

# Men's Health Week 2016 in Ireland



## Report on MHFI Activity

- collated for the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) by  
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# Foreword

Males constitute almost 50% of the population on the island of Ireland and, therefore, deserve to have a gender lens focused upon their specific health needs. Research shows that these men 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 amongst men may, in fact, rise in the future. However, this is not a lost cause. Much can be / is being done to improve this situation.

Men's Health Week (MHW) offers an annual opportunity to focus upon the specific health and wellbeing needs of men and boys. The week always begins on the Monday before Father's Day and ends on Father's Day itself. During 2016, it ran from Monday 13<sup>th</sup> until Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> June. MHW is celebrated in many European countries, as well as in the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and a number of other places worldwide.

Since 2002, 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 annual 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 2016 on the island of Ireland was '*Men United - for Health and Wellbeing*', and the key question posed was 'are we winning?'

The success of MHW in Ireland is heavily reliant upon the input of volunteers, the goodwill of organisations, offers of 'in-kind' and mutual support, and the creativity of contributors. Once again, many bodies throughout the island of Ireland were involved in this process during 2016. This report seeks to highlight the extent of this input and what was achieved.

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 and the publication of the '*Challenges and Choices*' manual for men in the Republic of Ireland.
- **Public Health Agency (PHA)** - who provided a grant of £4,685 to support the promotion and celebration of MHW and the publication of the '*Challenges and Choices*' manual for men in Northern Ireland.
- **HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention** - who provided a grant of €5,000 to include a mental health strand within MHW 2016.
- **Irish Pharmacy Union** - who printed / distributed Man Manuals for their members.
- **Martin O'Neill and Michael O'Neill** - who were willing to act as the 'public face' of MHW 2016.
- **MHW Planning Group Members** - who freely gave their time and expertise (both at meetings and afterwards) to make MHW 2016 a success.

For more information on MHW 2016 - and what took place in previous years - please visit: [www.mhfi.org/mhw/about-mhw.html](http://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 wellbeing 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 of all ages.
- Support men and boys to engage in healthier lifestyle choices and activities.
- Encourage the early detection and treatment of health difficulties in males.

During 2016, MHW ran from Monday 13<sup>th</sup> until Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> June. In Ireland, the theme centred upon '*Men United - for Health and Wellbeing*' and the key question that was asked is '*are we winning?*' This week provides an opportunity for men to think about new ways to improve their health, and for those around them to offer support and encouragement to do so. As such, the following groups were targeted:

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

The MHFI Board of Trustees appointed a MHW 2016 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 Forum's Planning Sub-Group determined a set of eleven objectives for MHFI during MHW 2016. These were ...

- i. **Convene and administer an all-island Planning Group:** This body included 64 diverse organisations from across the whole of Ireland who met three times between January and May (as well as conducting ongoing business via email) to help to shape MHW 2016. Members also used their own agency's networks / resources to promote MHW, disseminate promotional materials, develop on-the-ground activity, and work 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 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 'brand' for MHW 2016 and were widely utilised. 12,000

MHW postcards and 7,000 posters were distributed. Enlisting the support of the two Irish National Soccer Team Managers as 'poster boys' for the week made MHW appealing to a wide range of males - especially during 'UEFA Euro 2016' this year.

- 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 2016. It offered a shared understanding of the week to all partners, and the key information to help media outlets to provide 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 2016. 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 able to get involved.
- v. **Produce a 'Challenges and Choices' mini-manual for men:** In partnership with the Irish Pharmacy Union, 47,000 free hard copies of this booklet were printed and disseminated, and it was also made available for online downloading 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 full stock of hard copies was exhausted a few weeks after their launch, and thousands of electronic copies of the booklet were also downloaded from the MHFI website before the end of the year. Many male-dominated workplaces sought copies of the Manual to distribute to their employees.
- vi. **Increase awareness of MHW 2016:** 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.
  - Adopted the hashtag #MHW2016
  - Created a MHW 2016 YouTube channel (for partners to upload 30 second videos starting with: "*I / we are celebrating Men's Health Week because...*").
  - Ensured a high level of traditional and social media coverage for the week.
  - Arranged a launch photo-call with the two Ministers for Health (Michelle O'Neill and Simon Harris) ...

Additional support from the HSE's Communications Team, both Departments of Health, and Health and Social Care Trusts helped to increase exposure to and awareness of MHW - both inside and outside of statutory health services.

- vii. **Provide a free, easy to access, online information hub:** MHFI created and maintained a new MHW 2016 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. MHFI's social media outlets fed this flow of information by offering real-time updates.

- 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 three mechanisms for submission of information. These ranged from an online registration form, to emailing a Word attachment, 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, 141 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 2016. 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. **Highlight male mental health:** MHFI ensured that male mental health featured prominently in MHW 2016 coverage - especially via online exposure. This included linking to online mental health check tools, signposting to 'top tips', promoting sources of help and support, and highlighting relevant mental health and wellbeing research. Mental health was one of the specific issues that were highlighted on dedicated days during MHW. A pool of social media messages was also prepared for each thematic day, and these were widely publicised as a communal resource.

The celebration of MHW in Ireland was supported by the Health Service Executive (Health Promotion and Improvement Division and National Office for Suicide Prevention) and the Public Health Agency. During this year, MHFI was delighted to have had Ireland's two National Soccer Team Managers - Michael O'Neill and Martin O'Neill - associated with the week. As the 'face' of MHW, they starred in the nationwide poster and postcard campaign and on the cover of the free, 32 page, *'Challenges and Choices'* Man Manual.

All of the stated objectives for MHW 2016 were fully met and, in most cases exceeded. In addition, individual members of MHFI were also actively involved in the planning of locally-based MHW initiatives.



Minister for Health Simon Harris launches Men's Health Week 2016 in Government Buildings, Dublin, with some members of the all-island Planning Group



Minister for Health Michelle O'Neill launches Men's Health Week 2016 in Stormont Estate, Belfast, with some members of the all-island Planning Group

## 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 wellbeing 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 wellbeing 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 wellbeing 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 International 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 International Men's Health Week (although such a week had been celebrated in the USA since the government passed a resolution in 1994). 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.

Since 2002, groups throughout Ireland have organised local activity to mark this week. However, 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 each year.

Men's Health Week (MHW) is now celebrated in many European countries, as well as in the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and a number of other places worldwide. MHFI cooperates with other Men's Health Fora worldwide 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.

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

## 6. Date of MHW 2016

Men's Health Week (MHW) always begins on the Monday before Father's Day and ends on Father's Day itself. In 2016, it ran from Monday 13<sup>th</sup> until Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> June.

## 7. Theme of MHW 2016

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 - These are Challenging Times. It's No Joke. Let's Talk.
- 2012 - What's Your First Instinct ... Fight? Flight? Find Out?
- 2013 - Action Men: Turning Words into Actions
- 2014 - Challenges, Choices and Celebrations: What's Your Aim?
- 2015 - Creating Culture Change - it's time for a new script

The theme for 2016 in Ireland was: *'Men United - for Health and Wellbeing'*.



