

# IPH Submission to the Central Statistics Office (ROI)

## Introduction

### **The Institute of Public Health in Ireland**

The Institute of Public Health in Ireland (IPH) is an all-island body which aims to improve health in Ireland, by working to combat health inequalities and influence public policies in favour of health. IPH promotes co-operation in research, training, information and policy in order to contribute to policies which tackle inequalities in health.

Over the past ten years IPH has worked closely with the Department of Health and Children and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in Northern Ireland to build capacity for public health across the island of Ireland.

### **Key points**

IPH welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the questionnaire content for the 2011 Census of Population. We are particularly interested in how information collected by the Census can contribute to improved health and in this regard are broadly supportive of the questions addressing health in the current Census questionnaire.

We feel that an additional question that assesses self-perceived health would be extremely useful as, while this is a subjective assessment, it has been shown to correlate well with actual health status and use of health services. The Northern Ireland 2001 Census of Population included the following question:

#### **11. Over the last 12 months would you say your health on the whole has been:**

- **Good**
- **Fairly good**
- **Not good**

However there has been a call for the wording to be changed in the next Census which will also take place in 2011, to the following:

How is your health in general?

- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Bad
- Very bad

We would recommend a similar question be adopted in the Republic of Ireland to that being used in Northern Ireland to facilitate all-island analysis of health status. In this regard we note that other proposed changes to the forthcoming Northern Ireland Census include suggestions to adopt health questions similar to questions 15 and 16 in the current Republic of Ireland Census.

Finally we would suggest that any new or current questions regarding health are aligned with those used in the SLAN survey.