

Men's Health Week 2014 in Ireland

Men's Health Week 2014
CHALLENGES. CHOICES. CELEBRATIONS.
Monday 9th - Sunday 15th June 2014
Visit www.mhfi.org to find out more

CELEBRATIONS
CHALLENGES
CHOICES

WHAT'S YOUR AIM?

Logos at the bottom: Men's Health Week, Man Matters, Men's Health Forum in Ireland, H.E. (Habitat for Humanity), Lottery Funded, and a QR code.

Report on Activity

- collated for the Men's Health Forum in Ireland by Colin Fowler,
Director of 'Know How - Working with Men' Consultancy

Foreword

Men's Health Week (MHW) always begins on the Monday before Father's Day and ends on Father's Day itself. This year, it ran from Monday 9th until Sunday 15th June 2014.

MHW is celebrated in most European countries, as well as in the USA, Australia, New Zealand and a number of other places worldwide. The concept was agreed at the World Congress on Men's Health in Vienna in 2002. Since that time, groups throughout Ireland have organised local activity to mark this week. It was first celebrated on an all-island basis in 2005 - when the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) took on the coordinating role. This work continues to be a key focus for MHFI.

Every year, each country decides to pursue an overall theme for MHW which reflects their local concerns and priorities. The theme for 2014 in Ireland was: *'Challenges, Choices and Celebrations - What's Your Aim?'*

The success of MHW in Ireland is heavily reliant upon the input of volunteers, the good will of organisations, offers of 'in-kind' and mutual support, and the creativity of contributors. Many bodies throughout the island of Ireland were involved in this process during 2014.

This year, MHFI would especially like to thank:

- **Health Service Executive (HSE)** - who provided a grant of €15,000 to support the promotion and celebration of MHW in the Republic of Ireland, and the publication of the *'Challenges and Choices'* manual for men.
- **Hospital Saturday Fund** - for offering €3,000 to support cross-Border partnership activity, the dissemination of MHW publicity materials / *'Challenges and Choices'*, and to underwrite a physical base for MHFI which acted as the focus of activity.
- **Man Matters** - for funding a broad range of initiatives in Northern Ireland in the lead-up to MHW, and creating a strong infrastructure in this jurisdiction.
- **Institute of Public Health in Ireland** - for the regular use of their meeting rooms and video-conference facilities.
- **MHW Planning Group Members** - who freely gave their time and expertise to make MHW 2014 a success.

For more information on MHW 2014 - and what took place in previous years - please visit:

www.mhfi.org/mhw/about-mhw.html

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Executive Summary

The Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) is a diverse network of individuals and organisations, men and women, from both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. MHFI has operated since 1999, with the core aim of promoting and enhancing all aspects of the health and well-being of males on the island of Ireland.

MHFI first celebrated Men's Health Week (MHW) in 2005. Since that time, the coordination of MHW activity on the island of Ireland has become one of the Forum's core areas of work.

The overarching aims of MHW each year are to:

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

In 2014, MHW ran from Monday 9th until Sunday 15th June. In Ireland, the theme centred upon: *'Challenges, Choices and Celebrations - What's Your Aim?'*

The MHFI Board of Trustees appointed a MHW 2014 Planning Sub-Group to coordinate developments in Ireland. This body was supported by a temporary worker - Colin Fowler. The Sub-Group determined that MHFI should act in the roles of promoter, coordinator, educator, animateur, convenor, prompter, signposter and quartermaster. Thus the Forum's role focused upon kick-starting the engagement process for others, rather than acting as a direct service delivery body for men.

The Planning Sub-Group proposed eleven realistic objectives for MHW 2014 ...

- i. **Convene and administer an all-island Planning Group:** This body included 50 diverse organisations, and met three times to help to shape MHW 2014. Members were asked to use their own agency's networks / resources to promote MHW, to develop on-the-ground activity, and to work in partnership with each other.

- ii. **Design and produce promotional materials:** MHFI oversaw the design and production of a range of new MHW graphics and promotional materials (logos, banners, web images, posters and - for the first time - postcards). These were offered in both hard copy and online (for free and in a variety of sizes and formats to suit all media) to anyone who wished to raise awareness of the week or to be associated with it. They were widely utilised.
- iii. **Research, collate and disseminate a briefing paper:** MHFI prepared and circulated a briefing paper to everyone on its mailing list (including media outlets), as well as making this available for online downloading. This document (titled '*The Toolbox for Action*') provided answers to the most common questions that anyone might ask about MHW 2014.
- iv. **Collate a document on 'what can I do to mark this week':** A short paper was produced which offered simple and practical suggestions on how to get involved in MHW 2014. This was circulated to everyone on the MHFI mailing list, and was made available online.
- v. **Produce a 'Challenges and Choices' mini-manual for men:** Ten thousand free hard copies were printed and disseminated, and it was also made available for online download as a Portable Document Format (PDF) file. This 32 page booklet highlighted a range of key challenges to men's health, and offered three practical choices for dealing with each condition. The stock of hard copies was exhausted soon after the launch, and a further 936 electronic copies were downloaded online.
- vi. **Increase awareness of MHW 2014:** MHFI updated and consolidated its media and organisational mailing lists; utilised social and electronic media (including Facebook and Twitter); encouraged Planning Group partners to use their contacts and dissemination mechanisms; circulated updates via the '*E-Male Matters*' newsletter; ensured a high level of media interest and coverage. Additional support was received from the Health Service Executive's Public Communications Team.
- vii. **Provide free and easy to access to an online information hub:** MHFI created and maintained a new MHW 2014 section on its website, and used the Home Page and News Page of this site to raise awareness of the most recent developments.

- viii. **Promote the details of MHW activity and events:** The Forum invited organisations throughout Ireland to submit details of their MHW activities for inclusion in an e-booklet. Details could be submitted online (via an event registration form), by email attachment, or in hard copy. This content was regularly promoted in MHFI's online communications and mail-outs.

- ix. **Offer a signposting service to sources of support, information and resources:** In the lead-up to MHW, MHFI offered a 'signposting service' to organisations looking for ideas / resources / information / contacts ... to facilitate their involvement in the week. In total, 102 requests were dealt with.

- x. **Support other practical actions:** MHFI sought to support (where possible) small scale and affordable actions / projects which could promote or add value to MHW 2014. The Forum did this by: soliciting support for MHW from regional bodies; directing local groups to available funding / resources; helping organisations to network with similar projects; recruiting participants for MHW events being organised by external agencies; acting as a 'sounding board' for project ideas; working in partnership with other organisations to plan and deliver activities.

- xi. **Engage with young men:** Historically, MHW has only had a limited impact upon young men - especially those in third level education. This is largely because MHW falls in June each year, and this target group has either left college by then or is in the middle of exams. During 2014, MHFI worked with the Union of Students in Ireland to promote the week before the students left college, and assisted students in Dublin Institute of Technology to undertake two research projects into young men's health awareness and knowledge. These studies will help to inform future MHWs.

1. The Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI)

The Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) is a diverse network of individuals and organisations, men and women, from both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. The Forum was established in 1999, and operates on an all-island basis. At present, it has one temporary self-employed worker, but is, primarily, structured, organised and run using the expertise, resources and enthusiasm of volunteers.

MHFI is a small charitable organisation (accepted as a charity by the Revenue under Reference Number: CHY19591) which is registered in the Republic of Ireland as a Company Limited by Guarantee (Reference Number: 491368). The Forum seeks to promote all aspects of the health and well being of men and boys on the island of Ireland through research, training, networking, practical health initiatives and advocacy. It is managed by a Board of Trustees.

Anyone - individual or organisation - who can agree with the mission, value base, and aims of MHFI can ask to be included on the Forum's mailing list to receive the free monthly electronic newsletter (*'E-Male Matters'*) - as well as other updates, briefings, announcements and invitations in the field of work with men and boys.

2. Aims and Objectives of MHFI

The Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) seeks to promote and enhance all aspects of the health and well-being of males on the island of Ireland.

The principal objectives of MHFI are:

- The advancement of the education of the population in Ireland in all aspects of the health and well-being of men and boys and, in particular, but not exclusively, by providing information, commissioning and disseminating research, offering training programmes, piloting practical health initiatives, facilitating networks, and promoting debate on key issues with policy makers, service providers and the general public.
- The preservation and protection of men's health.

3. MHFI's Value Base

The Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) works on an all-island basis to enhance the health of men and boys. The Forum recognises the right of everyone to good health regardless of age, sex, disability, race, sexual orientation, marital status, domestic circumstances, religious or political affiliations.

MHFI believes that all men and boys have the right to:

- The best possible health.
- Gender-specific information and education on how to keep themselves healthy.
- Equity of access to available, affordable and gender-sensitive services.
- Have their issues recognised and properly addressed - in a way that is not at the expense of women's or children's health, but seen as beneficial to society as a whole.
- Call for greater emphasis on a partnership approach in developing future strategies and initiatives on men's health. This includes consultation between policy-makers, healthcare providers, statutory and voluntary groups working on behalf of men, employers, and men themselves.

4. Origins of Men's Health Week (MHW)

At the Second World Congress on Men's Health in Vienna, Austria, in 2002, representatives from men's health organisations from across the world decided to work together to launch Men's Health Week (MHW). Their simple aim was to increase awareness of male health issues, and to encourage the development of health policies and services that meet men's specific needs. It was hoped that this would have an impact at international, national, regional and local levels.

MHW is celebrated in most European countries, as well as in the USA, Australia, New Zealand and a number of other places worldwide. The Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) first celebrated MHW in Ireland in 2005. Since that time, the coordination of MHW activity on the island of Ireland has become one of the Forum's core areas of work each year. MHFI cooperates with other Men's Health Fora across Europe to mark this occasion annually.

5. Aims of MHW

The overall aims of Men's Health Week (MHW) each year are to:

- 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.

All initiatives to celebrate MHW (in whatever form) are encouraged - as the simple rationale behind this week is to highlight men's health and well-being needs and issues.

6. Date of MHW 2014

Men's Health Week (MHW) always begins on the Monday before Father's Day and ends on Father's Day itself. In 2014, it ran from Monday 9th until Sunday 15th June.

7. Theme of MHW 2014

Each year, Men's Health Week (MHW) focuses upon a specific theme. Previous MHWs in Ireland have focused upon:

- 2005 - Obesity
- 2006 - Mental Wellbeing
- 2007 - Long-term Conditions
- 2008 - Workplace Health
- 2009 - Access to Services
- 2010 - Physical Activity
- 2011 - Health and Well-Being During Challenging Times
- 2012 - Men's Health: What's Your First Instinct ... Fight? Flight? Find Out?
- 2013 - Action Men - Turning Words into Actions

The theme for 2014 in Ireland centred upon: *'Challenges, Choices and Celebrations - What's Your Aim?'* This called upon everyone (service providers, policy makers and men themselves) to set a realistic aim for MHW and to do something practical about it. This theme was endorsed by members of the all-island MHW Planning Group.

In recent years, a broad range of research has highlighted the health difficulties which face men in Ireland and further afield. For example ...

- Men's Health in Ireland (www.mhfi.org/fullreport.pdf)
- Getting Inside Men's Health (www.mhfi.org/gettinginsidemenshealth.pdf)
- Men's Health in Northern Ireland: Tackling the Root Causes of Men's [ill] Health (www.mhfi.org/manmattersbriefing1.pdf)
- A Report on the all-Ireland Young Men and Suicide Project (www.mhfi.org/ymspfullreport.pdf)
- Facing the Challenge - The Impact of Recession and Unemployment on Men's Health in Ireland (www.mhfi.org/IPHreport2011.pdf)
- A Report on the Excess Burden of Cancer among Men in the Republic of Ireland (www.mhfi.org/ICSreport2013.pdf)
- The State of Men's Health in Europe (www.mhfi.org/menshealtheurope.pdf) ...

This evidence clearly shows that there are many CHALLENGES to be faced when seeking to improve men's health. However, it also highlights that men's health can be improved in many significant ways - if we make the right CHOICES. Men, themselves, have a key role to play in this process, but they require support, encouragement and opportunities to succeed.

However, men's health is not just an issue for individual men. While it is crucial for men to take responsibility for looking after themselves, their health can often be determined by other factors outside of their personal control. Thus, there is also a need for policy-makers and service providers to recognise the role that they need to play, and to do something practical about it. Subsequently, Men's Health Week this year asked everyone: 'WHAT'S YOUR AIM?'

Frequently, we simply blame men for their own state of health, and focus upon the shortcomings of individuals. MHW 2014 called upon everyone to do their bit to improve the lot of men and boys, as well as to CELEBRATE the important contributions that males make to our society.

8. Target Audience

The purpose of Men's Health Week (MHW) each year is to draw attention to the health and well-being issues affecting men and boys, and to encourage personal, structural and systemic change where possible. This, therefore, implies that any messages and engagement needs to target:

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

MHW provides a focal point for men's health issues in Ireland, and gives everyone (health professionals, service providers, youth groups, sporting bodies, community organisations, employers, policy makers, church groups, family workers, the media, parents, individuals etc.) an opportunity to encourage men and boys to take better care of their health and to seek help or treatment at an early stage.