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

- Men's Health in Ireland ([www.mhfi.org/fullreport.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/fullreport.pdf))
- Getting Inside Men's Health ([www.mhfi.org/gettinginsidemenshealth.pdf](http://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](http://www.mhfi.org/manmattersbriefing1.pdf))
- A Report on the all-Ireland Young Men and Suicide Project ([www.mhfi.org/ymspfullreport.pdf](http://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](http://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](http://www.mhfi.org/ICSreport2013.pdf))
- The State of Men's Health in Europe ([www.mhfi.org/menshealtheuropa.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/menshealtheuropa.pdf)) ...

Although the health of men in Ireland is poor, it can be improved in many significant ways. Work has already been done to support the health needs of men and boys: Ireland was the first country in the world to have a National Men's Health Policy; the 'Engage' men's health training programme has influenced how services and structures support males; new innovative and pioneering initiatives have been developed which provide a model for improving aspects of men's health ... Much has been achieved, but there is room for more.

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, service providers, and society as a whole to recognise the role that they need to play, and to do something practical about it.

There is little doubt that more progress can be made when everyone pulls in the same direction. *'Men United - for Health and Wellbeing'* captured the essence of this movement. It called upon everyone to ask themselves / their organisations the basic question: *'Are we winning?'* ... If this is not the case, then it is time to consider joining with other people to do something that will make a positive difference to the health and wellbeing of men and boys throughout the island of Ireland. MHW 2016 offered a launch pad to do this.

## 8. Target Audience

The purpose of Men's Health Week (MHW) each year is to draw attention to the health and wellbeing 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, pharmacists, church groups, family workers, the media, parents, individuals etc.) an opportunity to support and 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 2016

As in previous years, volunteers were sought from the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) Management Committee to form a Men's Health Week (MHW) Planning Sub-Group. This body was tasked with:

- Defining the parameters of MHFI's involvement in MHW 2016.
- Identifying potential members for an all-island, inter-agency Planning Group.
- Working with the inter-agency Planning Group to develop the overarching theme for MHW 2016 in Ireland.
- Participating in, inputting to, and acting as the executive agent of the all-island MHW 2016 Planning Group.
- Designing and delivering realistic actions on behalf of MHFI to support the celebration of MHW 2016.
- Overseeing and steering developments on behalf of MHFI.
- Reporting back to the MHFI Board of Trustees.

The Planning Sub-Group was comprised of:

- Lorcan Brennan - Men's Development Network, Waterford
- Sandra Gordon - Cancer Focus NI, Belfast
- Michael McKeon - Dublin City University School of Nursing
- Finian Murray - Health Service Executive, Dublin / North East

During this period, Colin Fowler (from *'Know How - Working with Men'*) 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 their initial discussions via teleconference in November and December 2015. 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 2016

It was agreed by the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) Planning Sub-Group that the Forum should - as in previous years - 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.

It was accepted by the Planning Sub-Group that MHFI 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 2016, MHFI should 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 / general public about men's health needs.

- *Signposter* - offering direction to resources, research, support and activities.
- *Quartermaster* - supplying the basic information / resources / tools (e.g. statistics, logos, posters, communication mechanisms) to support the celebration of MHW throughout Ireland.

## 11. MHFI's Objectives for MHW 2016

The Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) Planning Sub-Group determined a set of eleven realistic objectives for Men's Health Week (MHW) 2016. These were ...

- i. **Establish, convene and administer an all-island inter-agency 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, and offer these free to all organisations and groups who wish to promote MHW 2016 via online download and in hard copy.
- 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 2016.
- v. **Produce a 'Challenges and Choices' Man Manual** (in both hard copy and as a Portable Document Format file) which highlights a number of key challenges to men's health, offers three practical choices for dealing with each condition, and directs the reader to qualified sources of help and advice.
- vi. **Increase awareness of MHW 2016** amongst the general public, service providers, decision-makers and men, themselves - especially through the media, and by circulating updates / materials to the MHFI mailing database.
- vii. **Provide a free, easy to access, online information hub** on MHW 2016.
- viii. **Promote the details of MHW activity and events** on the MHFI website and in MHFI publications.
- ix. **Offer a signposting service to 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 2016.
- xi. **Highlight male mental health** as a specific issue during MHW 2016.

## 12. How MHFI met the Objectives for MHW 2016

### 12.1 All-Island Inter-Agency Planning Group

Ever since 2005 - when the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) first marked Men's Health Week (MHW) in Ireland - the Forum recognised that there are a lot of organisations and groups throughout the island who can contribute to the health and wellbeing 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 ideal opportunity for a very wide range of agencies to actively participate.

To further the aims of MHW 2016, MHFI identified and convened an all-island, inter-agency, MHW Planning Group. All members of the MHW 2015 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 2016, the Planning Group drew upon the insight, expertise, support and contacts of 64 diverse organisations. However, some organisations appointed more than one person to input to the group. Therefore, in total, 79 individuals contributed to the planning process at some stage. The partner organisations were ...

Action Cancer	Alcohol Action Ireland
Alone	Amen
ARK (QUB and University of Ulster)	Aware
Belfast Comm Sports Development Network	Belfast Health & Social Care Trust
Belfast Men's Health Group	British Medical Association (NI)
Cancer Focus Northern Ireland	Closing the Gap Project
Colin Neighbourhood Partnership	Cruse Bereavement Care
Dublin City University School of Nursing	Focus: The Identity Trust
Football Association of Ireland	Gaelic Athletic Association
Headstrong	Health Service Executive
Institute of Public Health in Ireland	Institute of Technology Carlow
Irish Cancer Society	Irish Family Planning Association
Irish Football Association	Irish Heart Foundation
Irish Men's Sheds Association	Irish Pharmacy Union
Irish Rugby Football Union	Louth Leader Partnership
Man Alive	Marie Keating Foundation
Mayo North East Leader	Men's Action Network
Men's Advisory Project	Men's Development Network
Men's Health Forum in Ireland	Men's Health West
Mental Health Ireland	National Screening Service
National Youth Council of Ireland	Netwell Centre
Northern Health & Social Care Trust	NI Medical Students' Committee
NUI Galway	Pavee Point Traveller Men's Health
QUB School of Nursing and Midwifery	ReachOut Ireland
Relate NI	SafeFood

Samaritans Ireland  
Shoot Positive  
Southern Area Men's Health Group  
Sport Ireland  
State of Mind Ireland  
Western Health & Social Care Trust  
3fivetwo Training Academy

See Change  
South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust  
Southern Health & Social Care Trust  
Sport NI  
Union of Students in Ireland  
YouthAction NI - Work with Young Men  
3Ts

The all-island MHW Planning Group met three times between January and May 2016:

- Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2016
- Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2016
- Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2016

All of these meetings were face-to-face, and were held in the Armagh Diocesan Pastoral Centre, Dundalk, Co. Louth. Each gathering lasted approximately three hours. This included both business and social networking time. They were convened, coordinated, minuted and administered by Colin Fowler (on behalf of MHFI). Additional business was conducted via email and telephone in the interim periods between meetings.

It was impossible for all members of the Planning Group to attend every meeting - due to their own work commitments, the substantial amount of time required to participate, travel restrictions, changes in job roles etc. 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) on a rolling basis.

