
Minutes: Second Meeting of the Men's Health Week 2012 Planning Group

Date: Thursday 19th April 2012
Time: 10.30am - 12.30pm (followed by lunch)
Venue: Video-link between the offices of the Institute of Public Health in Dublin and Belfast

Present:

Dublin ...

Lorcan Brennan - Men's Development Network (MDN)
Marita Hennessy - Researcher, National Cancer Registry Ireland
Finian Murray - HSE Dublin / North East
Nigel O'Callaghan - Inspire Ireland Foundation
Kevin O'Hagan - National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI)
Ann Scanlon - Irish Heart Foundation (IHF)
Joanne Vance - Irish Cancer Society (ICS)

Belfast ...

Luke Boyle - British Medical Association NI Medical Students' Committee
Colin Fowler - Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI)
Michael Lynch - Men's Action Network (MAN)
Geraldine McDonnell - Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT)
Peter Shaw - Belfast Community Sports Development Network (BCSDN)

Apologies:

John Cantwell - Fír Le Cheile (Men Together)
Andrew Castles - Safefood
Angela Corr - Southern Health and Social Care Trust (SHSCT)
Paula Devine - ARK (Access Research Knowledge)
John Evoy - Men's Sheds Network
Geraldine Gleeson - Marie Keating Foundation
Sandra Gordon - Man Alive
Kate Markey - Amen
Sonia Montgomery - Western Health and Social Care Trust (WHSCT)
Darach Murphy - Men Alone In No-mans-land (MAIN)
Keith McAdam - Sure Start Fathers' Network
Michael McKenna - Youth Action Northern Ireland
Ruairi McKiernan - Community.ie
John News - Sport NI
Paul O'Kane - Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT)
Jessica Perry - Northern Ireland Chest, Heart and Stroke (NICHS)
Lisa Rickett - Irish Football Association (IFA)
Gary Smyth - Man Matters
Ted Tierney - Mental Health Ireland
Ray Tonge - Men As Learners and Elders (MALES Ireland)

Minute Taker: Colin Fowler

AGENDA ITEMS ...

1. Welcome

Lorcan welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for making the effort to be here. He then led a quick round of name introductions.

Apologies were tendered from a broad range of organisations and these were announced. Retrospectively, the date for today's meeting was not ideal - as many people were just returning from their Easter break, and had either forgotten about the date or had to play 'catch-up' at work. Although the date did not suit a large number of people, they have all asked to be kept updated, and wish to be involved in the process of looking at what can be done to mark and celebrate Men's Health Week (MHW) this year.

Following on from the first Men's Health Week (MHW) Planning Group meeting, a number of additional organisations asked to be involved, and they were invited to attend this and future gatherings. The Planning Group is an open forum which welcomes the input of anyone who is willing to contribute to it and to work collaboratively with others.

2. Introductions

Finian invited everyone to introduce themselves - by way of helping to get to know each other and to understand the work that each person is involved in. Individuals were asked to give:

- Their name.
- The organisation that they work for and what it does.
- An overview of their interest in Men's Health Week.

This session once again highlighted the vast range of experience / areas of interest present at the meeting.

3. Matters Arising

It was felt that there were no matters arising from the last minutes which would not be addressed in the proposed agenda.

4. MHW Poster

Colin thanked everyone who provided feedback on the ideas generated at the last meeting in relation to the MHW 2012 poster. Marita was given a special mention for the highly detailed response that she had made.

Feedback was received from 18 members of the Planning Group. The total number of respondents was 83 individual men (from a broad range of ages, backgrounds and locations) and 32 workers.

Overall, this feedback reflected the tone of the earlier conversation in the Planning Group meeting ...

