



Public Health News in Ireland

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The newsletter of the Institute of Public Health in Ireland
www.publichealth.ie

Welcome to the newsletter of the Institute of Public Health in Ireland. As always Spring is a time of change and particularly this year as we look forward to the return of a new Assembly in Northern Ireland. It is a very positive time which will strengthen the benefits of North/South working. During this time and in the months to come the Institute will continue to strive to ensure that cooperation to improve health and address health inequalities is firmly on the agenda across the island.

This newsletter highlights key developments across the island and links with the UK and Europe. As always 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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Northern Ireland goes Smoke-Free

Workplaces in Northern Ireland will be smoke-free from the 30 April 2007. This is a great achievement and will protect employees and the general public from the proven dangers to health from environmental tobacco smoke. It recognises the combined work of many health, social, trade and political organisations in Ireland.

Whilst this legislation will protect against the dangers of environmental tobacco smoke it will be essential to continue lobbying for a comprehensive tobacco action plan North and South of the island. This should include smoking cessation services and fiscal measures. The Institute plans to bring together key organisations across the island in the coming months to identify opportunities for further North/South cooperation in this area.

Information about the smoke-free legislation is available from www.spacetobreathe.org.uk.

Power in Public Health

'Power in public health' was the title of a conference organised by the 4th group of participants of the Institute's Leadership Programme. The conference aimed to explore how through individual and collective leadership, those working in public health can utilise different power bases to positively influence health and inequalities. Over 70 participants attended the conference further strengthening the network of leaders from different sectors across Ireland who are working collaboratively and creatively to build a healthy society and reduce inequalities in health across the island.

Further information on the Institute's Leadership Programme is available from www.publichealth.ie/index.asp?locID=48 or by contacting karen.patterson@publichealth.ie.

New Public Health Alliance for the island of Ireland (PHAI)

The Northern Ireland Public Health Alliance and the Public Health Alliance Ireland have now merged to become one voice for the island of Ireland which will be known as the Public Health Alliance for the island of Ireland.

This new Alliance was launched formally at the Creating Connections II conference where it received significant support from the Department of Health and Children and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

The new Alliance website details its aims, objectives and governing principles and can be sourced at www.phaii.org. Membership application forms are also available from this website in the form of individual and corporate memberships.

Decent Food for All

The Institute is currently conducting research and evaluation of the 'Decent Food for All' (DFfA) programme, a three-year initiative addressing food poverty led by Armagh and Dungannon Health Action Zone in Northern Ireland.

The evaluation will test the effectiveness of the programme at reducing food poverty in the Armagh and Dungannon area and runs through the lifetime of the programme. DFfA is a community based intervention study with programme and comparison areas. Pre and post intervention data has been collected which focuses on physical and financial access to food, dietary and food safety knowledge and practices and cultural aspects of food and food consumption. Funding for the evaluation has been provided by [SafeFood](#).

A final evaluation report will be completed at the end of 2007. Interim reports are available at www.publichealth.ie/index.asp?locID=160.

Evaluation of Healthy Living Centres

There are 19 Healthy Living Centres (HLCs) in Northern Ireland, part of a wider programme of over 350 HLCs across the UK. The Institute was commissioned by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) to evaluate HLCs in Northern Ireland, to assist them in assessing the value of the work done by the HLCs and to make decisions about the support which might be offered to them in future in the light of competing priorities.

The evaluation concluded that HLCs in Northern Ireland are doing what they were set up to do, that is to address the health and well-being needs of disadvantaged communities and to contribute to tackling health inequalities. A summary report is available at www.publichealth.ie/index.asp?locID=10.

The Injury Observatory of Britain and Ireland (IOBI)

Ireland and Northern Ireland's Population Health Observatory (INIsPHO) is participating in the development of an injury observatory for Britain and Ireland. This will be a virtual observatory based on collaboration between population/public health observatories in Britain and Ireland. It builds upon a successful model in Wales – Collaboration for Accident Prevention and Injury Control (CAPIC).

The injury observatory will support practitioners by making important and relevant information and tools available on one site.

The first phase of data will include mortality from homicide, road traffic accidents, falls, and drowning. INIsPHO has compiled this data for the island of Ireland and is now analysing and comparing data in Ireland, England, Scotland, and Wales in collaboration with colleagues in the Association of Public Health Observatories.

For further information on this project please contact steve.barron@publichealth.ie.

Social Inclusion in Ireland

Ireland's National Action Plan For Social Inclusion 2007 – 2016 was launched in February. The plan identifies health as a high-level goal. Specific commitments to address food poverty and obesity among children and develop integrated accessible primary care services are made. The plan also proposes to support the monitoring of inequalities in cancer risks, cancer occurrence, services and outcomes and to roll-out the use of the ethnic identifier in health information systems.

