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## **Minutes:**

# **First Meeting of the Men's Health Week 2014 Planning Group**

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**Date:** Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2014  
**Time:** 10.30am - 1.30pm (including lunch)  
**Venue:** Armagh Diocesan Pastoral Centre, Dundalk, Co. Louth

### **Present:**

Scott Ahearn - See Change  
Lorcan Brennan - Men's Development Network (MDN)  
John Cantwell - Fír Le Cheile (Men Together)  
Niall Culkin - Irish Men's Sheds Association  
Frances Dowds - Action Cancer  
Colin Fowler - Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI)  
Sandra Gordon - Man Alive, Cancer Focus NI  
Siobhán Harding - Workers' Educational Association (WEA)  
Linda Keating - Marie Keating Foundation  
Sean McKieran - Mental Health Ireland  
Larry Moley - Menaware  
Darach Murphy - Men Alone in No-mans-land (MAIN)  
Finian Murray - Health Service Executive Dublin / North East  
John News - Sport NI  
Nigel O'Callaghan - ReachOut.com  
Paul O'Kane - Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT)  
Eamonn O'Reilly - Marian House Nursing Home  
Gary Smyth - Man Matters

### **Apologies:**

Siobhan Brennan and Ailish O'Neill - National Youth Council of Ireland  
Shane Califf - Irish Sports Council  
James Copeland - The Rainbow Project  
Alan Corbett - Cork University Hospital  
Angela Corr - Southern Health and Social Care Trust (SHSCT)  
Paula Devine - ARK  
Niamh Farrell - Amen  
Leo Foy - Southern Area Men's Health Network  
Emmet Haughian - GAA  
Marita Hennessy - Waterford Institute of Technology  
Pheena Kenny - Irish Heart Foundation (IHF)  
Michael Lynch - Men's Action Network (MAN)  
Keith McAdam and Keith Cullen - Sure Start Fathers' Network  
Stephen McAleer - Northern Ireland Medical Students' Committee  
Denise McCarthy - Union of Students in Ireland  
Geraldine McDonnell - Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT)  
Michael McKenna and Jonny Ashe - YouthAction NI Working with Young Men Team  
Michael McKeon - School of Nursing, Dublin City University  
Bernadette Magennis - British Medical Association NI

Sonia Montgomery - Western Health and Social Care Trust (WHSCT)  
Jessica Perry - Northern Ireland Chest, Heart and Stroke  
Lisa Rickett - Irish Football Association (IFA)  
Umberto [Scap] Scappaticci - Colin Men's Group  
Lochlann Scott - Helplink Support Services  
Rosemary Scott - Irish Cancer Society (ICS)  
Peter Shaw - Belfast Community Sports Development Network (BCSDN)

**Minute Taker:** Colin Fowler

## **AGENDA ITEMS ...**

### **1. Welcome**

Colin welcomed everyone to the meeting - especially those people who had to make a considerable journey to be here.

In the early years of holding all-island meetings of the Men's Health Week (MHW) Planning Group, the gatherings were alternated between Dublin and Belfast venues. This helped the members to build relationships - as they met in person - but meant that they had to commit a lot of time to travelling to meetings. In later years, most business was conducted via video-link between Dublin and Belfast. This cut down on the amount of travel, but many members expressed a feeling that it had become quite impersonal, and it was hard to engage with others in the room as well as the people on the TV screen. To try to bridge this gap, it was agreed to hold today's meeting at a mid-way (and fairly inconvenient to all) point between Belfast and Dublin, and to give participants a chance (at least for this first meeting) to talk to each other face-to-face.

Apologies were tendered from a broad range of organisations. This was due to the date not suiting everyone and, especially, to restrictions upon their freedom to travel outside of their work catchment area / limits placed upon travel costs. These people do, however, still 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. A few organisations still have to reply to confirm their participation.

The partnership approach adopted in the past few years has proved to be very beneficial to MHW, and it is hoped that each participant's own area of work will also benefit from the contacts established in this and future meetings. Colin reminded everyone that this is an open forum which welcomes the input of anyone who is willing to participate. It was also acknowledged that there will, inevitably, be times when it is impossible for group members to attend meetings or contribute to the ongoing e-discussions. A pragmatic approach will be adopted.

### **2. Introductions**

Lorcan 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; say which organisation they represent and what it does; briefly outline any experience / knowledge of men's work that they already have.