9. MHFI Planning Sub-Group for MHW 2014

At a meeting of the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) Board of Trustees on Wednesday 18th September 2013, it was agreed that a Men's Health Week (MHW) Planning Sub-Group - comprised of members of the MHFI Management Committee - should be established. This body was asked to:

- Propose appropriate aims and objectives for MHFI's involvement in MHW 2014.
- Identify potential members for an all-island, inter-agency Planning Group.
- Work with the inter-agency Planning Group to develop the overarching theme for MHW 2014 in Ireland.
- Participate in, input to, and act as the executive of, the all-island MHW 2014 Planning Group.
- Design and deliver realistic actions on behalf of MHFI to support the celebration of MHW 2014.
- Oversee and steer developments on behalf of MHFI.
- Report back to the MHFI Board of Trustees.

The Planning Sub-Group was comprised of:

- Lorcan Brennan - Men's Development Network, Waterford
- Michael Lynch - Men's Action Network, Derry / Londonderry
- Michael McKeon - Dublin City University (DCU) School of Nursing
- Finian Murray - Health Service Executive, Dublin / North East
- Eamonn O'Reilly (for Mary Sheehan) - Marian House Nursing Home, Dublin

During this period, Colin Fowler (from *'Know How - Working with Men'* in Belfast) was paid as MHFI's temporary, self-employed, Director of Operations. He was asked to join this body, and acted as convenor, administrator and executive officer of the Sub-Group.

The Sub-Group held two meetings on ...

- Wednesday 30th October 2013 - in DCU
- Wednesday 27th November 2013 - in the Institute of Public Health in Dublin

Further ongoing business was conducted via meetings before and after the all-island Planning Group events, as well as by regular telephone and email communications.

10. Role of MHFI in MHW 2014

It was agreed by the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) Planning Sub-Group that the Forum should (as had been successful during 2011 - 2013) 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 accepted by the Planning Sub-Group that no matter what role MHFI plays, it can never, on its own, engage with a huge number of men in Ireland or those who work with them. From the outset it was, therefore, acknowledged that MHFI is best positioned to kick start the engagement process for others, rather than being a direct service delivery body for men.

Subsequently, it was agreed that during MHW 2014, MHFI would 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.
- *Animateur* - 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.

11. MHFI's Objectives for MHW 2014

The Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) Planning Sub-Group determined a set of eleven realistic objectives for Men's Health Week (MHW) 2014. These were ratified by the MHFI Management Committee, and consisted of:

- i. Establish, convene and administer an inter-agency, all-island, MHW 2014 **Planning Group** (consisting of health related organisations and other bodies who have contact with men) - to contribute to shaping MHW and to develop mutually beneficial partnership work with and between groups.
- ii. Design and produce **promotional materials** to add a common brand to this week - offered free to all organisations and groups (via online download and hard copy) who wish to promote MHW 2014.
- iii. Research, collate and disseminate a **briefing paper** which provides the context of MHW, the rationale for the theme selected in Ireland, and an overview of what is planned - in order to offer a core understanding of what MHW is / seeks to achieve, and to help to ensure a consistent approach across Ireland.
- iv. Collate a document on **what can I do to mark this week?** - to encourage individuals and groups to envisage realistic and practical ways that they can celebrate MHW 2014.

- v. Produce a **'Challenges and Choices' mini-manual** for men (in both hard copy and as a Portable Document Format file) which highlights a range of key challenges to men's health and offers three practical choices for dealing with each condition.
- vi. **Increase awareness** amongst the general public, service providers, decision-makers and men, themselves, about MHW 2014 - especially through the media, and by circulating updates / materials to the MHFI mailing database.
- vii. Provide a free, easy to access, **online information hub** for MHW 2014.
- viii. Promote the **details of MHW activity and events** on the MHFI website and in MHFI publications.
- ix. Offer a **signposting service** to other sources of support, information and resources - by telephone, email and online.
- x. Support (where possible) other **practical actions** / projects which promote or add value to MHW 2014.
- xi. Explore possible means to **engage young men** in men's health issues / MHW.

12. How MHFI met the Objectives for MHW 2014

12.1 Inter-Agency Planning Group

Since 2005, when the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) first marked Men's Health Week (MHW) in Ireland, the Forum has recognised that there are a lot of organisations and groups throughout the island who can contribute to the health and well-being of men and boys. This work is not solely applicable only to those who work directly in the health field. Indeed, the overall aims of MHW each year offer an opportunity for a very wide range of agencies to actively participate.

To further the aims of MHW 2014, MHFI identified and convened an all-island, inter-agency, MHW Planning Group. All members of the MHW 2013 Planning Group were, once again, invited to participate. However, since last year, some people had moved jobs or were unable to input due to resource shortages within their own organisations.

Before the first meeting took place, a range of additional agencies were identified by the MHFI Planning Sub-Group and asked to join the development process. At the first meeting, group members were also reminded that this is an open forum which welcomes the input of anyone who is willing to contribute. Subsequently, a number of other possible participants were suggested by group members and invited to join.

During MHW 2014, the Planning Group drew upon the insight, expertise, support and contacts of 50 diverse organisations - eight more than during 2013. Some organisations appointed more than one person to input to the group. Therefore, in total, 61 individuals contributed to the planning process ...

Name	Organisation
Frances Dowds	Action Cancer
Catherine Keane	Alcohol Action Ireland
Niamh Farrell	Amen
Paula Devine	ARK (Access Research Knowledge)
Peter Shaw	Belfast Comm Sports Development Network
Paul O'Kane	Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
Bernadette Maginnis	British Medical Association NI
Umberto Scappaticci	Colin Men's Group
Alan Corbett	Cork University Hospital
Michael McKeon	DCU School of Nursing
John Cantwell	Fír Le Cheile (Men Together)
Colin Regan and Emmet Haughian	Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA)
Finian Murray	Health Service Executive, Dublin / North East
Lochlann Scott	Helplink Support Services
Nigel O'Callaghan and Derek Chambers	Inspire Ireland Foundation
Joanne Vance and Rosemary Scott	Irish Cancer Society
Lisa Rickett	Irish Football Association (IFA)
Ann Scanlon and Pheena Kenny	Irish Heart Foundation
Niall Culkin	Irish Men's Sheds Association
Scott Walker and Eoin Hogan	Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU)

Shane Califf	Irish Sports Council
Jill Martin	Lewis Fertility Testing
Sandra Gordon	Man Alive
Gary Smyth	Man Matters Project
Eamonn O'Reilly and Nicola Manning	Marian House Nursing Home
Helen Forristal and Sue Hayden	Marie Keating Foundation
Darach Murphy	Men Alone in No-mans-land (MAIN)
Larry Moley	Menaware
Michael Lynch	Men's Action Network (MAN)
Lorcan Brennan	Men's Development Network (MDN)
Colin Fowler	Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI)
Sandra Semple	Men's Health West
Sean McKieran	Mental Health Ireland
Siobhan Brennan and Ailish O'Neill	National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI)
Jessica Perry	NI Chest, Heart and Stroke (NICHHS)
Stephen McAleer	NI Medical Students' Committee
Geraldine McDonnell	Northern Health and Social Care Trust
Andrew Castles and Sara Eslami	SafeFood
Scott Ahearn	See Change
Leo Foy	Southern Area Men's Health Group
Angela Corr	Southern Health and Social Care Trust
John News	Sport NI
Keith McAdam and Keith Cullen	Sure Start Fathers Network
James Copeland	The Rainbow Project
Denise McCarthy	Union of Students in Ireland
Marita Hennessy	Waterford Institute of Technology
Sonia Montgomery	Western Health and Social Care Trust
Siobhán Harding	Workers' Educational Association
Michael McKenna and Jonny Ashe	YouthAction NI
Fiona Kerr	3fivetwo Training Academy

The MHW all-island Planning Group met three times between January and April 2014:

- Wednesday 29th January 2014
- Monday 3rd March 2014
- Tuesday 15th April 2014

The first meeting was face-to-face, and was held in the Armagh Diocesan Pastoral Centre, Dundalk, Co. Louth. The following two meetings were conducted via video-link between the Dublin and Belfast offices of the Institute of Public Health in Ireland. Each gathering lasted approximately three hours, and was convened, coordinated, minuted and administered by Colin Fowler (on behalf of MHFI). The cost of these cross-border gatherings was underwritten by financial assistance received from The Hospital Saturday Fund. Additional business was conducted via email and telephone in the interim periods.

It was impossible for all members of the Planning Group to attend every meeting. However, everyone was kept up-to-date via the minutes of meetings, and there was substantial ongoing communication between all parties - who were asked to help with practical tasks (such as collating research and field-testing poster ideas) between events.

As well as advising on the shape and structure of MHW 2014, members of the Planning Group were asked to use their own agency's networks and resources to promote MHW and to develop on-the-ground activity. This was realised in practical terms by ...

- Disseminating hard copies of the MHW 2014 posters and postcards.
- Promoting MHW on their own websites, Facebook pages and Twitter feeds.
- Arranging regular update mailings within their own agencies.
- Developing in-house campaigns / projects to coincide with MHW.
- Highlighting MHW in their local media.
- Organising events and activities ...

Additionally, many members also collaborated on joint practical projects outside of the formal Planning Group meetings.

One issue raised by some members of the Planning Group was that that they would like to have more input into determining the theme for MHW next year - rather than just working on how to roll it out. MHFI agreed to look into the possibilities for this.


12.2 Promotional Materials

It was agreed by the Planning Group that it would be important to create a unique identity and common brand for Men's Health Week (MHW) again this year. They felt that this would ensure that it could be owned by everyone, and be independent of any specific organisation. As in previous years, they felt that this would:

- Help to unify and simplify the concept of MHW.
- Encourage 'buy-in' from a broad range of agencies.
- Offer groups who do not have the time or resources to run an event for MHW the opportunity to show their support.
- Increase publicity.

To achieve this aim, the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) oversaw the design and production of a range of MHW 2014 graphics and promotional materials. These were then offered online (for free and in a variety of sizes and formats to suit all media) to anyone who wished to raise awareness of the week or to be associated with it.

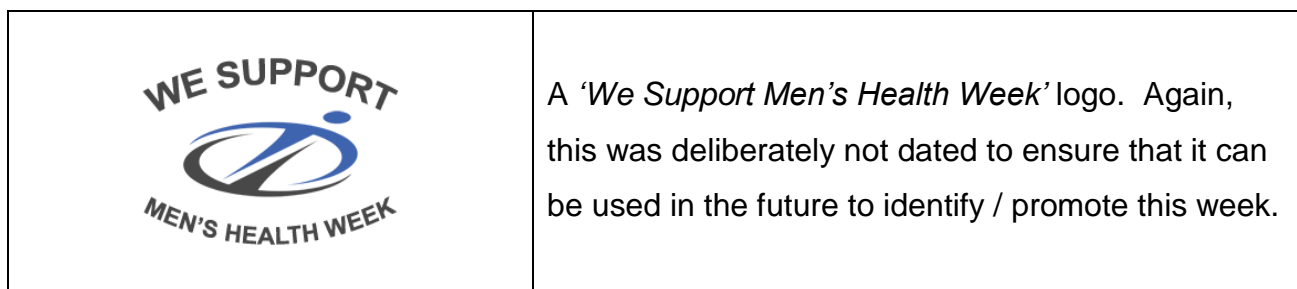
It was agreed that the dedicated MHW logo - designed in 2011 - should, once again, provide the core focus for the week. This, alongside a generic '*We Support Men's Health Week*' badge, was included in the array of images that were offered ...

	<p>A generic MHW logo which does not have a date attached - so that it can be used again in the future to identify / promote this week.</p>
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This image was produced as:

- Large JPG - good for general use
- Small JPG - good for general use and websites
- Large TIF - best for high resolution professional print jobs
- Large Transparent PNG - for use against a coloured or textured background
- Small Transparent PNG - for use against a coloured or textured background on websites
- Large Whiteout PNG - white image of the logo when on a coloured background

- Small Whiteout PNG - white image of the logo when on a coloured background
- Small Square JPG - for use as a Facebook profile picture



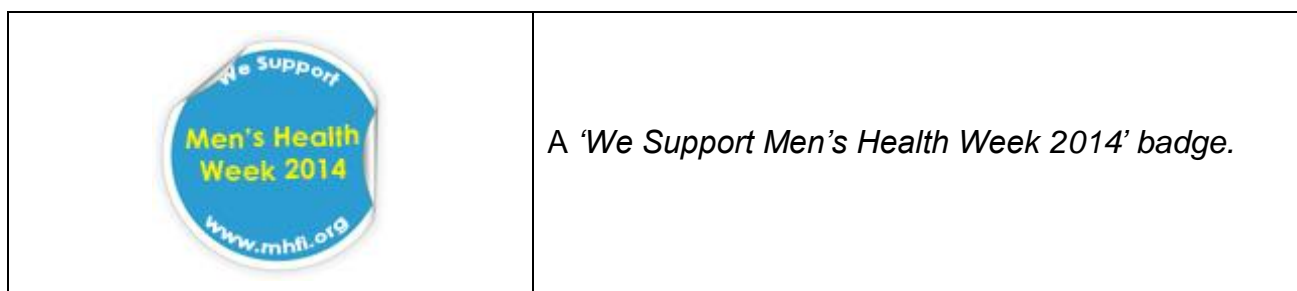
This image was produced as:

- Large PNG - good for general use
- Small PNG - good for general use and, especially, on websites
- Large Whiteout PNG - produces a white image of the logo when placed on a coloured background

However, a broad range of dedicated images for MHW 2014 were also designed and made available on the MHFI website ...



