

## The island of Ireland celebrates twenty years of standing shoulder-to-shoulder to improve the health of men and boys

American investor and philanthropist Warren Buffett famously once said: *“it takes twenty years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you’ll do things differently.”* For the past twenty years, a diverse range of organisations from across the island of Ireland have been voluntarily coming together to 'do things differently' in the field of men's health. Their work has seen the celebration of Men's Health Week on the island grow from a small number of people handing out a few posters in 2005, to almost 100 groups working together to plan and shape this week on an all-island basis today - running hundreds of events, engaging tens of thousands of men, and distributing over one hundred thousand resources.

[International Men's Health Week](#) (MHW) always begins on the Monday before Father's Day and ends on Father's Day itself. During 2025, it will run from Monday 9th until Sunday 15th June. It is celebrated in many European countries, as well as in the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and a number of other places worldwide.

Back in 2005, we were unaware of the full extent of men's poor health status and the specific health issues that they are contending with. However, this is no longer the case. In recent years, a broad [range of research](#) has highlighted the health challenges which face men on the island of Ireland and further afield.

This research shows that men on the island of Ireland experience a disproportionate burden of ill-health ...

- Men continue to die, on average, younger than women do.
- Some groups of men have much worse health than other men.
- Poor lifestyles (including smoking, drinking, diet and lack of exercise) are responsible for a high proportion of chronic diseases.
- Males have higher death rates than women for almost all of the leading causes of death, and at all ages.
- Men's mental health needs are often not recognised or met.
- Late presentation to health services can lead to a large number of problems becoming untreatable ...

Michael Lynch, Convenor of Men's Health West, comments:

*“Although the health of men in Ireland is sometimes poor, it is not a ‘lost cause’ - and it can be improved in many significant ways. Men’s Health Week offers an ideal opportunity to raise awareness of preventable health problems, support men and boys to live healthier lives, and encourage them to seek help or treatment at an early stage.”*

The theme for Men's Health Week this year is '[Shoulder to Shoulder - Connecting for Health](#)'. It focuses upon the importance of connectivity and helping each other - reminding everyone about the importance of not going it alone, that there are supports available, that men's health is a team effort and that it is important to take small, simple and realistic actions within a supportive environment.

Lorcan Brennan, Training and Resource Development Manager in the Men's Development Network, adds:

*“When males play sport together, or work on a communal task, we know what is meant by men standing ‘shoulder-to-shoulder’. They are unified, strong, resolute, focused, supportive and connected. They give 100% and do the best job that they can.*

*During Men's Health Week, everyone is being asked to put these positive traits into action, to connect for health, and to work together to support the health of men and boys on the island of Ireland.*

*We are calling upon policy makers to ensure that men have the resources to live long and healthy lives; service providers to offer appropriate tools, advice and support to males; men to take small practical steps to improve their own health; everyone to look out for and after each other.”*

To support men, an updated '[Action Man](#)' Manual has been produced - in both hard copy and as an online download. During Men's Health Week 2025, males are encouraged to get a copy of this free booklet, which has been specifically written for men in all parts of Ireland.

The 'Action Man: ten top tips for men's health' manual doesn't preach or lecture, it simply explains:



- WHY an action is needed.
- WHAT can be done about it.
- HOW to find support if you need it.

Finian Murray, Senior Health Promotion and Improvement Officer in the HSE, and one of the authors of the Man Manual, explains:

*“The ten top tips put men into the driving seat, and give them the tools and DIY instructions to make positive changes - if they choose to be their own ‘Action Man’. It starts with a clear warning: reading this booklet could seriously improve your health, and encourages men to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with those around them and to connect for health.”*

Colin Fowler, Director of Operations for the Men’s Health Forum in Ireland, concludes:

*“For twenty years, organisations and individuals from across the island of Ireland have been working collectively and voluntarily to ensure that Men’s Health Week is now one of the biggest events in the local health calendar. During these twenty years, a solid reputation has been built - much of this because the collaborators have dared to ‘do things differently’. Warren Buffett would certainly be pleased.”*

**ENDS**

*[followed by Editor’s Notes]*

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## **EDITOR’S NOTES**

1. For more information or an interview, contact one of the members of the all-island Men’s Health Week Planning Group ...