- Men are not 'one group' who all like / dislike the same things.
- It would be impossible to find only one core thing which will attract / engage all men.
- We need to identify 'best fits' and to be pragmatic.
- We should move away from focusing upon men's problems, shortcomings, and negative stereotypes.
- The poster needs to avoid being a string of medical conditions, and to portray men's health in the broadest sense.
- Any message should be simple, with strong images and few words.
- Don't preach to men. Instead, try to put ideas into their head.
- Be positive, but not unrealistic or 'airy-fairy'.
- The majority of respondents felt that an overall theme of 'First Instinct' would be the most relevant and inclusive option, and one which could engage a diverse range of men / organisations.
- Of all the options for straplines, 'Fight, Flight or Find Out' was seen as the easiest to relate to and understand. However, many people felt that the imagery that had been suggested at the last meeting had 'too much going on' or was too complicated / intellectual. It was felt that we should 'just say what we mean'.

Colin reminded the meeting that the purpose of the MHW poster is quite simple: it is a tool that can be used by a diverse range of organisations, to promote the fact that there is a 'Men's Health Week', and that this year it will take place from Monday 11th - Sunday 17th June 2012. It also seeks to direct the viewer to further sources of information. Thus, it has an awareness raising role rather than being the pivotal aspect of a sophisticated campaign to create a specific impact upon behaviour.

The Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) has secured a very small pot of money from Man Matters in Northern Ireland and the Health Service Executive in the Republic of Ireland to design and print the posters. It was pointed out that this very limited resource does not allow for sophisticated field-testing of ideas. Instead, we have to rely upon the insights of Planning Group members and their constituents. A further limitation is that we are now very close to the launch date for the posters (approximately Monday 14th May 2012 - i.e. one month before MHW), and they have to be finalised, signed-off, sent to the printer, and returned in hard copy before then.

Colin informed the meeting that he has written to the President of Ireland (Michael D. Higgins) to request his help to launch the posters.

After the first Planning Group meeting, Peter Robinson from Noostyle Web Design Belfast had been engaged to narrow down the concept and to draft a poster for discussion at today's meeting. This draft was shown to everyone in hard copy, and comments / suggestions for improvements were sought. These included ...

- The imagery / message is clear, factual, simple, uncomplicated and eye-catching. This makes it a strong and useful poster.
- Having little by way of text / information makes the poster much more striking, and makes sure that the message is not lost.
- Lorcan was concerned that the blackboard in the background might be seen as 'old world' and, perhaps, bring back bad memories of school days for some men. While this was acknowledged by others, it was felt that it would not be a huge barrier for most males.
- It was suggested that the black background might be seen as depressing. However, this will be off-set by the coloured arrows / logos / image of a man.

- The 'traffic light' colour scheme for the arrows was seen as sophisticated. They also reflect the key message that we would like to promote i.e. 'find out' gets the green light from us.
- To help to emphasise the importance of the find out message, it was suggested that we put this text into the same green colour as the arrow - so, making it more prominent / stand out on the page - and that the man in the photo should look directly towards this option.
- It was felt that the logo should, perhaps, be larger and put into green as well.
- Some people thought that the slanted writing under the logo was hard to read and that it would be better if it was straightened-up.
- The 'First Instinct' theme for MHW arose from the idea that human beings start out life with a genetic pre-disposition for self-preservation and survival which drives them to eat, keep fit, be active, ensure personal safety, look after themselves, work collectively, tend to injuries etc. However, over time - especially in Western societies - it is easy to become complacent, lazy, individualistic, neglectful, indulgent, isolated, lonely ... and, consequently, for health (physical, mental, emotional and spiritual) to suffer. By adopting this theme for MHW 2012, we are encouraging and developing a 'First Instinct' in males which is to actively seek help, advice, support, and to act quickly in times of difficulty / crisis / ill health rather than ignoring symptoms, turning to alcohol, 'soldiering on', taking their own life ... To make it clear in the poster what we are referring to when we say 'First Instinct', it was suggested that the words 'Men's Health ...' should be inserted at the top of the page before 'What's Your First Instinct?'
- It was discussed if it would be beneficial to use a 'famous face' in the poster or stick with someone who is not a celebrity. It was finally agreed that an 'ordinary man' would be preferred as: it would be hard to find a celebrity that all men would recognise / identify with; we don't have a budget or the time to engage a 'headliner'; men might think that the celebrity is too far removed from their life (e.g. fit, famous, rich, pampered ...); we now live in an over-the-top 'celebrity culture' and it is more refreshing to see 'real people' ...
- Michael Lynch from Men's Action Network has volunteered to be the 'ordinary man' who will feature in the printed version of the poster. It was also suggested that it would be beneficial (if money / time is available) to have a number of different A₄ size electronic versions of the poster which feature a range of other men (e.g. young, old, ethnic minority, disabled, Traveller ...). These could be made available on the Internet, and might help specific interest groups to relate more closely to the week. While it would be useful to have a case study or story behind each of these people, it is unlikely that this will be possible within the short timescale available.
- It was felt that the online electronic versions of the posters should have a blank box on them for groups to download and type / write details of their events onto them - so, customising the poster to their local needs.