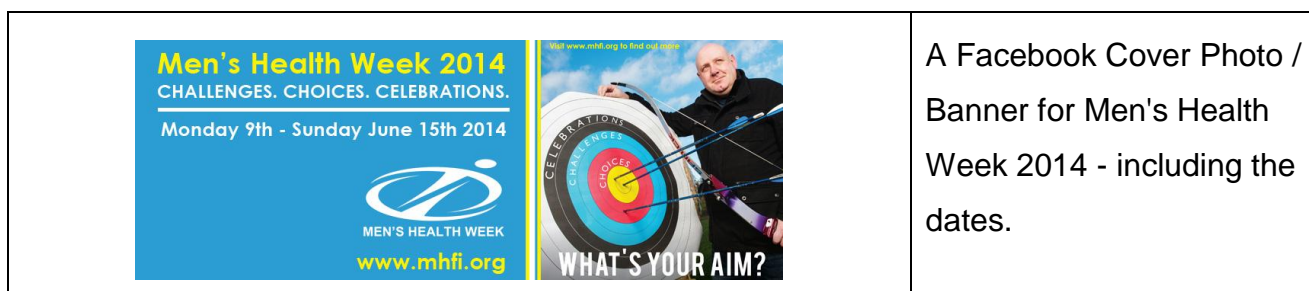
This image was produced as a small JPG - for use on websites, emails and as a letterhead.



This image was produced in three sizes:

- Large JPG - good for higher quality printing
- Medium JPG - good for general use
- Small JPG - good for websites and emails

As it was a transparent background image, it could be used on a coloured or textured background without showing a white frame / box around it.



[A generic, undated, Facebook Cover Photo was also produced. See: www.mhfi.org/mhwfacebookcover.jpg]



Hard copies of the poster were printed at A₃ size. However, members of the all-island Planning Group also suggested that it would be a good idea to produce a postcard (A₆ size) version of it as well. 3,000 copies of each size were, initially, printed. However, due to the phenomenal demand for these (especially for the postcards), a further print run was commissioned.

Colin coordinated the distribution of posters to all members of the MHW Planning Group who, in turn, disseminated them to their own networks. He then arranged for smaller quantities to be posted to groups in Northern Ireland who requested them. Nicola Manning, from Marian House Nursing Home in Dublin, volunteered to oversee the mailing of posters and postcards to groups in the Republic of Ireland. Colin acted as the central contact point for all requests.

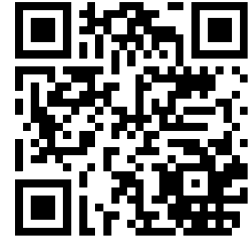
In total, 4,000 hard copies of the poster and 6,000 postcards were circulated to organisations throughout the island of Ireland.

Electronic versions of the poster were made available in a range of formats:

- Portable Document Format (PDF) - to print the poster at either A₃ or A₄ size.
- Poster with Blank Box (PDF) - to print the poster at either A₃ or A₄ size, and included a blank box to handwrite the details of local events into.
- Poster with type-your-details Blank Box (Word Document) - to print the poster at A₄ size, and included a blank box to type the details of local events into.
- Large JPG - original A₃ size image, best for high resolution print jobs and large posters (there was a also a version with a blank box for local event details).
- Medium JPG - A₄ image, useful for high resolution print jobs at this size (there was also a version with a blank box for local event details).
- Small JPG - small, lower resolution image, useful for websites and inclusion in emails / Word documents.
- JPG Thumbnail - small, fairly low resolution image, useful for websites and inclusion in emails.
- Square JPG - for use as a Facebook profile picture.

This range of options proved useful to many groups who could 'piggy-back' on the official poster, and enter their local event details without needing their own graphic designer.

As in earlier years, the MHW 2014 poster had a unique QR (Quick Response) Code inserted into it. This allowed Smart Phone users to scan the bar code and to be instantly directed to the MHW 2014 web page at: www.mhfi.org/mhw/previous-years/mhw-2014.html



The promotional materials produced for MHW proved to be very popular, and were downloaded frequently in the period leading up and during MHW 2014. AWStats - the programme used to monitor activity on the MHFI website - reveals that, by Monday 16th June 2014, the ...

- MHW 2014 poster had been downloaded 5,041 times.
- Banner specific to MHW 2014 had been downloaded 2,502 times.
- 'We Support Men's Health Week 2014' badge had been downloaded 923 times.
- Facebook Cover Photo had been downloaded 241 times.
- Generic MHW logo had been downloaded 3,164 times.
- Generic 'We Support Men's Health Week' logo had been downloaded 524 times.
- Poster QR Code directed 1,786 visitors to the MHW 2014 web page.

12.3 Briefing Paper

During previous Men's Health Weeks (MHW), the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) learned the value of producing a comprehensive overview document on the origins, focus and structure of the week. Subsequently, when preparing for MHW 2014, MHFI researched, collated and widely disseminated a Briefing Paper to everyone on the mailing list (including media outlets). This was done via a Portable Document Format file, which was also made available for online downloading.

This Briefing Paper (see [Appendix 1](#) for a copy) provided answers to the most common questions that anyone might ask about MHW 2014. It was suggested by the all-island Planning Group that this year we should call it: '*The Toolbox for Action*'.

The 'Toolbox' included:

- Why do we need to focus upon men's health issues and needs?
- When is Men's Health Week?

- Where is Men's Health Week celebrated?
- What are the aims of Men's Health Week?
- Is there a specific theme this year?
- Why choose the theme '*Challenges, Choices and Celebrations*' in 2014?
- What were the themes for Men's Health Week in previous years?
- Who is the target audience?
- Who can be involved in this week?
- How can my organisation get involved?
- Are there any ways that I can promote the week?
- Who has planned Men's Health Week 2014 in Ireland?
- What is the Men's Health Forum in Ireland?
- How can I find out more about Men's Health Week?

This document helped to provide clarity about MHW, and to ensure that all members of the MHW 2014 Planning Group (and others) had a coherent idea of what they were working towards. This paper was also circulated to all the media outlets in Ireland to increase their understanding of the week, and was widely utilised in coverage by these bodies.

12.4 What can I do to Mark this Week?

Men's Health Week (MHW) provides an opportunity for everyone to contribute to improving the health and well-being of men and boys. Indeed, the theme for 2014 (*'Challenges, Choices and Celebrations'*) lent itself to a wide range of ways to mark this occasion.

In the lead-up to MHW 2014, the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) also emphasised that groups did not have to stick rigidly to this particular theme. MHFI's core message was that anything which encourages men and boys to lead healthier lifestyles, to be more aware of preventable health problems, and to seek early detection and treatment for health difficulties would be welcome.

MHFI recognised that some organisations have time, energy and resources to plan a large-scale event for MHW. Others have to fit-in MHW activities around an already tight schedule and limited budget. Yet others, want to show their support for the week, but cannot commit to doing an actual 'thing' during the week. To try to accommodate all of

these circumstances, MHFI produced a short paper (see [Appendix 2](#) for a copy) which offered simple and practical suggestions on ‘*what can I do to mark this week?*’ This was circulated to everyone on the MHFI mailing list, and was made available for free online downloading.

The main purpose of this document was to encourage a broad range of individuals and groups to envisage ways that they could get involved - based upon the premise that many people realise why they should engage in MHW, but are not fully aware of how to go about doing it. Consequently, this resource also contributed to the signposting role of MHFI.

12.5 Challenges and Choices Man Manual

During Men’s Health Week (MHW) 2014, the Men’s Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) was presented with an opportunity to produce an Irish version of the highly successful Haynes ‘*Challenges and Choices*’ Man Manual.

The ‘*Challenges and Choices*’ booklet is a male-friendly, 32 page publication, which highlights ten key men’s health issues:

1. Alcohol
2. Smoking
3. Diet and obesity
4. Exercise and fitness
5. Stress and mental health
6. Blood pressure
7. Sexually transmitted diseases
8. Skin cancers
9. Back care
10. Help-seeking behaviour



Members of the National Men’s Health Policy Implementation Group launching ‘Challenges and Choices’

It was written by leading men’s health expert Dr Ian Banks (internationally acclaimed men’s health author, President of the European Men’s Health Forum, the British Medical Association’s Spokesperson on Men’s Health, and a resident of Northern Ireland).

This Manual ...

- Issues a realistic and practical challenge to improve the reader's health in each area of concern.
- Provides evidence and a rationale for why it is important to consider taking action in relation to each issue.
- Offers three possible choices for what actions can be taken to combat each condition.
- Signposts the reader to local sources of help and support.

'Challenges and Choices' is part of the highly successful Haynes Men's Health Manuals series. For many years now, association with the Haynes Car Manual brand has proven to be a very effective means to engage men, and to offer them health information in a humorous, user-friendly, car workshop format i.e. step-by-step guides using a technical logic. The content and style of all of the Haynes Man Manuals is extensively field-tested and evaluated before they are released.

MHFI worked with Ian Banks and Haynes Publishing to produce a version of this publication which is relevant to Ireland i.e. it presented current statistics on men's health on the island of Ireland, as well as offering signposting links to local sources of help, support and advice. This updating work was undertaken by Finian Murray (from the HSE Dublin / North East) and Colin Fowler (working on behalf of MHFI).

The 'Challenges and Choices' Man Manual (see www.mhfi.org/challenges.pdf) was distributed free-of-charge to males throughout the whole island of Ireland. This proved to be one of the most successful and sought after elements of MHW 2014, and almost all of the 10,000 hard copies of this booklet were given out shortly after they were launched. By Wednesday 31st December 2014, a further 936 electronic copies had been downloaded from the MHFI website.

Thanks to the support of the all-island Planning Group partners, a large number of links were made with male-dominated workplaces (e.g. building sites, transport companies, manufacturing plants), and they were very keen to distribute these materials to their workforce. Promotion of the booklet via the HSE Intranet also led to a high level of demand from HSE staff throughout Ireland.

The production of the '*Challenges and Choices*' manual for men was only possible because of the grant aid from the Health Service Executive and the use of Man Matters reserves by MHFI. The dissemination process was supported by a grant from The Hospital Saturday Fund.

12.6 Awareness Raising

One of the key objectives for the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) during Men's Health Week (MHW) 2014 was to increase awareness of the issues facing / needs of males. This objective targeted service providers, decision-makers / formers, and the general public (including men, themselves).

There were four key mechanisms adopted to achieve this goal:

(a) Mailing List Updates

MHFI has an e-distribution mailing list of over 3,500 people. From December 2013 onwards, MHFI regularly (at least monthly) updated these people about MHW 2014. This included sending a 'Season's Greetings' card, regular MHW 2014 features in '*E-Male Matters*' (the MHFI e-newsletter - see www.mhfi.org/newsletters/about-e-male-matters.html), and arranging single issue MHW mailouts as appropriate.

This distribution list includes TDs, MLAs, Government Equality Leads, statutory health service staff, academics, a broad range of voluntary sector organisations / service providers, community groups and men themselves. As in previous years, the women's sector was also kept informed, and was encouraged to circulate information to the men in their lives.

(b) Social and Electronic Media

A new MHW 2014 section was established on the MHFI website (www.mhfi.org/mhw/previous-years/mhw-2014.html), and the three social media sites administered by MHFI were regularly updated throughout 2014. These were:

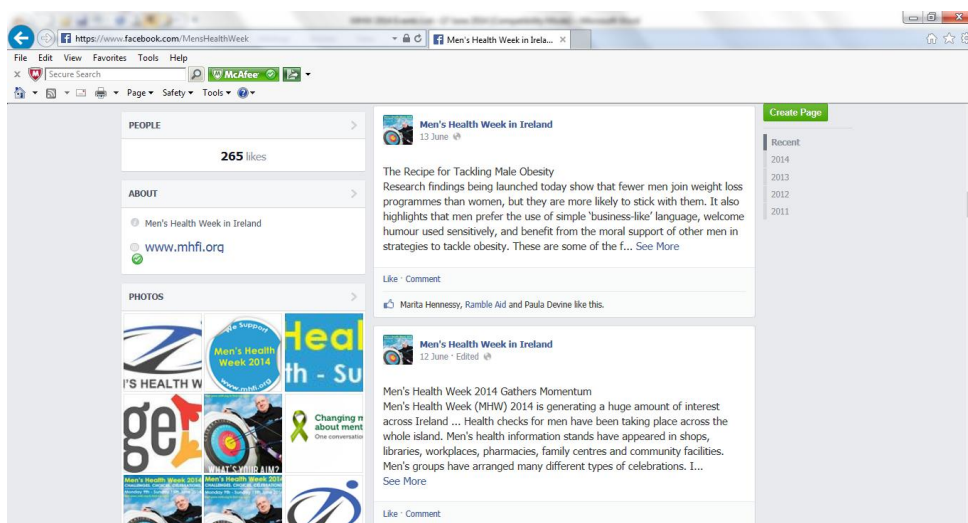
- www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek - MHW Facebook page
- www.facebook.com/MensHealthForumIreland - MHFI Facebook page
- www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL - MHFI Twitter feed

The frequency of updates increased as MHW drew closer, and these were uploaded at least once per day during the week itself.