- Colin Fowler (Belfast), Director of Operations, Men’s Health Forum in Ireland | Mobile: 0044 751 9945261 | Email: colin@mhfi.org
- Finian Murray (Navan), Senior Health Promotion and Improvement Officer for Men’s Health, HSE | Mobile: 00353 87 2038790 | Email: finianmurray@gmail.com
- Lorcan Brennan (Waterford), Training and Resource Development Manager, Men’s Development Network | Mobile: 00353 86 3619884 | Email: lorcan@mensnetwork.ie
- Laurence Gaughan (Galway / Mayo / Roscommon), HSE Project Manager, Health and Wellbeing | Tel: 094 9042509 | Email: laurence.gaughan@hse.ie
- Michael Lynch (Derry / Londonderry), Convenor of Men’s Health West | Mobile: 0044 790 3619511 | Email: admin@c4s.org.uk

2. The 'Men's Health in Numbers' publications provide an up-to-date and comprehensive overview of key statistics on men's health on the island of Ireland. They are available for free downloading from the Men's Health Forum in Ireland website at ...
  - Trends on the Island of Ireland - [www.mhfi.org/MensHealthInNumbers1.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/MensHealthInNumbers1.pdf)
  - Republic of Ireland Men's Health Report Card - [www.mhfi.org/MensHealthInNumbers2.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/MensHealthInNumbers2.pdf)
  - Northern Ireland Men's Health Report Card - [www.mhfi.org/MensHealthInNumbers3.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/MensHealthInNumbers3.pdf)
3. The 'Do You Know Your Numbers?' z-card for men is available online at: <https://mhfi.org/MensHealthInNumbers.pdf>
4. International Men's Health Week always begins on the Monday before Father's Day and ends on Father's Day itself. During 2025, it will run from Monday 9<sup>th</sup> until Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> June.
5. 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 / activities.
  - Encourage the early detection and treatment of health difficulties in males.
6. During 2025, the key message for the island of Ireland is: stand shoulder-to-shoulder, connecting for health.
7. Men's Health Week is celebrated across Europe, the USA, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and other countries worldwide.
8. On the island of Ireland, Men's Health Week is coordinated by the Men's Health Forum in Ireland, with support from almost 100 partner organisations.
9. The Men's Health Forum in Ireland ([www.mhfi.org](http://www.mhfi.org)) is a charity which works on an all-island basis to improve the health of men and boys. It is a voluntary network of individuals and organisations, men and women, which seeks to identify the key concerns relating to male health and to increase understanding of these issues.
10. Financial support for the week was received from Health Service Executive Health and Wellbeing and the Public Health Agency.
11. Key information on Men's Health Week on the island of Ireland is available online ...
  - Full overview of Men's Health Week 2025: [www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2025.html](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2025.html)
  - Men's Health Week posters and images: [www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-image-pack.html](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-image-pack.html)
  - Briefing paper which answers the most common questions about the week: [www.mhfi.org/mhw2025toolbox.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw2025toolbox.pdf)
  - Latest events and developments: [www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek](https://www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek) and [www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL](https://www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL)
12. Each day of Men's Health Week 2025 will focus upon a specific issue ...

- Monday 9<sup>th</sup> June: Trash the ash (and save the cash)
- Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> June: Prevention is better than cure
- Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> June: Food for thought
- Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> June: Rethink what you drink
- Friday 13<sup>th</sup> June: Be mind fit
- Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June: Let's get physical - be more than a sports spectator
- Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> June: Father's Day - the important role that fathers play in their children's lives

13. 35,000 hard copies of the 'Action Man - ten top tips for men's health' Man Manual have been given out to men across the island of Ireland in the last three weeks. A PDF copy of the Man Manual can be accessed online at: <https://mhfi.org/ActionMan.pdf>

14. The social media hashtags for the week are: #MensHealthWeek | #ShoulderToShoulder | #ConnectingForHealth

15. A large scale webinar, at Noon on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2025, will help to kick-off Men's Health Week (see: [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_XkmyffvTS4e5TfeNjQcGew](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_XkmyffvTS4e5TfeNjQcGew)) It will feature ...

- **Bernard Jackman** - Former Irish International and Leinster Rugby Player, Coach and Sports Commentator
- **Michael Darragh Macauley** - Former Dublin GAA Senior Football player, GAA/GPA Footballer of the Year and CEO of Sanctuary Runners
- **Sean Blake** - man living with anorexia who starred in the RTE documentary 'Anorexia, My Family and Me'
- **Joe Grogan** - bowel cancer sufferer and BowelScreen champion

16. Get a taste of some of the events taking place during Men's Health Week 2025 at: <https://mhfi.org/Events2025.pdf>

