



# Public Health News

## in Ireland

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

### **Welcome to the newsletter of the Institute of Public Health in Ireland.**

**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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### **North South cooperation for health**

Following the reconvening of the North South Ministerial Council, Dr Jane Wilde, Director of the Institute called for both governments to strengthen and extend their interest in promoting cooperation for health. Dr Wilde recognised the huge possibilities that exist with potential for improving the health of people across the island. Obesity, suicide and care of older people are all identified as issues that could benefit from stronger cross-border cooperation. Commenting, Dr Wilde said 'Tackling health inequalities together will help us improve health and wellbeing, ensuring fairness and prosperity for all'. Dr Wilde has also contributed a chapter on health in a publication produced by Co-operation Ireland entitled 'Seizing the Moment: Proposals for a New Era in North-South Co-operation'. This can be accessed from <http://www.cooperationireland.org>

### **Child health and poverty**

Child poverty casts a long shadow over a child's physical, mental and emotional health and development. These inequalities in child health and well-being are set early in life. Current knowledge on health inequalities at birth, in infancy, school years and issues relating to teenagers are highlighted in a recent policy paper 'Child health and poverty'. Commissioned by Combat Poverty Agency, it informed the child health recommendations made within the Combat Poverty Agency's recently launched Health Policy Statement. The Institute paper calls for a structured approach to tackling child poverty and inequalities in child health in Ireland. This paper will be made available on the Combat Poverty website in September [www.cpa.ie](http://www.cpa.ie)

## **Fuel poverty and health**

Fuel poverty and health is the focus of an all-island policy briefing. Key aspects of fuel poverty such as excess winter mortality, fuel prices and different policy approaches, North and South are discussed. New challenges in tackling poverty explored include the impact of fluctuating fuel prices and demographic factors such as population ageing and the climate change agenda. The Institute will launch this in October and it will be available from the Institute website.

## **Cross-border women's health**

Derry Well Women has commissioned the Institute to research the importance of the border and the conflict on women's health and their role in society. The research will contribute to the implementation of the North West Women's Health Strategy and a full report will then be published. A Cross-Border Anti-Exclusion Action Plan will be developed as part of the implementation of the North West Women's Health Strategy. This plan will provide a policy framework for anti-social exclusion activities in the border counties, with particular emphasis on social isolation affecting women and children, older people, those with disabilities, and Travellers.

## **Developing the anti-poverty agenda**

Fostering partnership working to tackle health inequalities, streamlining the implementation of the Lifetime Opportunities and the existing Investing for Health strategies was the focus of a seminar held in April. The outcomes of 'Developing the Anti-Poverty Agenda: A Shared Focus in the Eastern Health and Social Services Board' have been used to influence the forthcoming Lifetime Opportunities anti-poverty action plans being produced by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM). The seminar was organised by the Eastern Investing for Health Partnership with support from the Institute of Public Health in Ireland and the Northern Ireland Anti-Poverty Network. The conference report, conference proceedings, needs papers and submissions made to the OFMDFM on the Anti-Poverty Strategy are available from <http://www.publichealth.ie/index.asp?locID=160&docID=803>

## **CONSULTATIONS**

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 part of this work and during the last quarter we have responded to the following from the Department of Health, England:

### **Draft guidance on health in Strategic Environmental Assessment**

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is an assessment of the environmental impacts of a policy, plan or programme and came into effect as EU legislation in 2004. Legislation identifies that health should be given due consideration in the development of a SEA. The Department of Health in England developed this report to outline how health should be considered in SEA. A number of factors are highlighted including the wider determinants of health, key contacts in public health and how to assess the impacts of a proposal on health. The Institute's response can be viewed at <http://www.publichealth.ie/index.asp?locID=572&docID=-1>

## **RESOURCES**

### **Counting the cost of diabetes on the island of Ireland**

'Making Diabetes Count: What does the future hold?' was recently published by the Institute and predicts a 26% increase in diabetes in Northern Ireland and a 37% increase in the Republic of Ireland over the ten year period (2005-2015). This report is the second from the Irish Diabetes Prevalence Working Group. The Chief Medical Officer's, North and South both identified the importance of the report and recognised its importance in helping plan in the prevention and treatment for people with diabetes across the island. Access the report from <http://www.publichealth.ie/index.asp?locID=573&docID=787>

## **Supporting decision-making with reliable intelligence**

Relevant, accurate, valid, comprehensive, and timely information, used intelligently, is a cornerstone in driving continuous improvement in our health and social care services, improving the public's health, and reducing health inequalities. Data inventories – comprehensive lists of relevant datasets that are described in a systematic way – play a key role in promoting awareness, access and use of up-to-date information. The 'All-Ireland Health Data Inventory, Part 1: Metadata for key data sources (Version 1.0) brings together the metadata for the key numerical data sources relating to the island. This Inventory will be available as a collection in the INIsPHO (Online) library during September 2007.

## **Making HIA easier**

A desktop screening tool has been developed to assist organisations undertaking HIA. Screening quickly and systematically establishes whether a particular policy, programme or project has an impact on health and whether a HIA is appropriate or necessary. The screening tool can be downloaded in word format and used electronically to record the outcomes of a screening session. Access the screening tool from <http://www.publichealth.ie/index.asp?locID=632&docID=-1>

## **EVENTS**

### **Healthy Public Policy – Is Health Impact Assessment the Cornerstone?**

Providing an international forum to debate different perspectives in Health Impact Assessment and explore its role across a range of sectors, this conference will take place on 16 & 17 October 2007. The conference programme outlining plenary and parallel sessions will be available in September. The next issue of Public Health News in Ireland will cover the conference. Further information may be sourced at <http://www.publichealth.ie/index.asp?locID+561&docID=-1>

### **Monitoring diabetes: seminar to promote all-Ireland approach**

A seminar discussing the findings of the 'Making Diabetes Count' reports will be held on 4 September, 10.30-13.00 at the Institute of Public Health in Ireland, Belfast. The methods and findings of the reports will be presented with an outline of the next stages of this work. Registration and further details on 'Promoting a systematic all-Ireland approach to monitoring the population prevalence of diabetes' seminar can be found at [www.publichealth.ie](http://www.publichealth.ie) or email [lindi.gatchell@publichealth.ie](mailto:lindi.gatchell@publichealth.ie)

### **INIsPHO Regional Training Workshops**

Ireland and Northern Ireland's Population Health Observatory (INIsPHO) has developed two web-based initiatives to support the use of both non-numerical and numerical intelligence: the All Ireland electronic Health Library (AIeHL) and the INIsPHO (Online) Data system. Regional workshops providing a practical introduction to these resources are being held for those working across the health sector interested in strengthening their decision-making. For further information or to express an interest in these workshops please contact [lindi.gatchell@publichealth.ie](mailto:lindi.gatchell@publichealth.ie)

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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