One of the issues raised in feedback from the 2015 Planning Group members was that although it is useful for everyone to participate in determining the over-arching theme for MHW, this is very time-intensive and, often, can be a frustrating process. They felt that it would be better to return to the original model, wherein MHFI pitched a broad concept to the Planning Group members and let them refine it. This model was followed during 2016, and there was consensus that it worked well.

Another recommendation from 2015, was that it is not an efficient use of the limited time available to enter into long and drawn out discussions about what the value base for MHW should be each year. During 2015, a comprehensive debate on this matter had taken place, and a number of agreements were made. It was, therefore, decided to simply present these key points to this year's Planning Group for approval. The suggestions covered ...

- Health and wellbeing is about much more than physical health problems and/or treating illness. It is a holistic vision-led concept.
- It is important to focus on the positive aspects of men's lives, and to avoid the usual caricatures of unresponsive men who don't care about their health. Such deficit-based approaches often portray men as a problem to be solved, rather than an asset to themselves and everyone around them.
- Men can - to a degree - take responsibility for and influence some aspects of their health. However, their health and wellbeing is not only about what they do or how they act as individuals. It is also often affected by the environment in which they

live, the jobs that they carry out, the pressures that they face in a world which emphasises gendered roles, the way that services engage with them ... These social determinants are very powerful influencers of men's health and wellbeing.

- We need to be careful not to blame men for their own poor health or to focus solely upon their personal shortcomings. The key messages for MHW must also recognise the responsibilities of everyone who can have an impact on the health of men and boys, and highlight the breadth of organisational, political, structural, environmental, cultural, service provision, individual choice ... factors that can be influential.
- Where possible, we should use positive terms / phrases such as: *'listening to men', 'hearing men's voices', 'responding to need', 'creating opportunities', 'offering support', 'providing encouragement', 'seeking change', 'promoting positive action', 'respecting men's lives', 'self / organisational reflection and introspection', 'planning for the future', 'learning from men's experience', 'overcoming barriers', 'expanding options', 'promoting equality', 'offering choices', 'making the connections', 'working together', 'having new conversations', 'diverse needs', 'challenging the myths', 'partnership and cooperation' ...*
- While it is often easier to get media and public attention for a specific illness or negative issue (e.g. aggressive cancers or suicide or domestic violence) rather than a 'good news' story, MHW should seek to promote men's needs and issues in a positive light - even if this means missing the high profile shock-horror media coverage that is generated by 'Men in Crisis' or 'Men Behaving Badly' headlines.
- In Ireland, we tend to think of a 'real man' as being one single model, and his characteristics are often perceived as: white, heterosexual, able-bodied, physically fit, muscular / large body frame, fairly young, into sport, can handle himself ... Whenever possible, MHW imagery and text needs to challenge this stereotype and to reflect the diversity of men's lives and personal traits.
- Hearing about / exposure to the real life experiences of local men can help to bring MHW to life.

There was full agreement that these values are still valid for MHW 2016, and they were adopted by the Planning Group membership.

As well as advising on the focus, key messages, graphics and communication strategy for MHW 2016, 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 posters, postcards and Man Manuals.
- 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 for and with their own networks and contacts ...

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

## 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 2016 graphics and promotional materials. These were then offered online (for free and in a variety of sizes and formats to suit all media) and, in some cases, in hard copy, to anyone who wished to raise awareness of the week or to be associated with it. All of these materials can be viewed at: [www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-image-pack.html](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-image-pack.html)

Three generic MHW images (logo, 'We Support Men's Health Week' badge and a Facebook Cover Photo), were also included in the portfolio of images on offer ...

### *Generic MHW Logo*



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

### *Generic 'We Support MHW' Logo*



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

#### *MHW Facebook Cover Photo*



This image was in JPG format.

However, a broad range of dedicated images for MHW 2016 were also designed and made available on the MHFI website ...

#### *MHW 2016 Banner*



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

#### *MHW 2016 Badge*



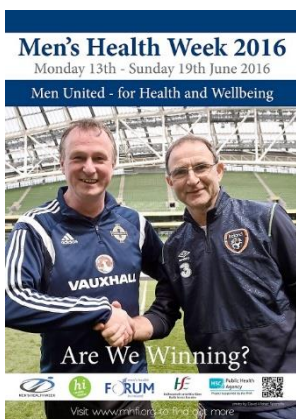
This image was produced in four sizes:

- Large PNG - good for higher quality printing
- Medium PNG - good for general use
- Small PNG - good for websites and emails
- Facebook Profile Picture

The large PNG was a transparent background image - so it could be used on a coloured or textured background without showing a white frame / box around it.



## MHW 2016 Poster and Postcard



Ireland's two National Soccer Team Managers - Michael O'Neill and Martin O'Neill - acted as the 'face' of Men's Health Week 2016 in Ireland when they starred in the nationwide poster (A<sub>3</sub> and A<sub>4</sub> size) and postcard (A<sub>6</sub> size) campaign. They also appeared on the cover of the free, 32 page '*Challenges and Choices*' Man Manual which was given to men across the island of Ireland. MHFI would like to thank the staff in the Irish Football Association and the Football Association of Ireland who arranged this.

There were two types of poster - hard copy and electronic files.

Colin Fowler (in MHFI) coordinated the distribution of posters and postcards to all members of the MHW Planning Group who, in turn, disseminated them to their own networks. He also acted as the central contact point for all requests for promotional materials and arranged for their dispersal.

In total, 12,000 MHW postcards, 6,000 A<sub>3</sub> posters and 1,000 A<sub>4</sub> posters were circulated to organisations throughout the island of Ireland. A<sub>4</sub> posters were created for the first time this year following feedback from Planning Group members. They proved to be very popular among many of the MHW partners.

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

- Portable Document Format (PDF) - to print the poster at either A<sub>3</sub> or A<sub>4</sub> size.
- Poster with Blank Box (PDF) - to print the poster at either A<sub>3</sub> or A<sub>4</sub> size, but with 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 A<sub>4</sub> size, but with a blank box to type the details of local events into.
- Large JPG - original A<sub>3</sub> size image, best for high resolution print jobs and large posters (there was also a version with a blank box for local event details).
- Medium JPG - A<sub>4</sub> 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.
- Thumbnail JPG - 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 were encouraged to 'piggy-back' on the official poster, and to include their local event details without needing their own graphic designer.

The MHW 2016 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 2016 web page at:  
[www.mhfi.org/mhw/previous-years/mhw-2016.html](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw/previous-years/mhw-2016.html)



The promotional materials produced for MHW proved to be very popular, and were downloaded frequently in the period leading up and during MHW 2016. By Monday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2016, the ...

- MHW 2016 poster had been downloaded 9,161 times (a staggering 38% increase on MHW 2015).
- Banner specific to MHW 2016 had been downloaded 2,763 times.
- 'We Support Men's Health Week 2016' badge had been downloaded 1,265 times.
- Facebook Cover Photo had been downloaded 296 times.
- Generic MHW logo had been downloaded 2,635 times.
- Generic 'We Support Men's Health Week' logo had been downloaded 189 times.
- Poster QR Code directed 1,902 visitors to the MHW 2016 web page.

Hi there,

Just a note to let you know that International Men's Health Week 2016 begins on Monday 13th June and lasts until Sunday 19th June.

