ie).

## **Anti-poverty strategies on the island of Ireland – where do we stand?**

### **Ireland**

Ireland's first *National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion* (NSSPI) was published in late 2006. It outlines key objectives and targets in relation to social inclusion, pensions, health and long-term care. It is allied to the next *National Action Plan Against Poverty and Social Exclusion 2006 - 2008* and the *National Development Plan 2007 - 2013*.

The Office for Social Inclusion will co-ordinate the monitoring of the NSSPI. Further information can be found at [www.socialinclusion.ie](http://www.socialinclusion.ie).

### **Northern Ireland**

*Lifetime Opportunities* is the first Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy for Northern Ireland. It was published in November 2006 and can be accessed on the Central Anti-Poverty Unit website ([www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/antipovertynov06.pdf](http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/antipovertynov06.pdf)). The strategy defines specific goals and targets for each stage of the life-course in an effort to help children and adults break out of a cycle of poverty.

The Institute's response to the consultation on *Lifetime Opportunities* can be accessed at our website [www.publichealth.ie](http://www.publichealth.ie).

### **Promoting action for equity**

More than 160 people from a wide variety of backgrounds attended the Action for Equity conference in Carlingford on the 17-18 October 2006. This provided a unique opportunity for human rights and equality bodies, and the public health community to share information and debate action on the health inequalities agenda.

Feedback from all the sessions is being used to develop the Carlingford Charter which will provide a template for key principles and actions required to tackle health inequalities and move the equity agenda forward.

Presentations and conference proceedings are available at [www.publichealth.ie](http://www.publichealth.ie) (news and events section).

### **New library for health**

The All-Ireland electronic Health Library (AIeHL) is a network of interoperable websites across the island of Ireland. Each member website contains a range of knowledge resources including policy and strategy documents, data (quantitative and qualitative), research reports, details of programmes and interventions, contacts and websites. The AIeHL links these websites and makes it possible to search all the resources held on its member websites via a single search using keywords or phrases or National Public Health Language (NPHL) terms (<http://www.nphl.nhs.uk>).

The library can be accessed via Ireland and Northern Ireland's Population Health Observatory (INIsPHO), at the Institute or from any member website. To access the library [click here](#).

For further information about the library please contact [angela.jordan@publichealth.ie](mailto:angela.jordan@publichealth.ie).

### **Increased availability of data on health and wellbeing**

INIsPHO has developed an online data system which now includes:

- Data from WHO and the National Suicide Research Foundation

- Estimates of the prevalence of diabetes
- Data from the "Inequalities in Mortality 1989-1998" report and the Social Capital and Health survey
- Hospital activity data

Online analytical tools also allow users to generate age standardised rates or comparisons and create their own groups for analysis.

You can view the INISPHO (Online) Data system by [clicking here](#).

If you have data that you would like to include or any suggestions about additional data you would like to see on the system please contact [adele.graham@publichealth.ie](mailto:adele.graham@publichealth.ie).

### **Inaugural all-Ireland health intelligence conference**

This two day conference was held in the Royal Hospital Kilmainham on the 7-8 of November 2006. It represented the first step in the Institute's plans to develop and support an all-Ireland health intelligence network and delegates were able to hear a variety of key note speakers, learn new skills at workshops, review an exhibition of innovative projects and engage in debate and discussion. Nearly 200 people attended including key agencies involved in preparing and disseminating health intelligence.

Presentations and conference proceedings are available at [www.inisphe.org](http://www.inisphe.org).

### **Health impact assessment (HIA) – learning opportunities for 2007**

The Institute is hosting the 5th all-island three-day training programme in HIA on 21 – 23 May 2007. This practical course will empower participants to conduct HIA through a mix of workshops and practitioner presentations.

The Institute also delivered short introductory courses to HIA throughout 2006 to a range of groups including Government Departments, the HSE, local authorities and community groups - similar courses will be available for 2007.

Register for courses now at [www.publichealth.ie/hia](http://www.publichealth.ie/hia) or contact the HIA team for further details;

Teresa Lavin (Dublin office) [teresa.lavin@publichealth.ie](mailto:teresa.lavin@publichealth.ie)

or

Claire Higgins (Belfast office) [claire.higgins@publichealth.ie](mailto:claire.higgins@publichealth.ie)

### **Cost benefit analysis of health impact assessment**

To ensure that resources are being used for maximum health benefit, the Department of Health commissioned the York Health Economics Consortium to conduct a cost benefit analysis of HIA. Sixteen HIAs from across the UK were reviewed and findings showed that the benefits associated with conducting HIA outweighed costs.