### **3. Overview of MHFI and MHW**

Finian gave a short PowerPoint presentation on: what the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) is / does, the aim of International Men's Health Week (MHW) each year, and what has previously been organised to mark this week. He also outlined the focus, theme and key message for 2014. Colin will circulate this presentation with these minutes.

### **4. Vision / 'Blue Skies' Thinking for MHW 2014**

Finian invited everyone to think about what MHW 2014 would look like this year, and asked them to specifically consider the following range of questions:

- Was there anything which worked well last year which we should repeat?
- What should / could / ought to happen to ensure that Men's Health Week has the maximum impact this year?
- What might the common poster for 2014 look like?
- How can we widely promote the week on an extremely limited budget?

### **Miscellaneous Issues Raised ...**

- It is part of the human condition to continually face challenges and choices. Thus, the focus for MHW 2014 is appropriate.
- The theme for MHW 2014 is relevant to all men (not just the active ones or the involved ones or the rich ones etc.) and to everyone who can make a difference to men's health.
- We need to be careful not to blame men for their own poor health or to focus upon their shortcomings. There should also be recognition of the responsibilities of policy makers and service providers. The 'challenges' element of the MHW 2014 theme should target everyone, and highlight personal, organisational, political, structural, environmental, social determinants ... issues when possible.
- The language we use when describing MHW is important - as it can affirm or blame or praise or exclude ... both men and those who have an impact upon their lives. Where possible, we should use terms such as 'opportunities', 'support', 'encouragement', 'change', 'positive action' etc.
- We need to be careful that MHW does not become associated with being a time to 'repair' broken or deficient men.
- We should always make it clear that improving the health of men is not about being anti-women or anti-women's health.
- There should be acknowledgement that men are not all the same, and that they have a diverse range of needs, interests and choices facing them.
- The key message for MHW 2014 should be that everyone can make positive choices which will make a difference to the overall health of men in Ireland.
- The danger with having a very broad theme is that sometimes there is no clear or easy to understand message within it.

- It's often easier to get media and public attention for a specific illness or negative issue (e.g. cancer or suicide or domestic violence) rather than a 'good news' story. However, if MHW 2014 is to have a more positive universal appeal, it needs to stick with a generic inclusive theme. This means that we will miss the high profile 'shock - horror' media coverage, but may get more local media features.
- It is important to have - as in previous years - a Briefing Paper which sets the context / tone of MHW 2014 for all interested parties. MHFI will prepare this and have it ready a few months before the week begins.
- MHFI was also asked to re-draft the 'What Can I Do?' paper which offers some simple ideas on how to mark MHW for specific groups in our community.
- MHFI hopes to produce a 'Challenges and Choices' men's health mini-manual (based upon the Haynes men's health publications model). This booklet will be a male-friendly 32 page publication which will be given to men throughout Ireland for free. It is hoped to get up to 10,000 copies of it produced. This publication highlights key challenges to men's health (e.g. alcohol, diet, exercise, sexually transmitted diseases, blood pressure, stress, smoking, skin cancers, back care and help-seeking behaviour) and offers three choices for dealing with each condition
- MHW needs to be seen as a celebration of men and men's lives. It was agreed that the overall theme for the week should be changed to: 'Challenges, Choices and Celebrations'.

## **MHW 2014 Posters ...**

- There is a very limited budget to support MHW 2014, and most of this goes on the printing of the posters. There is no budget for a communications strategy or a graphic design team. Therefore, the Planning Group will have to refine the poster concept.
- The Man Matters project (a partnership between the Workers' Educational Association, Men's Health Forum in Ireland, Parenting NI and Home-Start NI) will offer a small pot of money to underwrite the design and printing of posters for Northern Irish organisations. MHFI will cover the cost of poster production for the Republic of Ireland.
- The sole purpose of a MHW poster is to let people know that there is a Men's Health Week 2014, tell them when it takes place, inform them about the theme, and let them know how to get more information. It is not, in itself, a campaign tool.
- It is important to have a common MHW poster that can be used by anyone who wishes to promote and support the week. As well as providing useful publicity and exposure, displaying a poster also offers an easy and practical way for organisations to be involved in MHW.
- As in previous years, the poster will be made available in a range of formats e.g. A<sub>3</sub> size, A<sub>4</sub> size, PDF, JPG, with a space to type / write in contact details for local events ... It will also be supported by an array of graphics e.g. MHW logo, banner, slogan, Facebook image etc. All of these will be made available for free online downloading.