To inform the design / distillation process before today's meeting, the poster designer conducted an informal (but unscientific) feedback session on impressions of his draft poster with a large number of men of various ages (42 in total) who train in his gym. Overall, the responses were very positive, and the suggestions made were incorporated into the draft image presented to the meeting today.

Three thousand hard copies of the poster will be printed, and an A₄ size Portable Document Format (PDF) version will be made available online. As in previous years, there is no dedicated budget for a strategic dissemination process. Subsequently, it is necessary to rely upon the goodwill and voluntary input of a broad range of organisations.

There will be three main mechanisms for distribution ...

- Members of the MHW 2012 Planning Group are asked to circulate as many of the posters as possible within their own organisation and to other bodies that they work in partnership / have contact with.
- MHFI will target specific groups (e.g. HSE, DHSSPS, PSNI, Trade Unions etc.) and ask them to internally distribute posters to their work sites.
- Finian (Republic of Ireland) and Colin (Northern Ireland) will act as contact points for organisations and individuals who would like to receive posters.

Members of the Planning Group were asked to suggest other dissemination mechanisms. Suggestions included ...

- The BMA(NI) is holding a large scale event for doctors in Northern Ireland on 17th May 2012. Luke offered to bring posters to this gathering and give them out.
- Geraldine suggested targeting the Health Improvement Teams in each Health and Social Care Trust in Northern Ireland. It was felt that the Health Promotion Teams in the Republic of Ireland would also be worth contacting.
- The Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP) produces a monthly newsletter for members. It might be worth submitting an article on MHW 2012 / MHW posters to this.
- We should make contact with the 'Healthy Cities' network, and ask for their support.

All Planning Group members were asked to send the contact details of any potential distribution points to Colin as soon as possible.

5. Image Pack

As in MHW 2011, the poster designer will also be asked to produce an 'image pack' for the week. This will include a generic MHW Logo (as in the poster), a logo with the dates / theme on it, banners for inclusion on supporters' websites ... These images will be made available in a range of formats (e.g. JPG, GIF, TIF, whiteout etc.) so that they can be used for both hard copy printing and Internet promotion. All of them will be made available on the MHFI website for free downloading.

6. Publicising Events

One of the most successful aspects of previous MHWs has been the existence of a list of what's happening to celebrate the week across the island. MHFI hosts this on its website, and moderates the inclusion of material - to ensure consistency of format and, more importantly, that spam from online porn and bogus drugs companies is excluded. Website traffic reports indicate that many visitors have used this resource to identify events and activities taking place in their local area. Thus, this is an important source of MHW information.

This year, there are three ways that groups can submit details of their event or activity to mark MHW ...

- Download an online template from the MHFI website and complete / return it electronically.
- Submit the details of the event using the new online form which is linked to from every page of the MHFI website.
- Post hard copy details of the event to MHFI.