During this week, EVERYONE is asked to unite and work together to improve the health and wellbeing of men and boys.

However, the big question is: 'Are we winning?' ... If not, then let's do something positive to make a difference.

Have a great week, and remember to look after both your own health and that of others.

Good Luck!



Affix  
Stamp  
Here

Text side of MHW 2016 Postcard

## 12.3 Briefing Paper

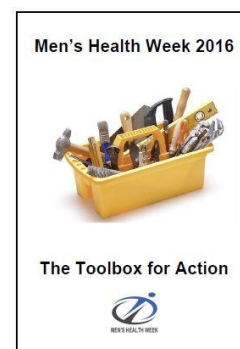
During previous Men's Health Weeks (MHW), the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) learned the value of producing a comprehensive overview document on the origins, focus and structure of the week. Subsequently, when preparing for MHW 2016, MHFI researched, collated and widely disseminated a Briefing 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 [www.mhfi.org/mhw2016toolbox.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw2016toolbox.pdf) for a copy) provided answers to the most common questions that anyone might ask about MHW 2016, and it was called: '*The Toolbox for Action*'.

The 'Toolbox' Q&A included ...

- Why do we need to focus upon men's health issues and needs?
- When is Men's Health Week (MHW)?
- 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 'Men United - for Health and Wellbeing' for 2016?
- 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?
- What is the 'Challenges and Choices' Man Manual?
- Who are the Men's Health Week 'Poster Boys' for 2016?
- Who has planned Men's Health Week 2016 in Ireland?
- What is the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI)?
- How can I find out more about Men's Health Week?



This document helped to provide clarity about MHW, and to ensure that members of the MHW 2016 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 wellbeing of men and boys. Indeed, the theme for 2016 (*'Men United - for Health and Wellbeing'*) lent itself to a wide range of ways to mark this occasion.

In the lead-up to the week, the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) emphasised that groups did not have to stick rigidly to this particular theme. The 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 which offered simple, practical and realistic suggestions on *'what can I do to mark this week?'* (for a copy, visit: [www.mhfi.org/mhw2016celebrateit.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw2016celebrateit.pdf)). The format of this document was radically changed from the one used in earlier years and, in 2016, it became much more image-driven. It was circulated electronically 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.

This document emphasised that ...

- Everyone can do something to support and celebrate Men's Health Week 2016.
- 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.
- With a bit of forward planning, amazing things are possible.
- Doing something is always better than doing nothing.

## 12.5 Challenges and Choices Man Manual

Research 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.

One of the most successful and sought after elements of Men's Health Week (MHW) 2014 and 2015 was the '*Challenges and Choices*' Man Manual which was distributed free-of-charge to males throughout the whole island of Ireland. Almost all of the 10,000 hard copies of this booklet were given out within a few weeks of their release each year.

During MHW 2016, the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) once again produced an Irish edition of this highly successful publication - an updated version of the 2015 booklet.

'*Challenges and Choices*' 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



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 update both the content and signposting to advice and support contained in the 2015 edition. This updating work was undertaken by Finian Murray (from the HSE Dublin / North East) and Colin Fowler (working on behalf of MHFI).

During MHW 2016, 47,000 hard copies of the 'Challenges and Choices' Man Manual ([www.mhfi.org/challenges2016.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/challenges2016.pdf)) were distributed free-of-charge to males throughout the whole island of Ireland. This extremely large print run was possible because the Irish Pharmacy Union committed to making men's health one of their key campaign issues during 2016, and paid for the printing and dissemination of materials to all of their local pharmacies throughout the Republic of Ireland (35,000 copies to 1,720 outlets).

The Man Manual was, by far, the most successful and sought after element of MHW, and all of the hard copies of this booklet were committed / given out within two weeks of their launch. These were distributed to every part of Ireland, and were often used as 'give-aways' at events to celebrate the week. A further 2,267 electronic copies of the booklet were downloaded from the MHFI website before the end of the year.

Thanks to the support of the all-island Planning Group partners, a large number of links were, once again, 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.

## 12.6 Awareness Raising

One of the key objectives for the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) during Men's Health Week (MHW) 2016 was to increase awareness of the issues facing / needs of males, and the support available to them. 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 a substantial sign-up-to-join e-distribution mailing list of over 3,500 recipients. From December 2015 onwards, MHFI regularly (at least monthly) updated these people about MHW 2016. This included sending a 'Season's Greetings' card, regular MHW 2016 features in 'E-Male Matters' (the MHFI e-newsletter - see [www.mhfi.org/newsletters/about-e-male-matters.html](http://www.mhfi.org/newsletters/about-e-male-matters.html)), and arranging single issue MHW mail-outs as appropriate.

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

# E-Male Matters

June 2016

The newsletter of the Men's Health Forum in Ireland

**Quick links to articles in this edition ...**

<p><b>MEN'S HEALTH WEEK</b>  <a href="#">Men's Health Week 2016 has arrived</a>  <a href="#">Do you know what Men's Health Week is?</a>  <a href="#">MHW 2016 posters and postcards sold out</a>  <a href="#">47,000 copies of the Man Manual in circulation</a>  <a href="#">What's happening during Men's Health Week?</a>  <a href="#">Keep up-to-date with MHW developments</a>  <a href="#">Raise the profile of MHW 2016 - Get Tweeting!</a>  <a href="#">YouTube Channel Launched for MHW 2016</a></p> <p><b>TRAINING</b>  <a href="#">MA in Facilitation Skills for Health and Wellbeing</a>  <a href="#">Managing Workplace Behavioural Health Risks</a></p> <p><b>RESEARCH</b>  <a href="#">Foodbook24</a></p>	<p><b>NEWS</b>  <a href="#">#NotALabel - the experience of young men</a>  <a href="#">'Staying Fit for Farming' booklet</a>  <a href="#">Life and Times Survey Teaching Datasets</a></p> <p><b>EVENTS</b>  <a href="#">Cancer Focus NI Men's Health Conference 2016</a>  <a href="#">Technology for Wellbeing Conference</a>  <a href="#">IPH Open Conference - call for proposals</a>  <a href="#">Mental Health and Wellbeing Summit</a>  <a href="#">Supporting Fathers</a></p> <p><b>WEB LINKS</b>  <a href="#">Men's issues on the web</a></p> <p><b>NEXT EDITION</b>  <a href="#">Submit an article for the next issue</a></p>
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### **(b) Social and Electronic Media**

A new MHW 2016 section was established on the MHFI website ([www.mhfi.org/mhw/previous-years/mhw-2016.html](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw/previous-years/mhw-2016.html)), and the three social media outlets administered by MHFI were regularly updated throughout 2016. These were:

- [www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek](http://www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek) - MHW Facebook page
- [www.facebook.com/MensHealthForumIreland](http://www.facebook.com/MensHealthForumIreland) - MHFI Facebook page
- [www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL](http://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. A common hashtag (#MHW2016) was also adopted by the Planning Group members.