- The 'everyman' image in the posters from the past few years has received very positive feedback. This will be continued in 2014.
- There was agreement that the poster needs to be self-explanatory.
- After a long period of discussion, it was agreed that the image for the posters should be an archer and a target, and the posters should:
  - Be A<sub>3</sub> size full colour
  - Have the title (i.e. Men's Health Week 2014) displayed prominently at the top.
  - Include the dates i.e. Monday 9th - Sunday 15th June 2014.
  - Have '*What are you aiming for?*' as the main slogan / strapline.
  - Ideally, have the words '*Challenges, Choices and Celebration*' PhotoShopped onto the target - preferably as three coloured segments (like a pie chart).
  - If possible, have the words '*Take the Next Step*' on, or under, the main image.
  - Include a QR code for MHW 2014.
- Gary, from Man Matters, will contact Carrie Davenport (the photographer who did the posters last year) to see if she would be willing to work with us again this year.
- The posters need to be launched by no later than early May 2014. Therefore, the final version has to be agreed by the Planning Group as soon as possible.

## 5. Current Plans for Men's Health Week

Lorcan invited everyone to share any plans that their own organisation might have to mark Men's Health Week 2014. These included ...

MDN - Will be running a number of events throughout Co. Wexford and will raise awareness of the week with the voluntary and community sectors throughout Ireland.

MAIN - Will be organising an event with the men's group in Hill Street Family Resource Centre in Dublin.

Fir le Cheile - Will be distributing information / making presentations on the week to grassroots men's groups. John also hopes to hold another walk for men to the top of the Hill of Uisneach in the centre of Ireland.

Action Cancer - Will be offering men's health checks across Northern Ireland via six pop-up clinics in community settings, as well as in their Belfast centre and on their 'Big Bus' - which operates throughout Northern Ireland.

MHFI - Will coordinate the design / printing of posters and logos; collate and promote details of activities throughout Ireland; 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); produce a 'Challenges and Choices' men's health mini-manual; inform the media about the week.

Man Alive - Will be organising a regional men's health conference in the week before MHW. They will be conducting health checks throughout Northern Ireland from their three mobile units, and will also place an emphasis upon work with pharmacies and employers (especially targeting the health needs of men who work outdoors).

ReachOut.com - Will be launching the 'WorkOut' mental fitness programme for young men as a phone app (it is currently accessible via computer), and will be offering online support to young men as well as promoting MHW through social media.

Sport NI - Will be working with Tullymore Outdoor Centre to run a Dads and Lads programme. They will also be inviting their 116 Active Community Coaches to host programmes during MHW, and will be offering a small grants programme in February - which will encourage grassroots engagement in physical activity programmes.

Kimmage - Will be looking into ways to mark the week in Marian House Nursing Home, and will be publicising MHW to their catchment group and staff team.

Man Matters - Will be providing support for a range of events, activities and groups across Northern Ireland e.g. large scale Sure Start Fathers Network event, health checks, Health Champion volunteers, funding for local projects etc.

Mental Health Ireland - Will be encouraging their local groups and extended network to support MHW in whatever way possible.

Belfast Men's Health Group - Will be organising a large-scale event in Belfast City Hall on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> June for local men. They will also be holding a roundtable discussion for senior health policy decision-makers and service commissioners, to convince them of the need to offer practical support to men's health initiatives.

HSE - Finian will be using his HSE contacts and links to the HSE Communications Department to raise awareness of MHW, and will play a role in liaising with the media in relation to the week.

Menaware - Will be having a celebration of the mid-summer solstice and running a men and boys overnight stay.

See Change - During May, See Change will be spearheading the 'Green Ribbon' campaign to reduce the stigma attached to mental health issues. They will use their extensive social media networks to raise awareness of MHW, encourage volunteers to distribute the posters, and ask their male ambassadors to promote MHW in their blogs.

Irish Men's Sheds - Will be promoting MHW among their members, and encouraging them to do something locally to celebrate this week.

## **6. Date of Next Meeting**

The next Planning Group meeting will take place on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2014, at 10.30am. It will be held via video-link conference between the Dublin and Belfast offices of the Institute of Public Health in Ireland. These offices are located at:

Forestview  
Purdy's Lane  
Belfast BT8 7ZX

5th Floor  
Bishop's Square  
Redmond's Hill  
Dublin 2

Maps can be found at: [www.publichealth.ie/contact-us](http://www.publichealth.ie/contact-us)