During MHW 2014, the dedicated Facebook page for the week (i.e. www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek) experienced a peak of popularity - with Monday 10th June 2014 being the most visited day. Throughout this week, the page:

- Had 265 core 'Fans'.
- Was visited by 3,751 different people - with 46% of these in the age band 25-34 years of age; 23% aged 35-44 years; 20% aged 18-24 years; 8% aged 45-54 years; 3% aged 55 years and over.
- Got 93% of all its visitors from Ireland (both Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland), with a further 5.5% from English speaking countries (i.e. England, Scotland, Wales, Australia, New Zealand, the USA and Canada), and 1.5% from other countries.
- Benefitted from a 'viral' following - most visitors arrived at the page after being specifically recommended by / directed to it by other organisations' and individuals' web and social media postings. The majority of these recommendations came from MHW 2014 Planning Group partners.
- Received 84% of all page views from males.

Between April and June 2014 (inclusive), there were 16,821 views of posts on this page.



Screen-shot of some news items on the MHW Facebook page during MHW 2014

To improve the visual impact of the MHW Facebook page, the new 'Cover Photo' for MHW 2014 was uploaded to this site:



New MHW 2014 Facebook Cover Photo

The popularity of MHFI's own Facebook Page also peaked during MHW. This page (www.facebook.com/MensHealthForumIreland) displayed the same information about MHW 2014 as the MHW Facebook page. Friday 6th June 2014 was the most visited day. Throughout MHW 2014, this page:

- Had 286 core 'Fans'.
- Was visited by 4,102 different people - with 40% of these in the age band 25-34 years of age; 20% aged 35-44 years; 19% aged 45-54 years; 12% aged 55 years and over; 9% aged 18-24 years.
- Got 89% of all its visitors from Ireland (both Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland), with a further 8% from English speaking countries (i.e. England, Scotland, Wales, Australia, New Zealand, the USA and Canada), and 3% from (mostly) other European countries.
- Received 64% of all page views from males.

Between April and June 2014 (inclusive), there were 17,025 views of posts on this page.

By MHW 2014, the MHFI Twitter feed had attracted 569 'Followers', and the content of the Twitter feed was regularly 're-tweeted' by other partners in the MHW inter-agency Planning Group, as well as a range of other health-related bodies ...



Screen-shot of some items on the MHFI Twitter feed during MHW 2014

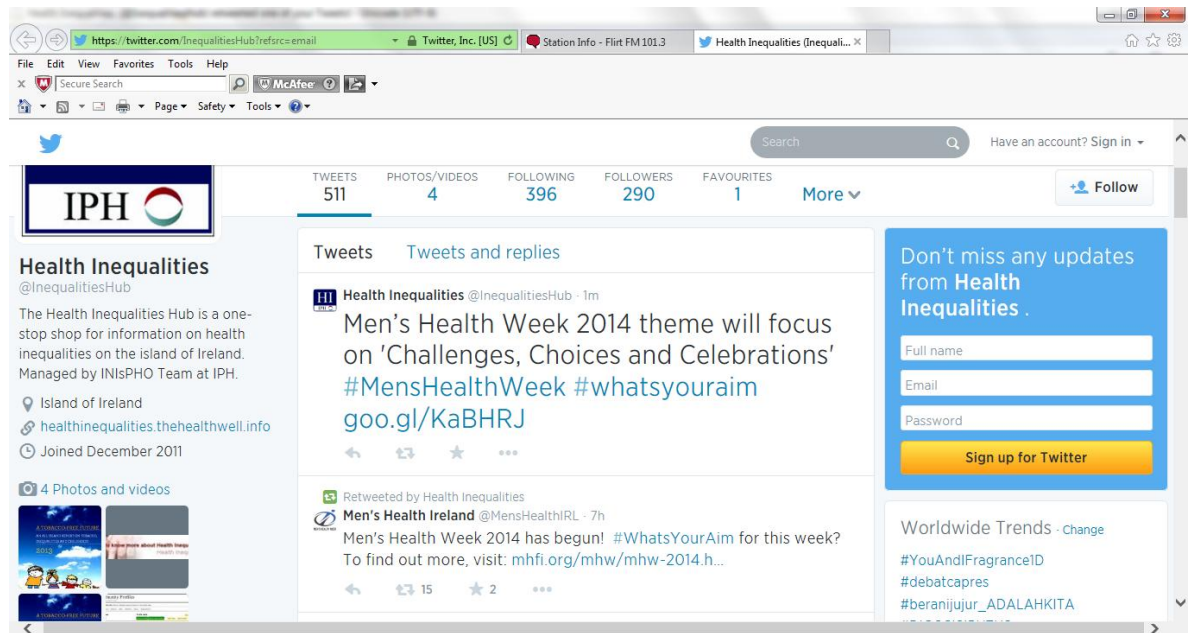
MHFI was also able to utilise the e-communication systems of other Planning Group partners to promote MHW 2014. This ensured that the key messages about MHW were disseminated to a diverse range of people from the statutory, voluntary, community, academic, governmental, medical and policy sectors throughout Ireland, as well as to individual men.

The Forum is especially grateful for the support of Fidelma Browne, in the HSE Communications Department, who disseminated information about MHW 2014 and the resources available to the wider HSE family.

(c) Planning Group Partner Contacts and Dissemination Mechanisms

All members of the MHW 2014 Planning Group were asked to raise awareness of the week through their own networks and communication channels such as websites, social media outlets, newsletters, hard copy mailouts, by displaying posters etc. As in previous years, this proved to be a very cost effective means to publicise the week, as well as offering a practical way for partners to actively contribute to the process.

Examples included ...
 [See Appendix 6 for further examples]



Institute of Public Health in Ireland's Health Inequalities Hub



Community NI



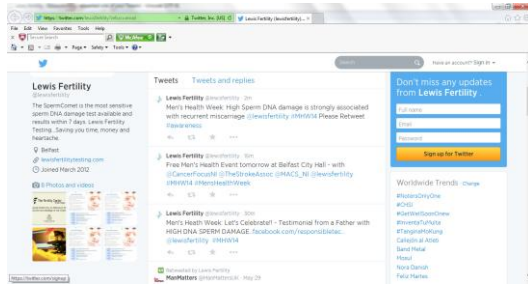
City Gate Dental



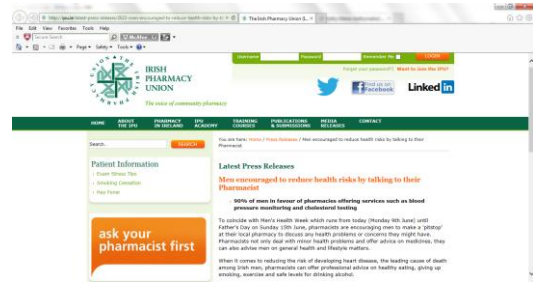
Irish Family Planning Association



QUB School of Nursing



Lewis Fertility



Irish Pharmacy Union



Marie Keating Foundation



Parenting NI



Mental Health Ireland



Splash Sure Start

The Men's Development Network (MDN) was especially supportive in the area of using their contacts and dissemination mechanisms to promote the week. MDN included full details about MHW 2014 in the pre-week hard copy mailout that they sent to Family Resource Centres, Community Development Projects, men's groups, and MDN staff, volunteers and committee members throughout Ireland.

(d) Media Coverage

It was agreed by the Planning Group, that MHFI should play the coordinating role in making the media aware of MHW 2014, raising awareness of the key messages for this week, and linking media outlets to activity in their local catchment area.

Subsequently, MHFI was given the task of issuing all the advance notice / preliminary media releases, and acting as the 'gatekeeper' for information on MHW.

It was also agreed that MHFI should issue an overview press release at the start of MHW 2014, and seek to ensure that the media releases of Planning Group members were evenly spaced out during the week - thus helping to minimise competition between partners and to maximise the publicity received.

In March 2014, MHFI spent a considerable amount of time updating the contacts on its media database in preparation for the forthcoming campaign. This database covered all media outlets in Ireland - both North and South - that were known to MHFI and included:

- 10 Republic of Ireland | 6 Northern Ireland daily newspapers
- 4 Republic of Ireland | 3 Northern Ireland Sunday newspapers
- 3 Republic of Ireland | 8 Northern Ireland magazines
- 71 Republic of Ireland | 46 Northern Ireland weekly newspapers
- 53 Republic of Ireland | 21 Northern Ireland TV and radio stations
- 7 Irish language broadcasting bodies
- 26 miscellaneous media outlets
- 8 health correspondents
- 8 letters to the editor contacts

In the lead-up to MHW 2014, MHFI sent seven mailouts to contacts on this media database. These were:

- **Friday 22nd November 2013** ... a date-for-your-diary email.
- **Wednesday 5th March 2014** ... an advance notice email informing them of the dates for MHW 2014, the theme of the week, and where to find out more information online.

- **Monday 19th May 2014** ... an email giving them a copy of the MHW 2014 'Toolbox for Action' (see [Appendix 1](#)). This also included background information on MHW 2014, how to access posters / images, details of events planned, where to find updates on the latest developments, and offered the support of MHFI to plan their coverage of the week.
- **Thursday 29th May 2014** ... a Press Release titled: '*European President Helps to Launch New Men's Health Manual for the Island of Ireland*' (see [Appendix 3](#)) - relating to the public launch of the '*Challenges and Choices*' Man Manual.
- **Friday 6th June 2014** ... a Press Release about MHW titled: '*Is World Cup Fever a Medical Condition?*' (see [Appendix 4](#)).
- **Monday 9th June 2014** ... a final reminder email about MHW 2014.
- **Tuesday 10th June 2014** ... letters to the editors of all the major daily newspapers in Ireland.

To maximise uptake, the Press Release gave contact details for six MHFI spokespeople based throughout Ireland (based in Belfast, Derry/Londonderry, Galway, Navan, Newry and Waterford). This proved to be successful - as local media outlets seemed to prefer to speak to the contact person nearest to their area.

On Thursday 12th June 2014, MHFI also circulated a Press Release titled: '*Changing diet, exercise, men-only groups and humour may be the recipe for tackling male obesity*'. This launched the findings from the international ROME0 (Review Of ME_n and Obesity) study. MHFI was one of the partners in this systematic review, and was a named author of the report findings.

A very high level of radio, news print and online coverage for MHW was achieved. However, as in previous years, the volume of TV coverage was more limited. This outcome was expected by the MHW Planning Group - who had agreed, in advance, that the most useful media strategy would be to seek to engage meaningful and in-depth coverage by radio, newspaper and online outlets, rather than manufacturing a sensational headline story for the visual media.

The level of media exposure achieved was monitored via the reporting of MHW Planning Group members / MHFI Management Committee, the creation of daily 'Google Alerts', as well as by online searches for key words / phrases ...

- Using the Google, Bing, Yahoo, Lycos, Ask Jeeves, Gigablast, Dogpile, DuckDuckGo and Hot Bot search engines.
- Looking for the terms: Men's Health Week in Ireland 2014; Men's Health Week Ireland 2014; Men's Health Week Ireland; Men's Health Week; MHW; MHW 2014; Men's Health Forum in Ireland; Men's Health Forum Ireland; MHFI; Colin Fowler; Challenges, Choices, Celebrations; What's Your Aim?
- Examining and recording the first 20 pages of links generated by each search engine.
- Up until Monday 30th June 2014.

The coverage recorded included ...

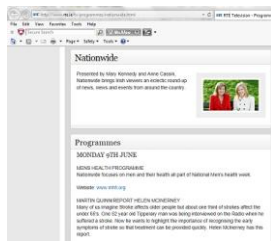
- 41 newspaper articles - including some of the main dailies e.g. Irish Times, Belfast Telegraph, Irish News, Irish Examiner, Irish Independent, Newsletter, Sunday Life and The Daily Mirror.
- 7 journal / magazine features - in publications with large circulations i.e. Irish Pharmacy News, Urology Review, Modern Medicine, Irish Medical News and The Journal (x3). All of these features were written by MHFI.
- 4 Letters to the Editor - published in the Belfast Telegraph, Irish World, Irish Times and Irish Independent.
- 65 slots (news items and interviews) on the radio - these included national, regional, local, community, and Irish medium stations.
- 1 feature show on TV i.e. RTE Nationwide - broadcast on Monday 9th June 2014.
- 6 TV slots - BBC Newslines, TV3 Ireland AM, RTE Morning Edition, Nuacht TG4, UTV News and UTV Live Tonight.
- 85 'shoutout requests' on a diverse range of radio stations / programmes throughout Ireland.
- 225 features on 'quality' local websites - including those of MHW Planning Group partners. The websites of statutory bodies (e.g. HSE, Public Health Agency, Health and Social Care Trusts and NI Direct) carried features on the

week. In addition, MHW 2014 in Ireland received online coverage from over 1,500 online newspapers / health feeds / search engines / bloggers / pharma companies / health equipment sales sites ... both national and international.

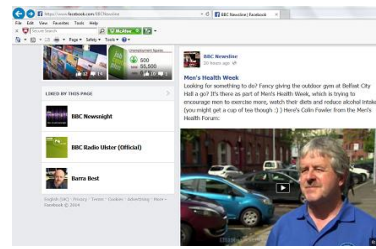
- 10 articles in newsletters - including Health Bytes, All-Island Obesity News, NICVA eNews, Health News Ireland, Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups newsletter and BMA NI eBriefing.
- A MHW announcement on the 'Big Screen' at the front of Belfast City Hall during the MHW 2014 event held there on Wednesday 11th June 2014.