During MHW 2016, the dedicated MHW Facebook page experienced a peak of popularity - with Monday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2016 being the most visited day. Throughout this week, the page:

- Had 422 core 'Fans'.
- Was visited by 5,098 different people.
- Got 95% of all its visitors from Ireland (both Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland), with a further 3.5% from English speaking countries, and 1.5% from other countries.
- Benefitted from visitors arriving at the page after being specifically directed to it by other organisations' and individuals' web and social media postings. The majority of these recommendations came from MHW 2016 Planning Group partners.
- Received 89% of all its page views from males.

Between April and June 2016 (inclusive), there were 19,243 views of posts on this page.



Screen-shot of a post on the MHW Facebook page during MHW 2016

The popularity of MHFI's own Facebook Page also peaked during MHW. This page displayed the same information about MHW 2016 as the MHW Facebook page. Monday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2016 was also the most visited day on this platform. Throughout MHW 2016, this page:

- Had 431 core 'Fans'.
- Was visited by 5,328 different people.
- Got 88% of all its visitors from Ireland (both Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland), with a further 8% from English speaking countries, and 4% from (mostly) other European countries.
- Received 71% of all page views from males.

Between April and June 2016 (inclusive), there were 19,967 views of posts on this page.

By MHW 2016, the MHFI Twitter feed had attracted 986 'Followers', and the content of this 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 2016

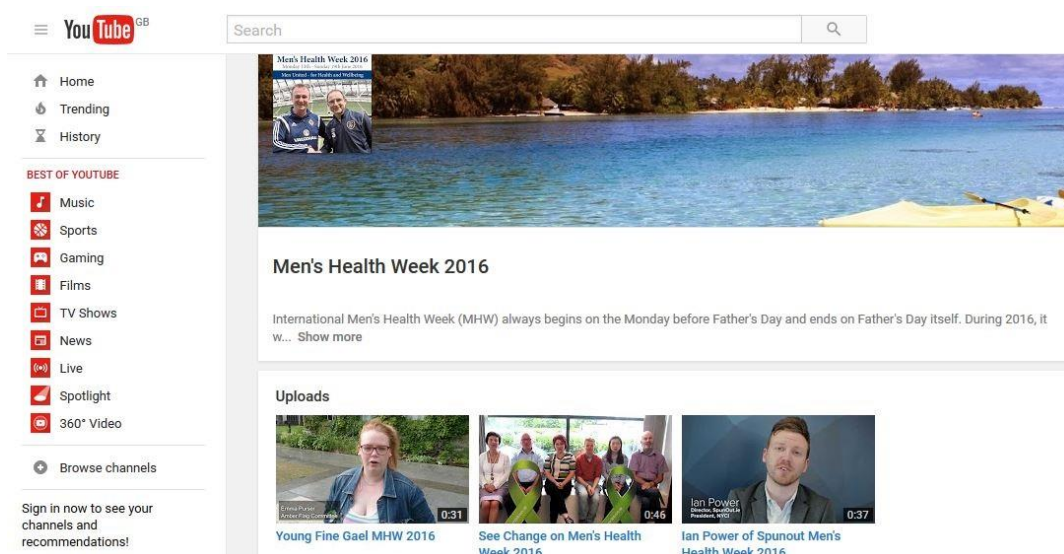
When preparing for MHW 2016, the all-island Planning Group felt that it would be useful to draw attention to a specific health issue on each day during the week, as well as on the days leading up to it. The themes decided upon were ...

- Friday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2016: Men's Health Week is coming!
- Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2016: Top Tips for Men's Mental Fitness
- Monday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2016: Men Overcoming Cancer
- Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2016: Men and Healthy Relationships
- Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2016: Trash the Ash - Men and Smoking
- Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2016: The Benefits of Physical Activity
- Friday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2016: Men and Alcohol
- Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2016: Food, Diet and Heart Health
- Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2016: The Importance of Fathers to Children's Outcomes

However, it was also stressed that anything which highlighted men's health issues and needs during MHW 2016 would be warmly welcomed on any day - so, there was no need to stick rigidly to these themes.

To support those people who would like to promote MHW 2016 using their social media channels, but who didn't have the time, energy or knowledge to develop their own messages, the Planning Group prepared a sample pool of Posts and Tweets ([www.mhfi.org/Tweets2016.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/Tweets2016.pdf)). Therefore, on each day of the week, there was a range of suggested material that anyone could simply cut-and-paste from. Some of these referred to research / events / resources / support / help in Northern Ireland, while others had a Republic of Ireland focus. When this was the case, they were accompanied by either [NI] or [RoI].

Another novel new initiative this year was the creation of a dedicated MHW 2016 YouTube Channel ([www.youtube.com/channel/UCIQEP0jZprHvXTqjSnbeyow](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIQEP0jZprHvXTqjSnbeyow)). MHW supporters were invited to upload short video clips (approximately 30 seconds) which opened with: *'I'm / we're celebrating Men's Health Week 2016 because ...'* and went on to explain why. Unfortunately, as this was a last minute suggestion from Planning Group members (and, subsequently, rushed in its execution) it did not realise its full potential. However, the content did focus almost exclusively upon men and mental health issues and, therefore, contributed to meeting MHFI's Objective 11 for MHW 2016.



Screen-shot of the new MHW 2016 YouTube Channel

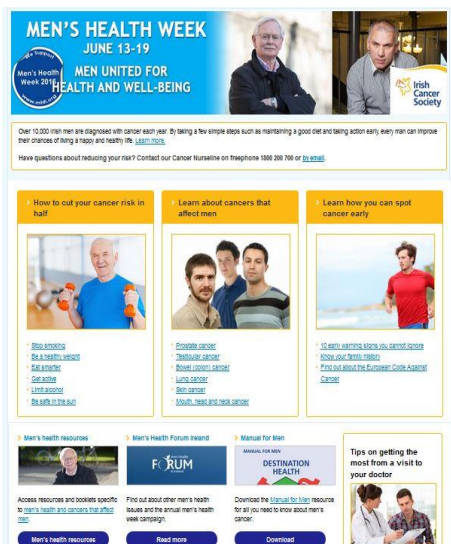


MHFI was also able to utilise the e-communication systems of other Planning Group partners to promote MHW 2016. This ensured that the key messages about MHW were disseminated to a diverse range of people from the statutory, voluntary, community, academic, governmental, medical and policy sectors throughout Ireland, as well as to individual men.

The Forum is especially grateful for the support of the HSE Communications Department, which developed a MHW 2016 Social Media Plan, and disseminated e-information about the week - and the resources available - to the wider HSE family. This proved to be very successful in raising awareness beyond MHFI's own network of contacts.

**(c) Planning Group Partner Contacts and Dissemination Mechanisms**

All members of the MHW 2016 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 mail-outs, 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. For example ...



Irish Cancer Society



Public Health Agency



Action Cancer



Amen

**Pavee Point**  
Traveller and Roma Centre

HOME NEWS ISSUES OUR WORK RESOURCES CONTACT US

**Traveller Men's Health Day**

HOME > NEWS > Traveller men's health day

Over 200 Traveller men made their way to the Phoenix Park on 14th of June for health checks on Traveller Men's Health Day, supported by the Eastern Regional Traveller Health Network and part of Men's Health Week.

Organisations such as the Irish Cancer Society, Pieta House, Headstrong, Jigsaw and the Marie Keating Foundation provided health information and diabetes and cholesterol checks were made available by nurses from North County Dublin before a few rousing games of soccer. Boats also provided information on sun protection before the rain came.

