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# First Meeting of MHFI Sub-Group to Plan Men's Health Week 2013

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**Date:** Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2012  
**Time:** 2.00pm - 3.00pm  
**Venue:** Teleconference  
**Present:** Colin Fowler, Sandra Gordon, Michael Lynch and Finian Murray  
**Apologies:** Lorcan Brennan  
**Minutes:** Colin Fowler

## Issues Discussed

### 1. Date of Men's Health Week 2013

Men's Health Week (MHW) 2013 will run from Monday 10<sup>th</sup> June - Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2013.

### 2. Theme of MHW 2013

It was agreed by the Sub-Group that the theme for MHW 2013 in Ireland should relate closely to the focus of the European Men's Health Forum's (EMHF) high profile Summit, which will be held in Dublin towards the end of MHW (probably on the Thursday and Friday). This event will mark Ireland's Presidency of the EU. The themes for the Irish Presidency will include tackling obesity and alcohol-related problems.

Although the exact title of this Summit is still to be finalised, it will concentrate upon the concept of moving from talk to action. This event will provide an ideal opportunity for the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) to piggy-back on some of EMHF's resource materials and publicity.

It was agreed that MHFI should adopt the title 'ACTION MEN' for MHW 2013, and use the strapline 'Turning words into Action'.

By now, most people know that men have health needs; that these needs are largely unmet; that there is a lot of evidence / research to suggest that things could be different ... However, what is needed is widespread action, and the translation of ideas into practice. Thus, other possible straplines could include: 'You know what's wrong. Get it sorted' or 'Stop talking. Start doing' etc.

It was felt that this theme would be broad enough to engage a range of organisations and men themselves - who could interpret 'action' in their own ways. For example ...

- Decision-makers could develop, fund and enforce male-specific health policies.
- Service providers could audit their current initiatives and target programmes to improve men's health.
- The voluntary and community sector could set-up local initiatives to engage men.
- Men could avail of some of the events / services on offer or have a health check ...

However, as in previous years, any initiative to celebrate MHW 2013 (in whatever form) will be encouraged - as the simple rationale behind this week is to highlight men's health and well-being needs and issues.

### **3. Role of the MHFI Planning Sub-Group for MHW 2013**

At the last meeting of the MHFI Management Committee, on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2012, it was agreed that an MHW 2013 Planning Sub-Group should be established.

Participants in the teleconference agreed that the remit of this body should be similar to the one set for last year's group:

- Set appropriate aims and objectives for MHFI's involvement in MHW 2013.
- Identify potential members for an all-island, inter-agency Planning Group.
- Work with the inter-agency Planning Group to coordinate MHW 2013 activity across Ireland.
- Participate in, input to, and act as the executive of, the all-island MHW 2013 Planning Group.
- Design and deliver realistic actions on behalf of MHFI to support the celebration of MHW 2013.
- Oversee and steer developments on behalf of MHFI.
- Report back to the MHFI Board of Trustees at Management Committee meetings.

### **4. Role of MHFI in MHW 2013**

Based upon the positive experience from MHW 2012, it was agreed that the Forum should, once again, be realistic about what it can do / offer during the week, and how it can play a unique role within the constraints of its own limited assets and capabilities.

It was felt that the most appropriate role for MHFI is to, once again, kick start the engagement process for others, rather than being a direct service delivery body for men in Ireland. Therefore, the key functions identified last year are still relevant and, during 2013, MHFI will act as:

- Promoter - raising awareness of what the week is and when it will happen.
- Coordinator - acting as the central contact point for and hub of activity in Ireland.
- Educator - making the case for MHW and men's health needs.
- Animator - encouraging others to grasp the vision and do something about it.
- Convenor - bringing interested groups together to work in partnership.
- Prompter - reminding decision-makers / service providers about men's health needs.
- Signposter - offering direction to resources, research, support and activities.
- Quartermaster - supplying the basic information / resources / tools (e.g. facts, logos, posters, communication mechanisms) to support the celebration of MHW throughout Ireland.

### **5. Aims of MHW 2013**

It was agreed that MHFI should, as in previous years, adhere to the following overarching aims for MHW 2013:

- Heighten awareness of preventable health problems for males of all ages.
- Support men and boys to engage in healthier lifestyle choices / activities.
- Encourage the early detection and treatment of health difficulties in males.