MHW 2014 in Ireland was promoted and publicised by a very broad range of bodies including: Helplines (e.g. Samaritans, Amen and Helplink); health service providers (e.g. Irish Cancer Society, Man Alive, Irish Heart Foundation, Action Cancer, Marie Keating Foundation, Alcohol Action Ireland and NI Chest, Heart and Stroke); research bodies (e.g. ARK, the Centre for Men's Health and Lewis Fertility Testing); networking organisations (e.g. NICVA and regional men's health groups / networks); youth organisations (e.g. National Youth Council of Ireland, Youth Action NI and Opportunity Youth); mental health services (e.g. Mental Health Ireland, Inspire Ireland, See Change and ReachOut); Irish Men's Sheds Association; Trade Unions (e.g. Union of Students in Ireland, ICTU and Irish Pharmacy Union); sporting bodies (GAA, IFA, IRFU, Irish Sports Council, Sport NI, Belfast Community Sports Development Network); educational establishments (e.g. Institutes of Technology and universities throughout Ireland); medical organisations (e.g. British Medical Association NI, DCU School of Nursing, QUB School of Nursing and Student Medical Committee NI); gay men's support projects (e.g. Gay Health Network and The Rainbow Project); statutory health bodies (PHA, HSE, Health and Social Care Trusts, and Health Action Zones); men's groups (e.g. Fir Le Chéile, Men's Development Network, Men's Action Network, Menaware and Men Alone in Norman's Land); fathers groups (e.g. Sure Start Fathers' Network); community initiatives (e.g. Community Development Partnerships, Area Partnership Boards, Volunteer Centres, Community Councils and Family Resource Centres); online discussion fora (e.g. Boards.ie) ...

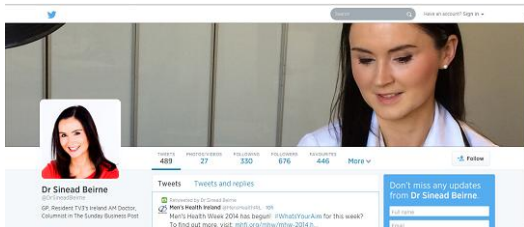
Examples of coverage included ...



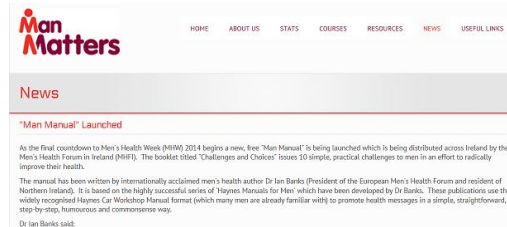
RTE Nationwide



BBC Newsline



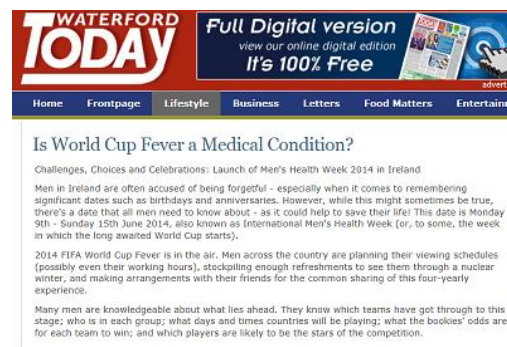
TV3



Man Matters



The Journal.ie



Waterford Today



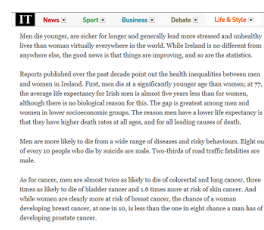
Galway Advertiser



Irish Health.com



Medical Independent



Irish Times

12.7 Online Information Hub

The Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) sought to provide a free, easy to access, online information hub for Men's Health Week (MHW) 2014. To achieve this, the Forum created a new section on its website at: www.mhfi.org/mhw/previous-years/mhw-2014.html

This webpage acted as the focal point for the week, and offered visitors access to a centralised hub for all available information. In addition, the Home Page, News Page and Latest News scrolling banner on the website raised awareness of the most recent developments.

MHFI utilised the 'AWStats' web traffic analysis tool to monitor activity on the MHFI website in the lead up to and during MHW 2014. The AWStats data* shows that site traffic increased steadily from February 2014 onwards, and peaked in June 2014 ...

- In February 2014, there were: 1,352 unique visitors; 2,379 site visits; 10,648 web pages viewed; 65,780 site hits. 5.67 GB bandwidth was used.
- By June 2014, there were: 2,766 unique visitors; 4,543 site visits; 19,781 web pages viewed; 207,557 site hits. 11.62GB of bandwidth was used.

[* These figures represent actual people visiting the site, and exclude traffic generated by search engine robots and spiders]

The vast majority of website visitors came from Ireland (both North and South). The next largest group came from England, Scotland and Wales; followed by people from the United States of America. This was similar to the experience of the Facebook pages and Twitter feed both during MHW 2014 and in the lead-up to it.

In terms of file downloads, the most frequently accessed (in order of popularity) were the:

- MHW posters and image pack.
- 'Challenges and Choices' Man Manual.
- 'The Toolbox for Action'.
- 'Men's Health Week 2014 - What can I do to Mark this Week?'
- 'Men's Health Week 2014 - Events and activities taking place on the island of Ireland'.

As hoped for, the MHW 2014 webpage (www.mhfi.org/mhw/previous-years/mhw-2014.html) was the most viewed page on the MHFI site and - during June - was also the most frequent entry point to the entire website.

These statistics clearly indicate that the MHFI website experienced an increase in traffic in the lead-up to and during MHW 2014. This website - in conjunction with the Facebook pages and Twitter feed - did, therefore, effectively act as an information hub which could offer an overview of the week, promote events and activities, recruit participants, and provide the latest updates on developments.

12.8 Promotion of Activity and Events

'E-Male Matters' (www.mhfi.org/newsletters/about-e-male-matters.html) is the monthly electronic newsletter of the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI). Each edition is, currently, circulated to 3,543 organisations / individuals - many of whom then forward it to other colleagues and contacts.

This publication - and the covering letter on the email it was attached to - regularly invited recipients to forward details of their Men's Health Week (MHW) activities to MHFI. This invitation was also issued on the MHFI website, Facebook pages and Twitter feed.

The purpose of the invitation was to gather information on MHW 2014 events and initiatives in Ireland, and to create a central inventory of at least some activities happening during the week, where they would take place, and how to join in. It was hoped that this would give recognition to, and increase the profile of, those groups that were doing something for and with men - especially those organisations that do not have their own online presence.

Subscribers were invited to send details of any endeavour related to MHW 2014 to MHFI. This could, for example, include health checks, conferences, launches, games, seminars, competitions, workshops, courses, displays, health fairs ...

To make the submission process as easy and accessible as possible, four mechanisms for registration of activities and events were utilised. It was hoped that these diverse systems would accommodate the needs of all interested parties:

- An online registration form was created for the submission of details at: www.mhfi.org/mhw/promote-an-event.html (this was taken down after MHW to avoid spamming).
- A registration form, in Microsoft Word format, was available for downloading at: www.mhfi.org/mhw2014project.doc Organisations were invited to save a copy of this document to their computer, type in their details, and email it back to MHFI.
- A registration form, in Portable Document Format (PDF), was available for downloading at: www.mhfi.org/mhw2014project.pdf Organisations could print this file, handwrite their details, and post it back to MHFI.
- Those without access to the Internet were invited to phone Colin Fowler, from MHFI, and have a hard copy of the form sent to them in the post. This could then be completed in pen and returned to MHFI.

To ensure consistency in the format of information, a registration template was devised (see [Appendix 5](#) for a copy). The information submitted was edited by MHFI, and then inserted into a cumulative publication titled: *'Men's Health Week 2014 - Events and activities taking place on the island of Ireland'*. This booklet (which had an internal hyperlink format) was made available on the MHFI website at:

www.mhfi.org/mhw2014events.pdf

This publication - and the individual entries contained within it - were regularly promoted in *'E-Male Matters'* and via MHFI's other online communications media. Entries were regularly added to it in the period leading up to MHW 2014.

12.9 Signposting Service

In the lead-up to Men's Health Week (MHW) 2014, the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) offered a signposting service to organisations looking for ideas / resources / information / contacts / research ... to facilitate their involvement in MHW. This 'helpline' service was coordinated by Colin Fowler.

In total, 102 requests were dealt with. The vast majority of these were conducted via telephone calls and email correspondence. However, a small number required on-site visits / meetings.

12.10 Practical Action / Projects

Although, from the outset, the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) Sub-Group for Men's Health Week (MHW) acknowledged that the Forum needed to be realistic about what it could achieve, it also sought to support (where possible) small scale and affordable actions / projects which could promote or add value to MHW 2014.

MHFI did this via ...

- Soliciting support for MHW from regional bodies.
- Directing local groups to available funding / resources.
- Helping organisations to connect / network with similar projects, and to create partnerships.
- Recruiting participants for MHW events being organised by external agencies.
- Acting as a 'sounding board' for project ideas.
- Providing advice on men's work action plans.
- Working in partnership with other organisations to plan and deliver on-the-ground activities (e.g. men's health events in Belfast City Hall and the Guild Hall in Derry) ...

12.11 Engagement with Young Men

Historically, Men's Health Week (MHW) has been quite successful at engaging older men - both in recognising the key messages and in responding to them / joining activities. However, there is a lot of evidence to suggest that younger men (especially those under the age of 25 years) have remained unaware of and, possibly, disengaged from the week. Indeed, a survey of male students in the University of Limerick in 2011 showed that only 2% of respondents were able to correctly identify when MHW takes place.

MHW always happens at a fixed date in June each year. It begins on the Monday before Father's Day, and Father's Day is always the third Sunday in June. This timing means that MHW (as it stands) can only have a limited impact upon young men - especially those in third level education - as MHW falls at a time when this target group has either left college or is in the middle of doing exams.

To help to combat this difficulty, the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) worked with the Union of Students in Ireland to promote MHW 2014 before the students left college in June 2014. This included the distribution of MHW posters and postcards, and the extensive use of social media networks.

However, MHFI also felt that it would be useful to explore:

- The level of awareness of men's health issues held by male students.
- The best ways to target young men with health information.
- How to effectively increase young men's awareness of: when MHW is; what the theme for 2014 is; how to access further information on the week.

To achieve these goals, MHFI worked in partnership with two groups of Marketing students from Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT). As part of the 'Students Learning with Communities' initiative within DIT, these students undertook two research projects:

1. The first focused, primarily, upon young men's knowledge of a range of health issues, with an emphasis upon how to encourage them to take action regarding their health and wellbeing (see www.mhfi.org/DITreport1.pdf).
2. The other addressed how to raise awareness of MHW in Ireland, and the reasons for low participation among young men in this area (see: www.mhfi.org/DITreport2.pdf).

Both of these studies will help to inform the roll-out of future MHWs in Ireland.



13. Conclusions and Recommendations

The celebration of Men's Health Week (MHW) in Ireland each year is always conducted on a financial shoe-string. The success of this week relies very heavily upon the input of volunteers, the good will of organisations, offers of 'in-kind' and mutual support, and the creativity of contributors.

This year witnessed a further expansion of MHW activity - especially with the publication of an Ireland edition of the '*Challenges and Choices*' Man Manual and the drive to increase the engagement of younger men in MHW.

The Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) was able to support developments in the Republic of Ireland via grant aid from the Health Service Executive (HSE), and was also able to increase the level of cross-Border activity with assistance from The Hospital Saturday Fund. Funding from the Man Matters project (now closed) was used to support the development of initiatives in Northern Ireland before the start of June 2014.

During MHW 2014, MHFI chose a theme which was different to England, Scotland or Wales. The local focus upon '*Challenges, Choices and Celebrations - What's Your Aim?*' was sanctioned by the all-island MHW Planning Group, and was felt to be inclusive enough to secure the interest and engagement of a diverse range of organisations in MHW activity. However, it was suggested that, in future, it would be useful to invite a wider group of people to be part of the process of determining the theme for MHW.

Overall, MHW 2014 proved to be very successful ...

- There was, once again, a broad base of engagement from across the whole island of Ireland. This was a very positive aspect of the week and entailed a vast amount of voluntary input from many individuals and organisations.
- As in previous years, MHFI was able to draw upon the support of the HSE and the Institute of Public Health in Ireland to enable it to offer both a coordinating role during MHW and support for a diverse spectrum of activities. Additional assistance this year, from The Hospital Saturday Fund, was greatly appreciated - especially following the closure of Man Matters.

