



# Institute of Public Health in Ireland

Strategic Framework 2018 - 2022



# Table of Contents

- FOREWORD..... 1**
- INTRODUCTION..... 2**
- ABOUT IPH ..... 3**
  - IPH Vision .....3
  - IPH Approach .....4
  - IPH Values .....4
- STRATEGIC AND POLICY CONTEXT ..... 5**
  - Policy .....6
- IPH STRATEGIC OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK..... 7**
- GOVERNANCE ..... 9**
  - Management Board .....9
  - Reporting and Accountability .....10
  - Evaluation and Impact .....10
  - Professional and Staff Development.....10

# Foreword

I am pleased to present the Strategic Framework 2018-2022 of the Institute of Public Health in Ireland (IPH) that sets out the direction and focus over the next five years.

This is an ambitious strategy developed within a changing and challenging context and requires support from partners across sectors as well as across the island.

The work of the public health community, in both policy and practice, has never been more important – Government strategies underscore that improving health and wellbeing is in everyone’s interest and indeed we all have our part to play.

Since its establishment in 1998, IPH has supported both Departments of Health in Ireland, North and South in advancing public health services and policy. Over that period the underlying focus of IPH remains the same – tackling social inequalities and shining a spotlight on the negative impact of social inequalities on the population across the island of Ireland. Unfortunately, health inequalities remain a challenge - it is a sad fact that those who are the poorest in society have the worst health, both mentally and physically, and die younger.

This strategy builds on the strengths of the Institute - IPH excels at showing and supporting the development of leadership as well as translating evidence and supporting implementation, interventions and innovation in public health across the life cycle, it fosters the sharing of common approaches to address common public health problems in Ireland, North and South.

On behalf of the Management Board and both Departments of Health I would like to thank IPH staff for their commitment and energy and wish them well in bringing this strategy forward.

**John Devlin**  
**Deputy Chief Medical Officer**  
**Chair**

**26 April 2018**

# Introduction

This strategic framework for IPH sets out the direction for the organisation during the period 2018–22. It has been developed within a changing and challenging environment and is informed by current developments in the field of policy, research and wider factors that impact upon the health and well-being of people living on the island of Ireland.

Over the past 20 years IPH has grown and evolved as an organisation and so has its sphere of influence and its facilitative leadership role. We have developed, in line with the requirements of the public health community, North and South.

This strategy will remain focused on utilising public health evidence as well as bringing people and organisations from across the island together and international colleagues to promote actions for sustained improvements in health and well-being. IPH will increasingly focus on supporting and informing the implementation of evidence to tackle the causes of health inequalities.

# About IPH

The Institute of Public Health in Ireland was established in 1998, with support from the Chief Medical Officers of both Departments of Health to promote greater cooperation and exchange of learning for public health across the island of Ireland.

From the outset, IPH was tasked to work across professions, disciplines, sectors, organisations and jurisdictions to address inequalities and its avoidable impact on society.

## IPH Mission

Providing evidence, advice and leadership to promote health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities in Ireland, North and South.

## IPH Vision

To be the recognised voice for public health evidence on the island of Ireland, North and South. IPH connects networks of policy-makers, researchers, public health practitioners and the voluntary and community sector who collectively work to reduce health inequalities. We actively support the development of capacity and leadership in public health across levels, sectors and borders.

## IPH Approach

IPH is committed to enhancing health and well-being across the island and tackling health inequalities.

IPH's approach is based on our experience of what works, which involves:

- facilitating effective partnerships and convening meaningful collaboration on health and well-being issues that matter to the people on the island of Ireland;
- being a catalyst for cooperation on public health priorities across all government departments in all political contexts;
- raising understanding that social justice, human rights and equality of opportunity are critical to reducing health inequalities;
- taking a systems approach that addresses the complexity of factors affecting our health and to create sustainable progress in health improvement;
- creating, sourcing and using the best available evidence to inform public health policy and practice on the island;
- making the best use of our available resources and developing a positive, passionate and skilled team;
- providing expertise in the evaluation of the impact and implementation of public health policy and programmes.

## IPH Values

Our core values underpin how we work within IPH and engage with others.

- **Excellence**...quality, performance, ambition
- **Respect**... humanity, diversity, courtesy
- **Involvement**...inclusion, partnership, contribution
- **Trust** ...ethical, reliable, consistent
- **Justice** ... fairness, voice, leadership

# Strategic and Policy Context

Improvements in life expectancy is one of the greatest successes of the last 100 years for public health. However, threats to our health and well-being remain ever present including: smoking, alcohol, obesity, poor diet, physical inactivity, inequalities and poverty; as well as emerging global threats to public health from areas such as climate change and food security.

Health inequalities remain stubbornly pervasive across the life cycle, despite increased awareness of the causes and consequences. IPH's core basis demands that we strengthen resolve to intensify work in this area to help increase the number of years that everyone on the island of Ireland lives in good health irrespective of their income, background or geography.

A range of policy areas and wider factors will influence our work in this next period.

- **Demographic change** and our ageing population have implications for both individuals and society as a whole and will increasingly inform the work of IPH; as will the growing ethnically diverse population in Ireland, north and south.
- **Challenging economic conditions** have placed a huge burden on societies in both jurisdictions and this circumstance is likely to remain a significant influence in the lifetime of this plan.
- The implications for the departure of the United Kingdom from the European Union (**Brexit**) will unfold during the period of this strategy and may have consequences for public health work in Ireland, North and South.