It was felt that these aims relate to most types of MHW activity within Ireland.

## 6. Target Audience

As in previous MHWs, it was felt that the key messages need to target:

- Males themselves
- Policy / decision-makers
- Service providers
- Public awareness and preconceptions

## 7. Key Deliverables:

In the MHW 2013 funding application to the HSE, MHFI committed to ...

- Develop a detailed work plan.
- Establish an inter-agency Planning Group for MHW 2013 - consisting of health related organisations and other bodies that have contact with men - and encourage mutually beneficial partnership work between these groups.
- Research, collate and disseminate a briefing paper which provides the context of MHW, the rationale for the 2013 theme selected in Ireland, and key facts / issues related to this theme.
- Increase awareness amongst the general public, service providers, decision-makers and men, themselves, about MHW 2013 - especially through press releases / media coverage, and by circulating updates to our mailing database.
- Collate a document titled 'What can I do to mark this Week?' - to encourage individuals and groups to see practical ways that they can celebrate MHW 2013.
- Promote the details of MHW activities across Ireland.
- Provide a free, central, easy to access, online information hub for MHW 2013 at: [www.mhfi.org/mens-health-week-2013.html](http://www.mhfi.org/mens-health-week-2013.html)
- Utilise social media to highlight and promote MHW e.g. MHFI's Facebook page at: [www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek](http://www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek) and Twitter site at: [www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL](http://www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL)
- Offer a signposting service for external organisations / individuals to sources of support, information and resources - by telephone, email and online.
- Design, produce and disseminate free promotional materials (posters and logos) to add a common national identity to this week.
- Work in partnership with other organisations to plan locally-based events.
- Report on the outputs and outcomes of Men's Health Week 2013.

## 8. MHW 2013 Inter-Agency Planning Group

Although attendance at meetings of the inter-agency MHW Planning Group for 2012 was relatively low, there was strong support tendered to both ongoing online communications and practical support during MHW itself.

The meetings did prove to be very successful in terms of generating ideas for the week, disseminating key messages, encouraging active involvement, and forming working partnerships between participants. All of these aspects to the group shall be pursued again in 2013.

While videoconferencing is, certainly, the most convenient means of holding a meeting, in the past, face-to-face gatherings allowed for relationships to develop. Indeed, these contacts often led to joint project work between group members.

To try to bridge this gap, it was agreed to ...

- Hold the first 'exploratory meeting' as a face-to-face all-island gathering in Dundalk (on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2013). Hopefully, this will be seen as a 'half way' venue. Finian will get details of a hotel near to the train station.
- Have subsequent meetings (at least two) via videoconferencing between the Institute of Public Health offices in Dublin and Belfast.
- Maintain ongoing communication between members via email and phone.

In terms of membership of this body, it was agreed that ...

- Everyone from the 2012 Planning Group will be invited to attend again this year.
- The group will be open to new members joining as the programme develops.
- We will specifically approach a few organisations to seek their 'buy-in' e.g. See Change (mental health stigma campaign), Travellers project, gay men's project, ethnic minorities group, Eircom's Health Net project, pharmacists, nurses (Finian has a contact). Send any named suggestions to Colin.

In the current climate, it will be very difficult to get long-term regular voluntary commitment from any organisation. Therefore, it is anticipated that we will have to expect intermittent and/or low attendance at meetings. The main goal, however, is to engage the longer-term support of a broad range of groups for the promotion of MHW 2013 and the delivery of a range of projects during it.

## **9. MHFI Wishlist**

It was agreed that MHFI should look at the possibility of pursuing a few additional practical outputs for MHW 2013. These could include ...

- An MHFI flyer to distribute during the week - possibly with ten key facts on men's health.
- A men's health Phone App.
- Trying (again) to engage the President of Ireland to launch the posters.
- A video for You Tube - possibly on what you can do to improve men's health.
- An article for Modern Medicine.

## **10. Next MHFI Planning Sub-Group Meeting**

The next meeting of MHFI's MHW 2012 Planning Sub-Group will be held on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2012, at Noon(ish), in the Institute of Public Health in Dublin.