- The MHFI Planning Sub-Group worked effectively together, and fulfilled all of the tasks set for it, including: determining the theme for MHW 2014; setting appropriate aims and objectives; identifying potential members for an all-island Planning Group; participating in the Planning Group; acting as the executive of this body; designing and delivering realistic actions on behalf of MHFI; steering developments on behalf of the Forum; reporting back to the MHFI Board of Trustees.
- MHFI set itself clearly defined roles for MHW 2014 (i.e. promoter, coordinator, educator, animateur, convenor, prompter, signposter and quartermaster), and sought to kick start the engagement process for others - rather than acting as a direct service delivery body for men. As in previous MHWs, this proved to be a realistic, sustainable and appropriate strategy, which allowed MHFI to play a unique role within the constraints of its own limited assets and capabilities.
- The involvement of the temporary MHFI Director of Operations was important to the overall success of the week. This person acted as the coordinator, convenor, administrator, executive officer, policy worker, webmaster, media liaison person, development officer and contact point for MHW 2014.
- The key messages for MHW 2014 were clear and concise, and they targeted / reached policy makers, opinion formers, service providers, community activists, the general public, and males themselves.
- All of the eleven objectives that the MHFI Planning Sub-Group determined for MHW 2014 were met and, in many cases, exceeded. For example ...
 - i. **Convene and administer an all-island Planning Group:** This body included 50 diverse organisations from across the whole of Ireland, and met three times (as well as conducting ongoing business via email) to help to shape MHW 2014. Members also used their own agency's networks / resources to promote MHW, developed on-the-ground activity, and worked in partnership with each other outside of the formal scheduled meetings.

- ii. **Design and produce promotional materials:** MHFI oversaw the design and production of a range of new MHW graphics and promotional materials (logos, banners, web images, posters and - for the first time - postcards). These were offered in both hard copy and online (for free and in a variety of sizes and formats to suit all media) to anyone who wished to raise awareness of the week or to be associated with it. These resources provided a unique 'brand' for MHW 2014 and were very widely utilised. This was the third year that MHFI had used a QR Code on the posters, and this again proved to be a very successful means to direct viewers to further information.
- iii. **Research, collate and disseminate a briefing paper:** MHFI prepared and circulated a Briefing Paper to everyone on its mailing list (including media outlets), as well as making this available for online downloading. This document (titled '*The Toolbox for Action*') provided answers to the most common questions that anyone might ask about MHW 2014, and offered a shared understanding of the week to all partners. MHFI's media contacts commented that it provided all of the key information to help them to produce informed coverage of the week.
- iv. **Collate a document on 'what can I do to mark this week':** A short paper was produced which offered simple and practical suggestions on how to get involved in MHW 2014. This was circulated to everyone on the MHFI mailing list, and was made available online. The paper highlighted realistic ways that organisations can make MHW fit with their own work, and helped them to visualise how they might be involved.
- v. **Produce a 'Challenges and Choices' mini-manual for men:** Ten thousand free hard copies of this booklet were printed and disseminated, and it was also made available for online download as a Portable Document Format (PDF) file. This 32 page booklet highlighted a range of key challenges to men's health, and offered three practical choices for dealing with each condition. The stock of hard copies was exhausted a short time after their launch, and a further 936 electronic copies were downloaded online. MHW 2014 witnessed a huge increase in contact with male-dominated workplaces. Many of these employers sought copies of the Manual to distribute to their employees.

- vi. **Increase awareness of MHW 2014:** MHFI updated and consolidated its media and organisational mailing lists; utilised its social and electronic media (Facebook and Twitter); encouraged Planning Group partners to use their contacts and dissemination mechanisms to amplify exposure; circulated updates via the '*E-Male Matters*' newsletter; ensured a high level of media coverage of the week. All of these tasks were successfully completed. The additional support received from the HSE's Public Communications Team increased exposure to, and awareness of, MHW within the wider HSE family.

- vii. **Provide a free, easy to access, online information hub:** MHFI created and maintained a new MHW 2014 section on its website, and used the Home Page, News Page and Latest News scrolling banner on this site to raise awareness of the most recent developments. The website witnessed a steady increase in traffic in the lead-up to MHW, and peaked during the week itself.

- viii. **Promote the details of MHW activity and events:** MHFI invited organisations throughout Ireland to submit details of their MHW activities for inclusion in an e-booklet. This content was regularly promoted in the '*E-Male Matters*' newsletter, as well as via other online communications media. To ensure maximum accessibility, there were four mechanisms for submission of information. These ranged from an online registration form to traditional 'snail mail'.

- ix. **Offer a signposting service to sources of support, information and resources:** In the lead-up to MHW, MHFI offered a signposting service to organisations looking for ideas / resources / information / contacts ... to facilitate their involvement in the week. In total, 102 requests were dealt with.

- x. **Support for other small scale actions:** MHFI sought to support (where possible) small scale actions which could promote or add value to MHW 2014. The Forum did this via: soliciting support for MHW from regional bodies; directing local groups to available resources; helping organisations to network with similar projects; recruiting participants for MHW events being organised by external agencies; acting as a 'sounding board' for project ideas; working in partnership to plan and deliver a range of events and activities.

- xi. **Engage with young men:** Historically, MHW has only had a limited impact upon young men - especially those in third level education. This is largely because MHW falls in June each year, and this target group has either left college by then or is in the middle of exams. During 2014, MHFI worked with the Union of Students in Ireland to promote the week before the students left college, and assisted students in Dublin Institute of Technology to undertake two research projects into young men's health knowledge and behaviours. These studies will help to inform future MHWs.

Based upon a review of activity and achievements during MHW 2014, the following recommendations are made for future weeks ...

- MHW is an important annual all-island celebration of men's health. MHFI should continue to support, promote and coordinate this week.
- Although a lot of MHW activity is the result of volunteering and contributions in-kind, funding is also required to ensure that MHW can have the maximum impact. An application to support MHW 2015 should be submitted to the HSE. The Hospital Saturday Fund should also be approached to see if they would consider a further application from MHFI. Historically, the Man Matters project has underwritten MHW activity in Northern Ireland. As this initiative has now ended, there is an urgent need to find an alternative funder for work in this region.
- During 2014, MHW was coordinated by a core worker dedicated to securing partnerships, on-the-ground activity, communication and publicity. This post had administrative, executive, advice, guidance, reporting and developmental functions. They also provided a focal / reference point for the diverse range of interested parties throughout Ireland. This role is crucial to the success of MHW - as no one else has the time or a remit to oversee these tasks. This post needs to continue in the future.
- MHFI should, once again, appoint a Planning Sub-Group to oversee MHW 2015.
- The clearly defined roles that MHFI played during MHW 2014 were both realistic and appropriate, and should be adopted next year.

- The broad theme for MHW 2014 in Ireland was determined in late 2013. This was a useful strategy - as it allowed more time to finalise the poster concept, and gave media outlets a longer lead-in period. Some members of the MHW 2014 all-island Planning Group said that they would like to have more input into deciding the theme for MHW next year - rather than just working on how to roll it out. MHFI should try to convene a meeting of this body in November or December 2014 to begin the process of agreeing the theme for 2015.

- The eleven objectives set for MHW 2014 were realistic and relevant. Subsequently, they should all - if possible - be pursued again next year. However, there are a number of issues which need to be considered ...
 - ✓ Finding an appropriate venue for meetings of the all-island Planning Group is problematic. Holding face-to-face gatherings has the benefit of helping participants to feel more connection to and ownership of the process. It also assists the creation of working partnerships between members outside of the meetings. However, in the current climate of cut-backs, some organisations will not permit their staff to travel beyond their own catchment area, while other individuals cannot afford to give up the extra time required to travel to a venue such as Dundalk. The Diocesan Pastoral Centre in Dundalk is, however, an ideal venue for a full group meeting. It is proposed that, in 2015, this setting should be used for (at least) the first Planning Group encounter. This will act as a team-building experience. After this, participants can determine if the pattern should move to video-conferencing between the Dublin and Belfast offices of the Institute of Public Health in Ireland (if this option continues to be available).

 - ✓ The MHW 2015 poster and image pack needs to be designed, agreed, and produced as early as possible. Determining the concept for the imagery requires a lot of negotiation with Planning Group members, and the design is usually changed many times before final sign-off is achieved. The deadline for final agreement should be the beginning of April 2015 - to allow plenty of time for printing and dissemination. The QR Code on the poster has proved to be very successful in the past, and should be maintained in the future.

- ✓ During 2014, MHW 'postcards' were produced for the first time. These proved to be very popular. However, this resource was little more than an A₆ version of the main poster printed on card. For 2015, it is recommended that postcards are, once again, produced, but that they also have two columns printed on the reverse of the poster - the left hand side giving a message / key facts about MHW 2015, and the right hand side offering a space to write in the address for the recipient.
- ✓ The MHW Briefing Paper (*'The Toolbox for Action'*) offers a common script for partners, media and the public to find out essential information about the week. This should be updated and reproduced for 2015.
- ✓ Each year, there is an increase in the number of organisations who know about Men's Health Week and/or why they need to be involved. The *'What can I do to mark this week?'* paper helps to encourage these people to see that it is something that they can easily fit into their existing priorities and strategic work plan. Therefore, it should, once again, be updated for next year.
- ✓ Media databases need to be updated regularly to ensure their accuracy and relevance. Even in the few months leading-up to MHW (and since then), MHFI's contacts for several agencies have changed.
- ✓ MHW 2014 received a very substantial amount of media coverage. In advance of MHW it was agreed that the main outlets to be targeted would be newspapers, magazines, radio, newsletters and online media - as they have much more time and space to fill; are prepared to address a broader range of subjects; are more open to 'good news stories'. It was decided not to promote any 'shock horror' stories required to engage television companies. This strategy proved to be successful, and should be continued.
- ✓ The support of the HSE Communications Department during MHW 2014 was welcome, and had a significant impact upon the exposure of MHW to the wider HSE family. This assistance should be sought again during 2015. The Public Health Agency / Health Trusts in Northern Ireland should also be approached to solicit their input.

- ✓ Having hard copies of the '*Challenges and Choices*' manual meant that MHFI had a tangible and practical resource to give to anyone who wanted an easy way to mark MHW 2014. The booklets were especially in demand in traditional male workplaces. If funding can be found, this publication could usefully be updated for MHW 2015 or replaced with a similar resource.
- ✓ MHW partner groups were encouraged to promote their events and activities in the media during MHW 2014. This helped to highlight the diverse range of interest in, and support for, men's health work throughout Ireland. However, to avoid competition for media exposure, this process was centrally managed by MHFI. This protocol should be followed again in 2015.
- ✓ MHFI's online promotion of MHW in the lead-up to and during the week proved to be extremely successful. This should be maintained during 2015 - especially the social media dimension. All Planning Group partners were asked to promote the week via their online presence and this, too, increased exposure to MHW 2014 and the key messages. This should be continued next year.
- ✓ Over the past few years, MHFI has sought to develop a broad range of means to submit the details of events taking place during MHW for publication. However, collating information on these initiatives has always been difficult. During 2014, only a relatively small number of projects were documented, and this in no way reflects the extent or diversity of activity on the island of Ireland. Interestingly, this is not just a phenomenon for groups that MHFI has little ongoing contact with - even members of the all-island Planning Group did not respond to calls for information and/or sent their details in at the last minute. It appears that the key stumbling block is remembering to do it, and finding the time to do so. This was also the case in earlier years, but needs to be addressed.
- ✓ The 'signposting' role performed by MHFI is crucially important to those who are unsure of where to start, and should not be under-estimated in the future.
- ✓ The relationship established with the Union of Students in Ireland and the 'Students Learning in Communities' initiative in Dublin Institute of Technology proved to be very valuable, and should be built upon during 2015. This will help to open-up a new line of communication with young men in third level education.

Appendix 1:

Men's Health Week 2014



The Toolbox for Action



MEN'S HEALTH WEEK

Contents

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Matters



Men's Health Week 2014

Why do we need to focus upon men's health issues and needs?

Men, on the island of Ireland, experience a disproportionate burden of ill-health and die too young ...

- Local men die, on average, four and a half years younger than women do.
- Males have higher death rates than women for all of the leading causes of death.
- Poor lifestyles are responsible for a high proportion of chronic diseases.
- Late presentation to health services leads to a large number of problems becoming untreatable ...



Indeed, while many of these conditions are preventable, their prevalence among men may, in fact, rise in the future.

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When is Men's Health Week (MHW)?

Men's Health Week (MHW) always begins on the Monday before Father's Day and ends on Father's Day itself. This year, it will run from Monday 9th until Sunday 15th June 2014.

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Where is MHW celebrated?

MHW is celebrated in most European countries, as well as in the USA, Australia, New Zealand and a number of other places worldwide.

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What are the aims of MHW?

Internationally, the core aims of MHW each year are to ...

- ❑ 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.

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Is there a specific theme this year?

Each year, individual countries focus upon a specific theme. The theme for 2014 in Ireland is: *'Challenges, Choices and Celebrations - What's Your Aim?'*

This is different to the theme in England and Wales - which will focus upon work and health.

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Why ‘Challenges, Choices and Celebrations’?

Not too long ago, we were unaware of the full extent of men’s poor health status and the specific health issues that they face. However, this is no longer the case. Therefore, we cannot ignore the needs of almost half of the population of the island of Ireland.

In recent years, a broad range of research has highlighted the health difficulties which face men in Ireland and further afield. For example ...

- Men’s Health in Ireland (www.mhfi.org/fullreport.pdf)
- Getting Inside Men’s Health (www.mhfi.org/gettinginsidemenshealth.pdf)
- Men’s Health in Northern Ireland: Tackling the Root Causes of Men’s [ill] Health (www.mhfi.org/manmattersbriefing1.pdf)
- A Report on the all-Ireland Young Men and Suicide Project (www.mhfi.org/ymspfullreport.pdf)
- Facing the Challenge - The Impact of Recession and Unemployment on Men’s Health in Ireland (www.mhfi.org/IPHreport2011.pdf)
- A Report on the Excess Burden of Cancer among Men in the Republic of Ireland (www.mhfi.org/ICSreport2013.pdf)
- The State of Men’s Health in Europe (www.mhfi.org/menshealtheurope.pdf) ...