Summary brochures and the full report can be downloaded at www.socialinclusion.ie.

HIA Forum

A HIA Forum has been developed to bring together all participants who have attended the Institute's comprehensive HIA training programme. The training programme provides a theory into practice approach to conducting HIA and the Forum has been established to provide ongoing support. The first meeting on the 24th April will highlight the impact of HIA at a local level. HIA "surgery sessions" and networking will also be key aspects of the day.

The Forum is for past participants of the Institute's HIA training programme who can register by sending their details to john.mitchell@publichealth.ie.

HIA Network

The Institute coordinates the All-Ireland HIA Network which is made up of organisations across Ireland working in HIA. The Network is developing a paper to review how HIA fits with Integrated Impact Assessment. Details of organisations involved in the Network and additional information about its work can be found at www.publichealth.ie/index.asp?locID=540.

Cross-Border Strategy to Tackle Health Inequalities

The Institute is contributing to the development of a Cross-Border Strategy to Tackle Health Inequalities. This is a two-year project operated by CAWT and supported by the departments of health North and South with European funding from INTERREG. The project plans to:

- produce an updated health inequality profile for the CAWT region
- use the profile to engage with key stakeholders and build infrastructure to address inequalities
- develop the current CAWT health inequalities database of projects and services addressing health inequalities in the region (www.cawt.com/site/projects.asp).

Influencing Policy

The Institute aims to influence policy development on the island in favour of health and highlight action to reduce health inequalities. Responding to consultations is a part of this work and over the last quarter we have responded to key strategies across the island;

- Lifetime Opportunities – the government’s anti-poverty and social inclusion strategy for Northern Ireland
- The Road Safety Strategy
- The Equality Framework for the DHSSPS
- Belfast City Centre North West Quarter Plan: Part Two
- Rural Homes and People: A Review of Housing Executive Rural Housing Policy
- License for Northern Ireland Water Reform
- Fit Futures Implementation Plan – consultation
- A Cancer Framework for Northern Ireland

In addition a number of expert submissions were made to aid the development of strategies.

- Expert opinion submitted on the variables for inclusion in the study of 9 month-old children in Growing Up in Ireland – the national longitudinal study of children in Ireland
- Response to inform development of the HSE National Intercultural Strategy
- Submission to Health in Europe – A Strategic Approach

Our consultation responses and expert submissions are available from www.publichealth.ie/index.asp?locID=77.

Resources

INIsPHO (Online) Data System – new data available

Ireland and Northern Ireland’s Population Health Observatory’s (INIsPHO) online data system continues to expand and we are grateful to those organisations who have contributed data. New datasets added this year include;

- The WHO Health for all database tables

These contain data on approximately 600 health indicators, including basic demographic and socio-economic indicators, lifestyle and environmental indicators, mortality, morbidity, disability hospital discharges and health care resources, utilization and expenditure.

- National Cancer Registry Ireland and Northern Ireland Cancer Registry tables

These provide data on cancer incidence, mortality and survival rates across the island of Ireland.

The data system can be accessed at www.inispho.org/index.asp?locID=531.

All-Ireland CHAIN

Together with the Health Service Executive, INIsPHO has sponsored a one year trial of an All-Ireland CHAIN (Contact, Help, Advice and Information Networks). CHAINS are facilitated contact databases that provide support for sharing ideas and experience between health professionals.

The database can be accessed at <http://chain.ulcc.ac.uk/chain>.

Tools for advocacy

A new advocacy website was launched recently at the Creating Connections II conference. This website was developed based upon work undertaken by participants from Group 2 of the Institute's Leadership for Public Health course. It contains a model for developing advocacy skills, strategies and competencies, a number of resources to help with this and a self assessment tool. The website can be accessed at the Public Health Alliance for the island of Ireland (www.phaii.org).

Health Inequalities on the island of Ireland – the facts, the causes, the remedies

In conjunction with its launch the new Public Health Alliance for the island of Ireland has produced a publication highlighting health inequalities across the island. This can be downloaded from www.phaii.org.

Events

Healthy Public Policy – Is Health Impact Assessment the Cornerstone?

Registration is now open for the 8th International HIA Conference. This will take place in Dublin Castle on 16 and 17 October 2007, with pre-conference workshops on 15 October.

HIA has reached a critical stage in its development. As the use of HIA continues to grow and spread internationally this conference will assess what has supported its progress to date and what is blocking further progress. The conference will address specific questions:

- What is the evidence base for HIA?
- How can HIA be embedded into public policy making?
- Does HIA contribute to sustainability?
- How can HIA contribute to intersectoral working?

Information on registration and details on submission of abstracts can be found at www.publichealth.ie/hia or email hia2007@publichealth.ie for further details.

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.

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