Travellers and Roma came from as far away as Donegal to attend and included people from Fingal, Coolock, Condalkin Travellers Development Group, Tallaght Travellers Development Group, TravAct, Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group, Southside Traveller Action Group and for the first time there was a Roma football team involved. The Pavee Point team carried away the winner's cup for the third year in a row and so remain the team to beat.

## Pavee Point - Men's Health Project

**HSC** Belfast Trust @BelfastTrust · 22h  
#MHW2016 Have u got copy of 'Challenges & Choices' Man Manual for Men's Health Week ? View [mhfi.org/challenges2016...](http://mhfi.org/challenges2016...)

Health Service NI, HSC Board, Public Health Agency and 7 others



## Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

ARK Retweeted

**Men's Health Ireland** @MensHealthIRL · 12h  
#MHW2016 Men's Health Week 2016 begins today. Find out why some organisations in Ireland are getting involved at:

**Men's Health Week 2016**  
International Men's Health Week (MHW) always begins on the Monday before Father's Day and ends on Father's Day itself. During 2016, it will run from Monda...  
[youtube.com](http://youtube.com)

## ARK

**IrishHeartFoundation** @Irishheart\_ie  
It's easy to get your '5-a-day', and almost all fruit and vegetables count. There are no limits - so, the more you eat the better! #mhw2016

**IrishHeartFoundation** @Irishheart\_ie  
Men: why not try a meat-free day each week? Here's why you should eat less (especially processed) meat: [bit.ly/1pJhdOM](http://bit.ly/1pJhdOM) #mhw2016

**IrishHeartFoundation** @Irishheart\_ie  
It is estimated that about 8 out of 10 men in Ireland don't eat enough fruit and vegetables. Are you one of them? #MHW2016

## Irish Heart Foundation

**Western Trust** @WesternHSCTrust · Jun 13  
This week men's health is in the spotlight - drop by one of our health check events #MHW2016 [bit.ly/1UkwYby](http://bit.ly/1UkwYby)

## Western Health & Social Care Trust

**Samaritans** @samaritans · 16h  
Men: in the mix of all the [soccer, tennis, basketball, football icons] make an effort to look after your mates [samaritans.org/news/samaritan...](http://samaritans.org/news/samaritan...) #MHW2016

## Samaritans

**Little Things** @littlthingshub · 10h  
It's Men's Health Week. Visit [yourmentalhealth.ie](http://yourmentalhealth.ie) for tips, advice & support to help you stay mentally fit #MHW2016

**Little Things** @littlthingshub · Jun 13  
Men's Health Week - staying physically fit can also help mental fitness [bit.ly/1UoaISO](http://bit.ly/1UoaISO) #MHW2016 #Euros2016

## Little Things

Pinned Tweet

**See Change** @SeeChangeIRL · 23h  
\*#VIDEO\* we made in support of #MHW2016. @MensHealthIRL @MensHealthForum

**See Change Movie Mental Health Week**  
The See Change Team supporting Mens Health Week 2016 in Ireland.  
[youtube.com](http://youtube.com)

## See Change

One of the MHW partner organisations, ReachOut Ireland, was able to enlist the social media support of Rhys Ruddock - the Irish Rugby star. Throughout the week, Rhys tweeted and re-tweeted men's health messages and, with 13,300 personal followers, his support had a huge impact on national exposure to the week. For example ...



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 2016 in the pre-week hard copy mail-out 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 2016, 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 2016, 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 February and March 2016, 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:

- 9 Republic of Ireland | 5 Northern Ireland daily newspapers
- 4 Republic of Ireland | 4 Northern Ireland Sunday newspapers
- 3 Republic of Ireland | 7 Northern Ireland magazines
- 66 Republic of Ireland | 48 Northern Ireland weekly newspapers
- 67 Republic of Ireland | 20 Northern Ireland TV and radio stations
- 7 Irish language broadcasting bodies
- 35 miscellaneous media outlets / contacts
- 8 health correspondents
- 8 letters to the editor contacts

MHFI sent six mail-outs to contacts on this media database. These were:

- **Monday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2016** ... a date-for-your-diary email.
- **Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2016** ... an advance notice email informing them of the dates for MHW 2016, the theme of the week, and where to find out more information online.
- **Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2016** ... an email giving them a copy of the MHW 2016 *'Toolbox for Action'*. This also included background information on MHW 2016, how to access posters / images, details of events planned, where to find updates on the latest developments, and an offer of support from MHFI to plan their coverage of the week.
- **Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2016** ... two MHW Press Releases, embargoed until the 10<sup>th</sup> of June - one for Republic of Ireland and one for Northern Ireland media outlets (see [www.mhfi.org/mhw/previous-years/mhw-2016.html](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw/previous-years/mhw-2016.html)).
- **Monday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2016** ... a reminder email that MHW 2016 had begun.
- **Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2016** ... letters to the editors of all the major daily newspapers in Ireland.

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

A very high level of radio, newsprint and online coverage for MHW was achieved. This was, undoubtedly, due to the association with the two National Soccer Team Managers (who acted as the public face of MHW 2016), and to the fact that the UEFA Euro 2016 Championship began on the Friday before MHW (10<sup>th</sup> June 2016). As in previous years, the volume of TV coverage was 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 'crisis in manhood' 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, Ask.com, AOL, DogPile and DuckDuckGo search engines.
- Looking for the terms: Men's Health Week in Ireland 2016; Men's Health Week Ireland 2016; Men's Health Week Ireland; Men's Health Week; men's health; MHW; MHW 2016; Men's Health Forum in Ireland; Men's Health Forum Ireland; MHFI; Men United; Are We Winning?; Challenges and Choices; Man Manual; Martin O'Neill; Michael O'Neill; #MHW2016
- Examining and recording the first 10 pages of links generated by each search engine.
- Up until Monday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2016.

The coverage that was recorded included ...

- 61 newspaper articles - including 9 of the main dailies / Sundays.
- 5 journal / magazine features - including the feature article on the cover of 'IPU Review'.
- 3 Letters to the Editor.

- 71 slots (news items or interviews) on the radio - these included national, regional, local, community, and Irish medium stations. Some stations (e.g. Connemara Community Radio, Life FM, NewsTalk and Radio Ulster) requested multiple interviews throughout the week.
- 5 TV slots (news items and interviews, including Irish medium stations).
- 139 'shout-out requests' on a diverse range of radio stations / programmes throughout Ireland.
- 268 features on 'quality' local websites - including those of MHW Planning Group partners. The websites of statutory health bodies in Ireland (e.g. HSE, Public Health Agency, Health and Social Care Trusts and the DHSSPS) carried features on the week.
- Over 1,300 online newspapers / health feeds / search engines / bloggers / pharma companies / health equipment sales sites ... both national and international.



Belfast Telegraph



Croí Heart and Stroke



Donegal Daily



Comm Development & Health Network



IPU Review



Irish Examiner



**O'Donovan's Life Pharmacy**  
Yesterday at 14:51 · 📍  
Like as your Page

Get a Man at home? Need advice on servicing? Haynes Manuals's Man Manual covers all models on the island of Ireland, produced in conjunction with Men's Health Forum in Ireland, it covers vital topics such as emissions, fluid levels, fuels and essential maintenance.  
Get your FREE copy from O'Donovan's Life Pharmacy while stocks last.