However, while this publicising of events has been very successful, it is dependent upon details being submitted prior to the activity taking place. In previous years, it has been very apparent that only a small fraction of the events which take place are recorded. Therefore, it is important for everyone to promote this publicity mechanism, and to encourage their colleagues and associates to use it to let others know about their plans.

The MHFI website (www.mhfi.org) will have a dedicated MHW 2012 page which gives details of the theme of MHW 2012; background to the week; some key facts; a list of Planning Group members (with links to their websites); ideas for ways to celebrate MHW; copies of the Press Releases; links to the online posters / image pack; a list of events taking place ...

7. Media Coverage

It was agreed that the following media strategy for MHW 2012 would be appropriate ...

- MHFI will contact every media outlet in Ireland approximately one month before the start of MHW 2012 to launch the MHW posters and ask them to put the week onto their radar / into their diaries.
- Approximately two weeks before MHW 2012, MHFI will: provide a detailed background briefing paper on what MHW is / what it hopes to achieve; highlight the countdown to MHW 2012; ask them to prepare to cover the week.
- On the Friday before MHW 2012, MHFI will send a final communication to every media outlet which focuses upon a specific issue - as well as reminding them that the week is about to begin on the following Monday.
- MHFI will not issue any Press Releases during the MHW itself.
- Planning Group partners will issue their own Press Releases during the week, but are asked to let everyone else know in advance when they are doing it - to avoid competition for the same coverage.

8. Current Plans for Men's Health Week

Michael invited everyone to share any plans that their own organisation might have to mark Men's Health Week 2012. These included ...

- Inspire Ireland - Is, currently, collaborating with MHFI to produce a new online 'mental fitness' programme for young men called 'WorkOut'. This is based upon an application developed by the Inspire Foundation in Australia. It is hoped that this will be publicly launched around the time of MHW, and additional interest will be generated via social networking media.
- National Youth Council of Ireland - Is an umbrella body for youth organisations in the Republic of Ireland, and maintains an extensive network of members. The Council hopes to promote the week with youth workers and the young people they engage with, as well as encourage them to organise on-the-ground activities.
- Marita - Comes from a research background, and will support the week by helping to access key research and statistics relevant to men's health, as well as circulating information to her range of contacts.

- HSE - Finian will distribute posters, write articles for health-related publications, support local men's initiatives in the Dublin / North east area, and take part in media interviews.
- MDN - Hope to: have an exhibition on men's lives in Gorey Library; produce a radio programme for South East Radio; promote the week with Family Resource Centres and Community Development Projects throughout Ireland; use the theme of MHW 2012 for the annual MDN Men's Summer School which will be held in the Midlands later in the year.
- IHF - Will be encouraging men's heart health checks / waist management initiatives, circulating their range of men's health information, including information on the week in their newsletter (to over 1,000 contacts), and issuing a press release.
- ICS - Will be issuing a press release about their physical activity programme with prostate cancer survivors, circulating MHW posters to some of the main pharmacy chains in the Republic of Ireland, and offering their CHEP volunteers to do talks / information stands in the Dublin, Cork, Galway and Donegal areas.
- Medical Students' Committee NI - Will be promoting the week with trainee doctors in Northern Ireland, trying to encourage members to think about running an event(s), supporting other organisations to offer 'Street Doctor' health checks, and making a pitch about MHW 2012 at the GPs event on 17th May 2012. Luke will also see if the Irish Medical Organisation has an equivalent student body in the Republic of Ireland.
- MHFI - Will organise the design / printing of posters and logos; collate and promote details of activities throughout Ireland (and develop an online submission form for these); research a briefing paper on MHW; offer a signposting role; prepare a document on 'what can I do to mark this week'; provide an online information hub (website, Facebook and Twitter); inform the media; work with Inspire Ireland to launch the 'WorkOut' programme.
- MAN - Hopes to offer a range of events, health checks and complementary therapy sessions in the North West during the week. They will work in partnership with the WHSCT and Medical Students' Committee to deliver this. They will conduct media interviews, and will also focus upon the issue of men's anger management.
- BSCDN - Employs 18 community sports coaches (focusing on a broad range of activities) and works with over 300 organisations. MHW links naturally with the 'Olympic Legacy' concept, and they hope to circulate hard copy / electronic information about the week to the groups that they work with. They will also work with the Medical Students' Committee to organise health checks at specific events for males, and collaborate with Belfast City Council on an initiative to improve the health of taxi drivers.
- NHSCT - Is meeting during the first week in May to finalise plans for MHW. They hope to organise 1-2 events on each day of MHW, and to hold these throughout the Trust area. Some of this activity will target the 'Olympic Torch Venues'. There will be a particular focus upon rural isolated men, and the issues of mental health, suicide and alcohol / drug use. Some of NHSCT's Small Grant Funding will be diverted to support initiatives during MHW, and the Corporate Relations Department within the Trust will promote the week.