The full report can be downloaded at [www.publichealth.ie/hia](http://www.publichealth.ie/hia).

### **Leadership for building a healthy society**

The need for strong leadership for public health was identified in the Investing for Health Strategy (2002) in Northern Ireland and Quality and Fairness (2001), the health strategy for Ireland.

The Institute helps develop leadership capability on the island of Ireland through the Leadership for

Building a Healthy Society programme.

Four groups (almost 100 people) have now completed this programme and a conference - Power in Public Health - is being held for the whole leadership network at the end of January 2007.

For more information on the leadership programme [click here](#).

### **New partnership evaluation tool**

Working in partnership across Government Departments and their agencies and with the community, voluntary and business sectors, and trade unions is central to government policies for tackling complex problems.

Between 2003 and 2006 the Research and Development Office for Health and Personal Social Services in Northern Ireland funded the Institute to carry out research to identify the impacts of multisectoral partnerships and devise ways for measuring these.

Based on this research the Institute has developed a set of indicators for use in assessing progress in partnerships. This is being developed as a web-based resource which will be available free of charge on the Institute's website for any partnership to use to support its own assessment and development.

A full research report will be published by the Institute in early 2007. For further information please contact [karen.patterson@publichealth.ie](mailto:karen.patterson@publichealth.ie).

### **Resources**

#### ***Unequal at birth –inequalities in the occurrence of low birthweight babies in Ireland***

Babies who are born low birthweight are at a greater risk of adverse developmental, educational, behavioural and socio-economic outcomes in childhood and adult life. This report explores the nature of the relationship between socio-economic status and low birthweight and considers the evidence-base for what works in reducing inequalities in the occurrence of low birthweight.

*Unequal at birth* is available to download from [www.publichealth.ie](http://www.publichealth.ie).

#### ***Making diabetes count***

This report, developed by an all-Ireland Working Group, led by INIsPHO, provides systematic estimates of the population prevalence of diabetes across the island of Ireland. Estimates include diagnosed and undiagnosed cases, and are available at national and sub national levels, including HSE Regions and Local Health Offices (in the South), and Health and Social Services Boards and Local Government Districts (in the North).

To download *Making Diabetes Count* [click here](#).

### **Events**

#### ***Healthy public policy – Is HIA the cornerstone?***

The 8th International Health Impact Assessment (HIA) Conference will be held in Dublin Castle from 15 –17 October 2007. This is the first time this international event will be hosted in Ireland and you can register your interest in attending by emailing your details to [hia2007@publichealth.ie](mailto:hia2007@publichealth.ie).

#### ***Creating connections II - advocating for the right to health***

This conference, run by the new Public Health Alliance for the island of Ireland, will be held on 27-28 February 2007 in the Hilton Hotel Belfast. Speakers will include Paul Hunt (UN Special Rapporteur), Kate Pickett (University of York) and Maev-Ann Wren (Journalist and Author). Workshops will focus on advocacy in action.

The conference programme and registration form is available at [www.phaii.org](http://www.phaii.org).

### **Health inequalities: showcasing good practice interventions**

This half day seminar will be held on 14 February 2007 in the Davenport Hotel, Dublin. It is a unique opportunity to hear about projects in Ireland which work directly with vulnerable groups to achieve a reduction in health inequalities. The projects which will be presented have been selected to take part in the European project *Closing the Gap: strategies for action to tackle health inequalities in Europe 2004-2007*. Speakers include Dr. Jane Wilde, Director of the Institute of Public Health in Ireland and Anna-May Harkin, Ireland's representative on the EU expert group on social determinants and health inequalities. If you would like to attend this seminar please contact [tara.burke@publichealth.ie](mailto:tara.burke@publichealth.ie).

### **Five nations health protection conference**

This conference will provide fresh perspectives on established areas of disease prevention and control and discuss new and emerging issues. Topics include travel and migration, incident management, risk assessment and communication, emergency planning and surveillance. It will be held on 22-23 May 2007 at the Waterfront Hall, Belfast. Further information can be obtained from [www.5nations.com](http://www.5nations.com) or [www.5nations.org.uk](http://www.5nations.org.uk).

If you would like to add your name to our mailing list for this newsletter or if you do not wish to receive future issues please let us know at [info@publichealth.ie](mailto:info@publichealth.ie).

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