**O'Donovan's Pharmacy**

**Purple House Cancer** @PurpleHouseIRL · 3m  
It's #MHW2016 & our garden project for men affected by Cancer allows a space for men to support each other.



**Purple House**

**Teagasc**

**Your Mental Health**

## 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) 2016. To achieve this, the Forum created a new section on its website at: [www.mhfi.org/mhw/previous-years/mhw-2016.html](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw/previous-years/mhw-2016.html)

This webpage acted as the focal point for the week, and offered visitors access to a central repository of 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 Forum's website in the lead up to and during MHW 2016. The AWStats data\* shows that site traffic increased steadily from March to June 2016 ...

- In March 2016, there were: 2,009 unique visitors; 3,415 site visits; 9,470 web pages viewed; 62,785 site hits. 5.23GB bandwidth was used.
- By June 2016, there were: 4,190 unique visitors; 7,102 site visits; 23,821 web pages viewed; 238,327 site hits. 12.13GB of bandwidth was used.

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

During MHW 2016, the vast majority of website visitors came from Ireland and the United Kingdom. The next largest group came from the United States of America, followed (mostly) by European countries. This was similar to the experience of the Facebook pages and Twitter feed both during MHW 2016 and in the lead-up to it.

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

- 'Challenges and Choices' Man Manual.
- MHW posters and image pack.
- 'The Toolbox for Action'.
- 'Men's Health Week 2016 - What can I do to Mark this Week?'
- 'Men's Health Week 2016 - Events and activities taking place on the island of Ireland'.

As hoped for, the MHW 2016 webpage ([www.mhfi.org/mhw/previous-years/mhw-2016.html](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw/previous-years/mhw-2016.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 2016. 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](http://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 over 3,500 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 2016 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 2016 to MHFI. This could, for example, include health checks, conferences, launches, games, seminars, competitions, workshops, courses, talks, displays, health fairs ...

To make the submission process as easy and accessible as possible, three 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](http://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/mhw2016project.doc](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw2016project.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/mhw2016project.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw2016project.pdf) Organisations could print this file, handwrite their details, and post it back to MHFI.

However, those without access to the Internet were invited to phone MHFI to get a hard copy of the form sent to them in the post. This could then be completed in pen and returned to the Forum.

The registration template ensured consistency in the format of the information received. The information submitted was edited by MHFI, and then inserted into a cumulative publication titled: *'Men's Health Week 2016 - 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/mhw2016events.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw2016events.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 continuously added to it in the period leading up to MHW 2016.

## 12.9 Signposting Service

In the lead-up to Men's Health Week (MHW) 2016, 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, 141 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 2016.

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 ...

## 12.11 Male Mental Health

The Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) ensured that male mental health featured prominently in Men's Health Week (MHW) 2016 coverage - especially via online exposure. This included ...

- Linking to online mental health check tools.
- Signposting to 'top tips'.
- Promoting sources of help and support.
- Highlighting relevant mental health and wellbeing research.
- Including a section on stress in the '*Challenges and Choices*' Man Manual.
- Directing readers / viewers of MHW material towards the '*Your Mental Health*' and '*Minding Your Head*' websites.

Many of the video clips on the new MHW YouTube Channel also focused upon mental health.

## 13. Conclusions and Recommendations

International Men's Health Week (MHW) offers an annual opportunity to focus upon the specific health and wellbeing needs of men and boys. The Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) - as a network body - is well placed to play the coordinating role in this week.

The celebration of MHW in Ireland is always conducted on a financial shoe-string. Indeed, 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. All of these elements were present during MHW 2016. However, special thanks are due to:

- Health Service Executive (HSE) - who funded the promotion and celebration of MHW and the publication of the '*Challenges and Choices*' Man Manual in the Republic of Ireland.
- Public Health Agency - who funded the promotion and celebration of MHW and the publication of the '*Challenges and Choices*' Man Manual in Northern Ireland.
- HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention - who supported the mental health strand within MHW 2016.
- Irish Pharmacy Union - who printed / distributed Man Manuals for their members, and encouraged them to mark the week locally.
- Martin O'Neill and Michael O'Neill - who were willing to act as the 'public face' of MHW 2016.
- MHW Planning Group Members - who freely gave their time and expertise (both at meetings and afterwards) to make MHW 2016 a success.

During MHW 2016, the local focus was upon '*Men United - for Health and Wellbeing*'. This theme was inclusive enough to secure the interest and engagement of a diverse range of organisations in MHW activity.

Overall, MHW 2016 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. The active involvement of many local pharmacies undoubtedly increased males' exposure to the week.

- The MHFI Planning Sub-Group worked effectively together and fulfilled all of the tasks set for it, including: setting appropriate objectives; identifying potential members for an all-island Planning Group; helping to determine the theme for 2016; 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. Members of the Sub-Group also took turns at leading the discussion on agenda items during meetings of the all-island Planning Group.
- MHFI set itself clearly defined roles for MHW 2016 (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 hands-on coordinator, convenor, administrator, executive officer, policy worker, webmaster, media liaison person, development officer and contact point for MHW 2016.
- The key messages for MHW 2016 were seen as clear and concise, and 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 2016 were met and, in many cases, exceeded. For example ...

- i. **Convene and administer an all-island Planning Group:** This body included 64 diverse organisations from across the whole of Ireland who met three times between January and May (as well as conducting ongoing business via email) to help to shape MHW 2016. Members also used their own agency's networks / resources to promote MHW, disseminate promotional materials, develop on-the-ground activity, and work 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 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 'brand' for MHW 2016 and were widely utilised. 12,000 MHW postcards and 7,000 posters were distributed. Enlisting the support of the two Irish National Soccer Team Managers as 'poster boys' for the week made MHW appealing to a wide range of males - especially during 'UEFA Euro 2016' this year.
- 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 2016. It offered a shared understanding of the week to all partners, and the key information to help media outlets to provide 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 2016. 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 able to get involved.
- v. **Produce a ‘Challenges and Choices’ mini-manual for men:** In partnership with the Irish Pharmacy Union, 47,000 free hard copies of this booklet were printed and disseminated, and it was also made available for online downloading 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 full stock of hard copies was exhausted a few weeks after their launch, and thousands of electronic copies of the booklet were also downloaded from the MHFI website before the end of the year. Many male-dominated workplaces sought copies of the Manual to distribute to their employees.
- vi. **Increase awareness of MHW 2016:** 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.
  - Adopted the hashtag #MHW2016
  - Created a MHW 2016 YouTube channel (for partners to upload 30 second videos starting with: “*I / we are celebrating Men’s Health Week because...*”).
  - Ensured a high level of traditional and social media coverage for the week.
  - Arranged a launch photo-call with the two Ministers for Health (Michelle O’Neill and Simon Harris) ...

Additional support from the HSE’s Communications Team, both Departments of Health, and Health and Social Care Trusts helped to increase exposure to and awareness of MHW - both inside and outside of statutory health services.