9. Any Other Business

It is important to have access to research and statistics which show that men's health issues are real and need to be addressed. A range of materials can be found online at:

www.mhfi.org/research-statistics-policy-and-reports.html Recent key documents include:

- Men's Health in Northern Ireland: Tackling the Root Causes of Men's [III] Health, 2011 - www.mhfi.org/manmattersbriefing1.pdf
- National Men's Health Policy 2008 - 2013 - www.dohc.ie/publications/national_mens_health_policy.html
- The State of Men's Health in Europe, 2011 - www.mhfi.org/menshealtheurope.pdf
- Facing the Challenge; The Impact of Unemployment and Recession Upon Men's Health, 2011 - www.mhfi.org/IPHreport2011.pdf
- Improving Men's Health in Northern Ireland, 2011 - www.bma.org.uk/ni/healthcare_policy/menshealthnorthernireland.jsp
- Women and Men in Ireland, 2011 - www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/otherreleases/2011/Women%20and%20Men%20in%20Ireland%202011.pdf
- Health in Ireland: Key Health Trends, 2011 - www.dohc.ie/publications/pdf/key_trends_2011.pdf?direct=1

Thanks to Marita for identifying some of these sources. Other AOB included ...

- The Irish Cancer Society can their offer Community Health Education Programme (CHEP) volunteers to support MHW events in Dublin, Cork, Galway and Donegal.
- MHFI will be preparing two documents to support MHW: (1) A briefing paper for the media and others which gives a list of FAQs. (2) A simple 'What You Can Do' paper. Both of these publications will be circulated to the Planning Group and made available on the MHFI website.
- As MHW falls at the same time as the European Championship, we should write to Johnny Giles / Eamon Dunphy and Joel Taggart to make them aware of this connection.

10. Action Points

- ✓ MHFI will ensure that the suggested amendments to the poster are included, and that the other MHW promotional graphics are produced and made available online.
- ✓ Members of the Planning Group will undertake to disseminate the MHW posters to their colleagues and contacts. They will also send suggestions for other recipients to Colin.
- ✓ Finian (RoI) and Colin (NI) will coordinate the distribution of MHW posters.
- ✓ Luke will bring MHW posters to the BMA NI event on 17th May and give them out. He will also check if the Irish Medical Organisation has an equivalent student body to his own.
- ✓ Everyone is asked to promote the mechanism for publicising MHW events, and to encourage their colleagues and associates to use it to let others know about their plans.
- ✓ Colin will set-up a dedicated MHW 2012 page on the MHFI website.
- ✓ MHFI will coordinate the agreed media strategy for MHW 2012 outlined in Section 7.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be conducted via video-conference between the Dublin and Belfast offices of the Institute of Public Health in Ireland. This will take place on Wednesday 30th May 2012, from 10.30am - 12.30pm, and will be followed by lunch.