This evidence clearly shows that there are many **CHALLENGES** to be faced when seeking to improve men’s health. However, it also highlights that men’s health can be improved in many significant ways - if we make the right **CHOICES**. Men, themselves, have a key role to play in this process, but they require support, encouragement and opportunities to succeed.

The Republic of Ireland was the first country in the world to have a National Men’s Health Policy (www.mhfi.org/menshealthpolicy.pdf). This was founded upon a comprehensive review of men’s health evidence (both nationally and internationally), as well as consultations with a range of stakeholders - including men themselves. Northern Ireland still lacks any dedicated formal framework / guidelines for assessing or meeting men’s health needs.



Now that we know what many of the key men’s health issues are, it’s time to do something about them. Men’s health is not just an issue for individual men. While it is crucial for men to take responsibility for looking after themselves, their health can often be determined by other factors outside of their personal control. Thus, there is also a need for policy-makers and service providers to recognise the role that they need to play, and to do something practical about it. Subsequently, Men’s Health Week this year asks everyone: **‘WHAT’S YOUR AIM?’**

Frequently, we simply blame men for their own state of health, and focus upon the shortcomings of individuals. MHW 2014 calls upon everyone to do their bit to improve the lot of men and boys, as well as to **CELEBRATE** the important contributions that males make to our society.

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What were the themes for MHW in previous years?

Previous MHWs in Ireland have focused upon ...

- 2005 - Obesity
- 2006 - Mental Well-Being
- 2007 - Long-Term Conditions
- 2008 - Health in the Workplace
- 2009 - Access to Services
- 2010 - Physical Activity
- 2011 - Supporting Men and Boys during Challenging Times
- 2012 - What's Your First Instinct ... Fight? Flight? Find Out?
- 2013 - Action Men! - Turning Words into Actions



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Who is the target audience?

The purpose of MHW is to draw attention to the health and well-being issues affecting men and boys, and to encourage / promote personal, structural and systemic change where possible. This, therefore, implies that any messages and engagement needs to target:

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

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Who can be involved in this week?

MHW gives everyone (health professionals, service providers, youth groups, sporting bodies, community organisations, employers, Churches, policy makers, family workers, the media, parents, individuals ...) an opportunity to encourage men and boys to take better care of their health and to seek help or treatment at an early stage.

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How can my organisation get involved?

Absolutely everyone can do something to support and celebrate MHW 2014. The focus for this year (i.e. *'Challenges, Choices and Celebrations - What's Your Aim?'*) lends itself to a wide range of ways to mark this occasion. However, anything which promotes the week and encourages men and boys to lead healthier lifestyles, to be more aware of preventable health problems, and to seek early detection and treatment for health difficulties is very welcome.

A range of practical ideas for how you or your organisation can be involved in MHW 2014 can be found online at: www.mhfi.org/mhw2014celebrateit.pdf These suggestions range from the simple and free, to large-scale and expensive!

You could also consider helping to give out the new, free, 32 page 'Challenges and Choices' mini-manual for men (see www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2014.html for details).

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Are there any ways that I can promote the week?

There is a common logo / image pack which can be used by everyone who wishes to raise awareness of the week. There is also a MHW 2014 poster. These are important promotional tools - as one of the key aims is to let as many people as possible know about the week. These are available, free, to anyone who wishes to use them. See www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-image-pack.html for more details.

Promotion of MHW could take the form of:

- Putting-up a poster.
- Advertising MHW on your own website.
- Creating a link from your website to the MHW 2014 web page (www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2014.html).
- Sending an email to everyone in your contacts list about Men's Health Week and asking them to forward the message.
- Inserting the MHW logo (www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-image-pack.html) into your outgoing emails.
- Becoming a fan of the Men's Health Week in Ireland's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek) and sending the link to all your online friends.
- Including information about MHW in your mailouts / newsletters.
- Telling others about what is happening in your area during MHW by posting details on the MHW website (www.mhfi.org/mhw/promote-an-event.html).
- Reminding your colleagues to follow all the latest MHW news on Twitter (www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL).
- Tweeting about MHW 2014, and including #WhatsYourAim in your message.
- Encouraging the men you know to get involved in some of the activities taking place around the country ...

Doing one or more of these simple (and cost-free) things would contribute hugely to MHW 2014!

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Who has planned Men's Health Week 2014 in Ireland?

MHW in Ireland has been planned by a broad range of partners who contributed to an inter-agency Planning Group. This body met, and had ongoing communication with each other, between January and April 2014. It was convened and coordinated by the [Men's Health Forum in Ireland](#) (MHFI). MHFI works alongside other Men's Health Fora worldwide to focus attention upon male health issues.

The theme for this year's MHW (i.e. 'Challenges, Choices and Celebrations') offers an opportunity for a very wide range of agencies to participate. Indeed, the planning process for 2014 drew upon the insight, expertise, support and contacts of individuals from ...

Action Cancer
Alcohol Action Ireland
Amen

ARK (Queen's University and University of Ulster)
Belfast Community Sports Development Network

Marian House Nursing Home
Marie Keating Foundation
Men Alone in No-mans-land
Menaware
Men's Action Network

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
British Medical Association NI
Colin Neighbourhood Partnership
Cork University Hospital
Dublin City University School of Nursing
Fír Le Cheile (Men Together)
Gaelic Athletic Association
Health Service Executive, Dublin / North East
Helplink Support Services
Inspire Ireland
Irish Cancer Society
Irish Football Association
Irish Heart Foundation
Irish Men's Sheds Association
Irish Rugby Football Union
Irish Sports Council
Lewis Fertility Testing
Man Alive - Cancer Focus NI
Man Matters Project

Men's Development Network
Men's Health Forum in Ireland
Mental Health Ireland
National Youth Council of Ireland
Northern Health and Social Care Trust
Northern Ireland Chest, Heart and Stroke
Northern Ireland Medical Students' Committee
SafeFood
See Change
Southern Health and Social Care Trust
Sport Northern Ireland
Sure Start Fathers' Network
The Rainbow Project
Union of Students in Ireland
Waterford Institute of Technology
Western Health and Social Care Trust
Workers' Educational Association
YouthAction Northern Ireland
3fivetwo Training Academy

... as well as a range of other interested individuals from across the island of Ireland.

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What is the Men's Health Forum in Ireland?

The Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) is a diverse network of individuals and organisations, men and women, from both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The Forum was established in 1999, and operates on an all-island basis. At present, it has one temporary self-employed worker, but is, primarily, structured, organised and run using the expertise, resources and enthusiasm of volunteers.

MHFI is a charitable organisation which is registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee. The Forum seeks to promote all aspects of the health and well being of men and boys on the island of Ireland through research, training, networking, health initiatives and advocacy. It is managed by a Board of Trustees.

One of MHFI's core areas of work is the coordination of Men's Health Week (MHW) activity on the island of Ireland each year. More details can be found at: www.mhfi.org

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How can I find out more about MHW?

To find out more about Men's Health Week 2014, contact ...

Colin Fowler
Director of Operations
Men's Health Forum in Ireland
Tel: 0044 751 9945261
Email: colin@mhfi.org

or visit ...

Website: www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2014.html
Facebook: www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/MensHealthIRL>



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Appendix 2:

Men's Health Week 2014

Men's Health Week 2014
CHALLENGES. CHOICES. CELEBRATIONS.
Monday 9th - Sunday 15th June 2014
Visit www.mhfi.org to find out more

WHAT'S YOUR AIM?

Men's Health Week
Man Matters
FORUM
HE
LOTTERY FUNDED

QR code

- what can I do to mark this week?

Absolutely everyone can do something to support and celebrate Men's Health Week (MHW) 2014 ...

The focus for Men's Health Week (MHW) this year (*'Challenges, Choices and Celebrations - What's Your Aim?'*) lends itself to a wide range of ways to mark this occasion. However, you don't have to stick rigidly to this particular theme. Anything which promotes the week and encourages men and boys to lead healthier lifestyles, to be more aware of preventable health problems, and to seek early detection and treatment for health difficulties will be very welcome!

In Ireland, there is a MHW poster, logo, and an image pack which can be used by anyone who wishes to raise awareness of MHW and/or to be associated with it. All of these images are available for free online downloading at: www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-image-pack.html
There is also a free 32 page men's health mini-manual available - see www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2014.html for details of how to access this booklet.

These resources are important promotional tools - as one of the key aims of MHW is to let as many people as possible (especially men) know about the week, when it will happen, and how they can get involved. The booklet also outlines ten key health challenges for men.

Even if you don't have a lot of time, energy or resources to give, there are still some really easy (and free) ways that you can show your support.

These include:

- Putting a [MHW poster](#) (or two) up in your workplace / meeting space / community centre / local shop / waiting room / home ...
- Promoting the week on your website - using a copy of the [MHW logo](#) and/or [web banner](#).
- Linking to the Men's Health Forum in Ireland's website page devoted to Men's Health Week 2014 (www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2014.html) from your own website, Facebook page or other social networking site.
- Sending an email to everyone in your contacts list to tell them about Men's Health Week, and asking them to forward the message to all their contacts.
- Becoming a fan of the Men's Health Week in Ireland's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek) and sending this link to all your online friends.
- Inserting the MHW logo into your outgoing emails for the months of May and June.
- Including information on MHW in your mailouts / newsletters.
- Telling others about what is happening in your area during MHW by posting details on the MHFI website (use the form at: www.mhfi.org/mhw/promote-an-event.html).
- Making the MHW logo your computer desktop 'wallpaper' during May and June.
- Reminding your colleagues to follow all the latest MHW news on Twitter (www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL).
- Tweeting about MHW 2014, and including #WhatsYourAim in your message.
- Encouraging the men you know to get involved in some of the activities taking place during MHW 2014 ...



However, even more is possible. If you're a ...

- **HEALTH SERVICE PROVIDER** why not produce a men's health leaflet, or offer men's health (MOT / NCT) checks, or run a men's health campaign in your area, or consult with local men about what services they need, or give free pedometers to men, or ...?
- **COMMUNITY / VOLUNTARY GROUP** why not start-up a walking group, or organise a healthy eating cookery class, or form a men's health group, or launch a men's swimming / cycling club, or get your local leisure centre / gym to offer a free pass to men during MHW, or collate and display a list of local Helplines / support services for men, or ...?
- **SPORTING BODY** why not use your unique position (as many men like sport already) to give out men's health information at games, or get local men to join-in training sessions, or ask your best known player to give a men's health talk, or develop forms of your game which older men can participate in, or print men's health messages on your players' shirts, or put details about the week into your match programmes, or set-up / support a ['ParkRun'](#) programme, or ...?
- **LOCAL POLITICIAN / POLICY MAKER** why not table a debate on men's health in the Northern Ireland Assembly / Dáil Éireann / local council chamber, or set-up an inter-party group on men's health, or host a men's health seminar in your constituency, or propose a party policy on men's health, or look at how elements of the Men's Health Policy in the Republic of Ireland could be introduced to Northern Ireland, or set your department the goal of tackling a specific men's health issue over the coming year, or have a look at some of the evidence about men's health status (available at: www.mhfi.org/resources/research-policies-and-reports.html) or ...?
- **EMPLOYER** why not organise health checks for men in your workplace, or set-up a regular game of football before / after work, or invite speakers to come in and give talks on specific aspects of men's health, or produce your own workplace guide to men's health, or offer an hour off to your employees to attend a men's health event, or support a walk / cycle to work week, or ...?
- **OTHER SERVICE PROVIDER** why not display men's health information in your public spaces, or direct your service users to men's health programmes, or provide a room and administrative support for a local men's health initiative, or think about helping to start-up a ['Men's Shed'](#) or ...?
- **MEDIA PERSON** why not cover MHW 2014 in your publication / programme, or research and produce an in-depth special report on a specific men's health issue, or promote the work of a local men's health project, or run a series of features on men's health during MHW 2014, or have a men's health supplement in your newspaper, or ...?
- **HELPLINE** why not specifically target men and encourage them to use your service during MHW, or ...
- **WOMAN** why not encourage the man / men in your life (partner, father, brother, uncle, grandfather, neighbour, friend, colleague etc.) to take part in one of the MHW events, or to see their GP about that niggling health concern, or to join a men's health group, or ...?
- **MAN** why not take a few minutes to look at the state of your own health, and make MHW 2014 the start date for a new beginning!!! You might even consider taking on one or more of the ten challenges in our *'Challenges and Choices'* booklet ...



Appendix 3: European President Helps to Launch New Men's Health Manual for the Island of Ireland

Today, as the final countdown to Men's Health Week begins, Dr Ian Banks - President of the European Men's Health Forum - is helping to launch a new, free, 32 page Man Manual which will be distributed by the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI). This booklet - titled '*Challenges and Choices*' - poses a series of simple, practical challenges to men in an effort to radically improve their health.