- vii. **Provide a free, easy to access, online information hub:** MHFI created and maintained a new MHW 2016 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. MHFI’s social media outlets fed this flow of information by offering real-time updates.
- 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 three mechanisms for submission of information. These ranged from an online registration form, to emailing a Word attachment, 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, 141 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 2016. 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. **Highlight male mental health:** MHFI ensured that male mental health featured prominently in MHW 2016 coverage - especially via online exposure. This included linking to online mental health check tools, signposting to 'top tips', promoting sources of help and support, and highlighting relevant mental health and wellbeing research. Mental health was one of the specific issues that were highlighted on dedicated days during MHW. A pool of social media messages was also prepared for each thematic day, and these were widely publicised as a communal resource.

Based upon this review of activity and achievements during MHW 2016, the following recommendations are made for future weeks ...

1. MHW continues to be an important annual all-island celebration of men's health. MHFI is well placed to support, promote and coordinate this week, and should continue to do so.
2. Although a lot of MHW activity relies on volunteering and contributions in-kind, funding is also required to ensure that MHW can have the maximum impact. An application to support MHW 2017 should be submitted to the HSE's Health Promotion and Improvement Division (to pay for Republic of Ireland work) and the Public Health Agency (to underwrite work in Northern Ireland). A further grant application should be made to the HSE National Office for Suicide Prevention to seek support to highlight the mental health needs of / issues facing local men.
3. During 2016, MHFI engaged a self-employed worker to coordinate MHW partnerships, on-the-ground activity, communication and publicity. This post had administrative, executive, advice, guidance, reporting and developmental functions. It also provided a focal / reference point for the diverse range of interested parties throughout Ireland. This overseeing and enabling role is crucial to the success of MHW - as no one else has the time or remit to oversee these tasks. Therefore, it needs to continue in the future.
4. MHFI should, once again, appoint a Planning Sub-Group to oversee MHW 2017. Such an active body of committed people adds collective ownership to the development process.
5. The clearly defined roles that MHFI played during MHW 2016 were both realistic and appropriate, and should be adopted next year.
6. There was general consensus among members of the all-island Planning Group that the return to the original model of determining the theme for MHW (wherein MHFI pitches a broad concept to Planning Group members at their first meeting and lets them refine it) worked well. This format should, therefore, be followed in 2017.

7. Although having a very specific theme (e.g. men and cancer) would provide a clearer focus for MHW, it could also exclude many potential partners - who may not see it as relevant to them. Adopting a broader concept (as in recent years) encourages maximum buy-in from a much more diverse range of organisations, who can all find their own 'angle'.
8. The wide-ranging membership of the all-island Planning Group is a major asset to MHW. Subsequently, the number and breadth of participants should be constantly reviewed and expanded.
9. Holding face-to-face meetings of the all-island Planning Group had the benefit of helping participants to feel more connection to and ownership of the process. It also assisted in the creation of working partnerships between members outside of the meetings. However, many interested individuals could not participate in this way because their organisations would not permit them to travel beyond their own catchment area, while other individuals could not afford to give up the extra time required to travel to a venue such as Dundalk. It is proposed that the Diocesan Pastoral Centre should be used for (at least) the first 2017 Planning Group encounter. 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).
10. The range of MHW graphics (e.g. logo, banner, badge) and promotional materials (e.g. poster and postcard) produced each year creates a strong brand and identity for the week. However, determining the concept for these graphics requires a lot of negotiation with Planning Group members, and the design is often changed many times before final sign-off is achieved. The deadline for final agreement should be no later than mid-April - to allow enough time for printing and dissemination.
11. The QR Code on the poster has proved to be very successful, and should be maintained in the foreseeable future.
12. Members of the Planning Group suggested that it might be worth considering producing branded materials (such as pens, pencils, key-rings etc.) to give away at MHW events. MHFI should explore the cost implications of this for MHW 2017.
13. Ensuring that most of the MHW information / materials are available online saves money, reduces wastage, and meets the electronic expectations of many users. This is an important dimension to MHW activity, and should continue.
14. Having a printed message on the back of the MHW 'postcards' proved to be very popular and should be continued. Many organisations said that they sent the postcards to the men they work with, and they were also useful as MHW fliers to leave on counters in shops / libraries / community centres / bars etc.
15. '*The Toolbox for Action*' Briefing Paper 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 2017.
16. While an increasing number of organisations now know about MHW, many still need to be convinced that it is something that they can easily fit into their existing priorities and work plan. The '*What can I do to mark this week?*' paper offers

realistic and practical suggestions to these people and should be updated next year. The inclusion of more graphics and less text might also help to make it more user-friendly.

17. The '*Challenges and Choices*' Man Manual was immensely popular during MHW 2016 and acted as a main focal point of the week. If funding can be accessed, a similar publication should be made available in 2017.
18. Workplaces proved to be a useful access point for getting health information to men. The potential for expanding interventions in this area should be exploited in the future.
19. Media databases need to be updated regularly to ensure their accuracy and relevance. Even in the few months leading-up to MHW, MHFI's contacts for several agencies changed. This, therefore, requires substantial ongoing input.
20. Having Michael O'Neill and Martin O'Neill as the 'face' of MHW proved to be a hook for both the media and many men across Ireland - especially given the unique circumstance wherein both teams in Ireland qualified for the last stages of 'UEFA Euro 2016'. While it might be worth seeking a similar high profile 'poster boy(s)' for MHW 2017, there is a danger that this year's successful association cannot be trumped for a while.
21. In this age of social media, having a distinct hashtag for MHW 2016 (i.e. #MHW2016) was crucial. This needs to be continued in later years.
22. The involvement of, and support offered by, the HSE Communications Department during MHW 2016 ensured that the wider HSE family was exposed to both the key messages and the resources on offer. Similar assistance should be sought again during 2017. Links with the Departments of Health, Public Health Agency and Health Trusts in Northern Ireland should also be cultivated - as they, too, proved to be extremely useful.
23. The photo-calls with Ministers for Health Michelle O'Neill and Simon Harris to launch MHW helped to raise the profile of the week in the media and to officially endorse the main messages. During 2017, it would be useful to engage the Health Ministers in both political jurisdictions on the island of Ireland in a similar way.
24. As in previous years, it was extremely difficult (and very time consuming) to get organisations to submit the details of their MHW 2016 events and activities for publication. However, although only a relatively small number of initiatives were documented, this in no way reflected the extent or diversity of activity on the island of Ireland. This issue needs to be raised in the initial all-island Planning Group meetings for 2017. However, it may be a situation which simply cannot be remedied.
25. The ongoing 'signposting' and 'hand-holding' roles performed by MHFI are often unseen and unrecognised. However, they are crucially important to those who are unsure of how to get men's health initiatives started. Thus, these aspects of MHW need to be maintained.

26. Mental health is often intimately linked to physical health, and poor mental health can restrict health-seeking behaviours. Therefore, it is important for MHFI to maintain a specific focus upon this area during MHW next year.
27. The central role played by pharmacies throughout the Republic of Ireland during MHW 2016 (encouraged and supported by the Irish Pharmacy Union) was extremely important, and enhanced the visibility of MHW in local communities. These relationships should be strengthened during 2017 and, if possible, a means found to link to pharmacies in Northern Ireland as well.