Men's Health Week always begins on the Monday before Father's Day and ends on Father's Day itself. This year, it will run from Monday 9th until Sunday 15th June 2014. It is celebrated in most European countries, as well as in the USA, Australia, New Zealand and a number of other places worldwide. The theme for Men's Health Week 2014 on the island of Ireland is: '*Challenges, Choices and Celebrations - What's Your Aim?*'



The manual being launched today has been written by internationally acclaimed men's health author Dr Ian Banks (President of the European Men's Health Forum, and resident of Northern Ireland). It is based upon the highly successful series of 'Haynes Manuals for Men' which have been developed by Dr Banks. These publications use the widely recognised Haynes Car Workshop Manual format (which many men are already familiar with) to promote health messages in a straightforward, step-by-step, humorous and commonsense way. As Dr Banks says:

*'When all else fails, read the instruction manual. Well, actually this manual doesn't tell men what they **must** do, that would be impossible as we are all so different. Instead, it challenges men to think about what they **could** do to make their lives healthier and better. Charity shops are full of discarded gadgets, books and infernal devices designed to make men fitter, so why not use what men have already - their brains and male ingenuity. This manual is a challenge, not a patronising pat on the bald spot.'*

Michael Lynch (Chairperson of the Men's Health Forum in Ireland) adds:

'Evidence clearly shows that there are many challenges to be faced when seeking to improve men's health. However, it also highlights that men's health can be improved in significant ways - if the right choices are made. Men, need support, encouragement and opportunities to succeed. This manual provides the information and the tools. Men's Health Week offers the opportunity to make a change.'

Pre-release orders for the manual have already soared, and 9,000 of the 10,000 copies available have already been reserved due to word-of-mouth communication on the grapevine. Michael Lynch comments:

'Interest in men's health is certainly increasing, and not only amongst policy makers and service providers. Men, themselves, are rising to the challenge, and seeking information to help them to make positive choices. With the publication of this manual, the Men's Health Forum in Ireland is delighted to be able to support this movement, and to make Men's Health Week 2014 a time for new beginnings'.

Production of the 'Challenges and Choices' mini-manual has been funded by the Man Matters Project (supported by the Big Lottery Fund) in Northern Ireland, and by the Health Service Executive in the Republic of Ireland.

Information on how to access copies of the booklet can be found online at:
www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2014.html#Challenges

Further information on this publication or Men's Health Week can be obtained by contacting ...

Northern Ireland:

- **Michael Lynch (Derry / Londonderry)** | Tel: 0044 2871 377777 | Mobile: 0044 790 3619511 | Email: man_in_derry@yahoo.co.uk
- **Sandra Gordon (Newry)** | Tel: 0044 797 7501908 | Email: sandragordon@cancerfocusni.org
- **Siobhán Harding (Belfast)** | Tel: 0044 2890 329718 | Mobile: 0044 776 4224 360 | Email: siobhan.harding@wea-ni.com

Republic of Ireland:

- **Finian Murray (Navan)** | Tel: 00353 46 9076449 | Mobile: 00353 87 2038790 | Email: finian.murray@hse.ie
- **Lorcan Brennan (Waterford)** | Tel: 00353 51 844260 | Mobile: 00353 86 3619884 | Email: lorcan@mens-network.net
- **Paul Gillen (Galway)** | Tel: 00353 91 737261 | Email: paul.gillen@hse.ie

ENDS - followed by Editor's Notes

Editor's Notes:

- The core aims of Men's Health Week each year are to:
 - 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.
- Each year, individual countries focus upon a specific theme. The theme for 2014 on the island of Ireland is: *'Challenges, Choices and Celebrations - What's Your Aim?'*
- The Men's Health Forum in Ireland (www.mhfi.org) is a charity which works on an all-Ireland basis to enhance the health of men and boys. It is a voluntary network of individuals and organisations, men and women, which seeks to identify the key concerns relating to male health and to increase understanding of these issues. Every year, the Forum coordinates Men's Health Week activity on the island of Ireland.
- Men's Health Week 2014 in Ireland has been planned by a broad range of partners who contributed to an inter-agency, all-island Planning Group.
- Key information on Men's Health Week on the island of Ireland is available online ...
 - Full overview of Men's Health Week 2014: www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2014.html
 - Briefing paper which answers all the most common questions: www.mhfi.org/mhw2014toolbox.pdf
 - Men's Health Week posters and images: www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-image-pack.html
 - Practical suggestions for organisations on how they can get involved: www.mhfi.org/mhw2014celebrateit.pdf
 - Latest developments: www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek and www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL
- The *'Challenges and Choices'* Man Manual issues ten simple and practical challenges to men. After each challenge, there is a reason why it is important to think about this issue. It then offers three choices for action (Do Nothing, DIY, Find an Expert), and explains the consequences of each option.
- A low resolution preview copy of the Man Manual (PDF) is attached to the email containing this Press Release. If you have not received it, and would like to view it, please email colin@mhfi.org to request a copy.



Appendix 4: MHW 2014 Press Release - 'Is World Cup Fever a Medical Condition?'

Challenges, Choices and Celebrations: Launch of Men's Health Week 2014 in Ireland

Men in Ireland are often accused of being forgetful - especially when it comes to remembering significant dates such as birthdays and anniversaries. However, while this might sometimes be true, there's a date that all men need to know about - as it could help to save their life! This date is Monday 9th - Sunday 15th June 2014, also known as International Men's Health Week (or, to some, the week in which the long awaited World Cup starts).

2014 FIFA World Cup Fever is in the air. Men across the country are planning their viewing schedules (possibly even their working hours), stockpiling enough refreshments to see them through a nuclear winter, and making arrangements with their friends for the common sharing of this four-yearly experience.

Many men are knowledgeable about what lies ahead. They know which teams have got through to this stage; who is in each group; what days and times countries will be playing; what the bookies' odds are for each team to win; and which players are likely to be the stars of the competition.

The World Cup has created a common bond among many men. They have a reason to be in each other's company. They are well informed by the media about what lies ahead. They are prepared to give their opinions and stand out from the crowd. They are motivated and excited. They are enthusiastic and want to be involved. They are likely to show more emotion than usual ... They've obviously 'caught a bug'. Maybe World Cup Fever is a medical condition after all.

Michael Lynch, Chairperson of the Men's Health Forum in Ireland, comments:

"These are traits that we don't often associate with males on the island of Ireland, and we need to harness this energy. Like a common cold, the World Cup will come and go in a matter of weeks, but men's health issues will remain long into the future. There is clear evidence that men in Ireland experience a disproportionate burden of ill-health and die too young. Men's Health Week seeks to challenge this situation".

So, why should we focus upon men's health? Well, the reasons are both clear and stark:

- Men in Ireland die, on average, almost four and a half years younger than women do.
- Males have higher death rates than women for all of the leading causes of death and at all ages.
- Poor lifestyles are responsible for a high proportion of chronic diseases.
- Late presentation to health services leads to a large number of problems becoming untreatable ...

This high level of premature mortality amongst men in Ireland has far-reaching repercussions - far beyond the life satisfaction of men themselves. It affects not only industry and commerce, but also impacts upon the social and financial positions of families. However, this is not a lost cause. That is why we need Men's Health Week which, this year, focuses upon the theme of *'Challenges, Choices and Celebrations - What's Your Aim?'*

While the evidence clearly shows that there are many CHALLENGES to be faced when seeking to improve the health of men, it also highlights that men's health can be improved in many significant ways - if we make the right CHOICES. Men, themselves, have a key role to play in this process, but they require support, encouragement and opportunities to succeed.

As Michael Lynch adds:

"Men's health is not just an issue for individual men. It is everyone's business. While it is crucial for men to take responsibility for looking after themselves, their health can often be determined by other factors outside of their personal control. That's why Men's Health Week this year asks everyone: 'WHAT'S YOUR AIM?'"

To support Men's Health Week 2014, the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (www.mhfi.org) has produced a new, free, 32 page mini-manual for men. This booklet - titled *'Challenges and Choices'* - opens with the statement: *'Warning ... Reading this manual can seriously improve your health'*, and goes on to issue a series of ten simple, practical challenges to local men:

1. Order a soft drink the next time you're in the pub.
2. Try some fruit or vegetables you've never tasted before or think you don't like.
3. Make at least one journey by foot or bicycle instead of going by car.
4. If you're under 25 and sexually active, get yourself checked for chlamydia.
5. Stressed out? ... Walk away from tense situations before you blow up.
6. Find out about the opening hours at your local GP's surgery.
7. Get your blood pressure checked within the next two weeks.
8. Get a mate to quit smoking with you - and get advice on how to stop.
9. Show a doctor that lump, strange-shaped mole, or rash that's bothering you.
10. If you get backache, don't let it become a pain in the ass. Get it sorted.

Each challenge is accompanied by a reason why it is important to take action, a menu of possible choices available, and where to find help. Most importantly, it provides this information in a straightforward, step-by-step, humorous and commonsense way.

Michael Lynch sums up:

"Frequently, we simply blame men for their own state of health, focus upon the shortcomings of individuals, and concentrate upon the negative behaviours of males. Our local football teams may not be through to the final stages of the 2014 FIFA World Cup, but Men's Health Week 2014 calls upon everyone on the island of Ireland to CELEBRATE the important contributions that males make to our society, and to do their bit to improve the lot of men and boys".

Many organisations across the island of Ireland have risen to this challenge, and details of some of their initiatives can be viewed online at: www.mhfi.org/mhw2014events.pdf

Further information on Men's Health Week can be obtained by contacting ...

Northern Ireland:

- Colin Fowler (**Belfast**) | Mobile: 0044 751 9945261 | Email: colin@mhfi.org
- **Michael Lynch (Derry / Londonderry)** | Tel: 0044 2871 377777 | Mobile: 0044 790 3619511 | Email: man_in_derry@yahoo.co.uk
- Sandra Gordon (**Newry**) | Tel: 0044 797 7501908 | Email: sandragordon@cancerfocusni.org

Republic of Ireland:

- Lorcan Brennan (**Waterford**) | Tel: 00353 51 844260 | Mobile: 00353 86 3619884 | Email: lorcan@mens-network.net
- Paul Gillen (**Galway**) | Tel: 00353 91 737261 | Email: paul.gillen@hse.ie
- Finian Murray (**Navan**) | Tel: 00353 46 9076449 | Mobile: 00353 87 2038790 | Email: finian.murray@hse.ie

ENDS - followed by Editor's Notes

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 - Briefing paper which answers all the most common questions: www.mhfi.org/mhw2014toolbox.pdf
 - Men's Health Week posters and images: www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-image-pack.html
 - Practical suggestions for organisations on how they can get involved: www.mhfi.org/mhw2014celebrateit.pdf
 - Latest developments: www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek and www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL
- The *'Challenges and Choices'* Man Manual issues ten simple and practical challenges to men. After each challenge, there is a reason why it is important to think about this issue. It then offers three choices for action (Do Nothing, DIY, Find an Expert), and explains the consequences of each option.



Men's Health Week 2014
Monday 9th - Sunday 15th June 2014

Appendix 5:

Men's Health Week 2014 - Online Promotion of Events

[Men's Health Week](#) (MHW) will run from Monday 9th June until Sunday 15th June this year. The theme for [MHW 2014](#) is: 'Challenges, Choices and Celebrations - What's Your Aim?'



This focus lends itself to a wide range of ways to mark this occasion. However, you don't have to stick rigidly to this particular topic. Anything which encourages men and boys to lead healthier lifestyles, to be more aware of preventable health problems, to seek early detection and treatment for health difficulties, and to access help and support will be welcome!

The [Men's Health Forum in Ireland](#) (MHFI) has created a special section on its website (www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2014.html) to promote the details of any activities or events that will be held throughout Ireland. This will help everyone to find out what is happening during the week, and to get details on how to join in. We also hope that this site will give some profile and recognition to all those groups across Ireland that are doing something for and with men.

Your activity might be health checks, or a conference, or a launch, or a game, or a seminar, or a competition, or a workshop, or a lunch, or a course, or a drama, or a display, or a health fair ...



Whatever it is, if you would like to have the details included on our website, please complete as much of the form below as is appropriate to you. Then return it to us as soon as possible. Alternatively, you may prefer to submit your details using our online form which can be found at:

www.mhfi.org/mhw/promote-an-event.html

Name of Event / Activity:

Date:

Start / Finish Time:

Venue / Location:

Name of Organisation Running Event / Activity:

Brief Description of the Event / Activity - Maximum 150 Words [What it will involve. Who it is for etc.] ...

Is there an Entry Fee?:

Contact Person:

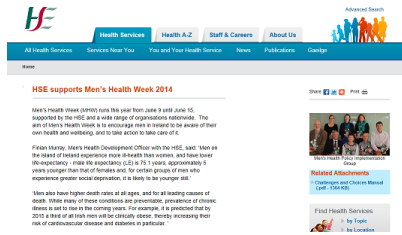
Telephone Number:

Email Address:

Website Address:

Please post this form to: Michael Lynch, Men's Action Network, Floor 2, Old City Factory, 100 Patrick Street, Derry / Londonderry BT48 7EL
or email it to: menshealthweek@mhfi.org

Appendix 6: Further Examples of MHW 2014 Publicity



HSE



Cancer Focus NI



Fir le Chéile



Cairde



Relate NI



City Dental



MHFI



Gender Medicine



Union of Students in Ireland



The Journal.ie