The international health policy context for the IPH is the World Health Organization 'Health 2020' and 'The European Union (EU) Multi Annual Programme of Action for Health 2014 – 2020'.

On the island our work is positioned in the context of Programmes for Government, North and South which informs the direction and priorities for our work. Significant policy documents include:

Department of Health (NI):

- Making Life Better: a Whole System Strategic Framework for Public Health June 2014
- Health and Well-being 2026: Delivering Together

Department of Health (RoI):

- Healthy Ireland – A Framework for Action 2013-2025
- Committee on the Future of Healthcare - Sláintecare Report 2017

# IPH Strategic Outcomes Framework

- In line with the direction of travel of Government frameworks, IPH will adopt an outcomes based approach that will allow us to focus on the difference that we want to make during this strategic framework period 2018 - 2022.
- The outcomes and strategic work activities will be translated into IPH annual business plans and specific performance indicators and measures to record, monitor and evaluate progress.

Our strategy is built on three fundamental premises:

- Health is socially and economically determined
- Health inequalities are avoidable, unjust and unfair
- Cross-sectoral and cross-policy action is needed to reduce health inequalities

To address these over the next 5 years, IPH will focus on achieving five strategic outcomes by 2022. The table overleaf sets out each of the 5 strategic outcomes and the associated strategic work activities that will shape the IPH agenda.

## Strategic Outcomes

## Strategic Work Activities

- 1. A demonstrable positive impact on public health outcomes in key areas across the life cycle**
  - a. Work collaboratively to improve population health in agreed North/ South thematic areas.
  - b. Advise on development, implementation and assist in evaluating the impact of government programmes and policy.
  - c. Facilitate the development of North/South networks for research and policy to assist implementation.
  - d. Support government departments in their efforts to implement the 'health in all policies' approach and actions to address inequalities.
- 2. Leadership and capacity building for public health enhanced**
  - a. Design and develop a cross-sectoral public health leadership programme.
  - b. Establish an IPH Fellowship network.
  - c. Develop an all island public health training and development programme.
  - d. Stimulate discussion on key public health leadership issues and training.
- 3. Vocal and authoritative contributions to the field of public health on inequalities utilising the latest evidence and information**
  - a. Produce public health briefings and reports.
  - b. Translate and mobilise high quality public health evidence for application in policy and practice.
  - c. Raise awareness and understanding of the connection between poverty and determinants of health inequalities.
  - d. Develop and deliver an effective communication and engagement strategy for stakeholders and the media.
- 4. Stimulated greater attention on new and emerging threats to public health**
  - a. Convene expert symposiums to explore future scenarios impacting on public health policy and practice.
  - b. Establish a strategic advisory group of key stakeholders to inform this work.
  - c. Support and advise both Departments on emerging trends and patterns for population health on the Island of Ireland.
  - d. Explore support and test innovation in public health.
- 5. IPH has robust governance, accountability and financial sustainability**
  - a. Review and improve governance and accountability systems.
  - b. Establish monitoring and evaluation processes.
  - c. Set in place an organisational and staff development plan.
  - d. Increase team working within IPH and across areas of expertise and offices.

# Governance

The organisation's overarching governance framework is directed by our Articles & Memorandum of Association (the 'Constitution') and the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.

## Management Board

The Institute of Public Health in Ireland is governed by a Management Board consisting of representatives from the Department of Health in Ireland and the Department of Health (Northern Ireland), and a representative of the Royal College of Physicians in Ireland (RCPI).

Our Board of Trustees are:

Dr John Devlin  
Department of Health (Ireland)  
Ms Kate O'Flaherty  
Department of Health (Ireland)  
Prof Patricia Fitzpatrick (representing RCPI)  
University College Dublin  
Dr Elizabeth Redmond  
Department of Health (Northern Ireland)  
Dr Carolyn Harper  
Public Health Agency  
Prof Roger O'Sullivan  
Institute of Public Health in Ireland

The Institute of Public Health in Ireland is a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital. It is registered in the Republic of Ireland (number 362110). Its registered address is 5th Floor, Bishop's Square, Redmond's Hill, Dublin 2.

## Reporting and Accountability

Our work in this strategic framework will be accomplished within our processes and structures for accountability and governance. Our governance structures link financial governance with risk management and human resources. We work closely with the Board of Trustees and both Departments of Health to achieve strong and effective financial accountability and efficiency.

## Evaluation and Impact

Evaluation and sharing of good practice will be undertaken internally and supported by an external independent evaluator. It will be an ongoing process that informs development throughout the strategy. It will be based on the outcomes and strategic positioning set out within this strategic framework. After each key stage of the strategy, an internal evaluation will take place in order to ensure that it is in line with the next stage. This will focus on reviewing and learning from the annual business plan in Quarter 4 and helping to plan the forthcoming period of work.

## Professional and Staff Development

Our staff team is IPH's single most important resource and we will continue to manage, support and develop our people through a range of human resource policies, processes and development initiatives which are in line with employment legislation and recognised standards.



**Belfast**

Institute of Public Health in Ireland  
Forestview  
Purdy's Lane  
Belfast  
BT8 7AR  
Telephone: + 4428 90648494

**Dublin**

Institute of Public Health in Ireland  
700 South Circular Road  
Kilmainham  
Dublin 8  
D08 NH90

Telephone: + 353 1 478 6300

Email: [info@publichealth.ie](mailto:info@publichealth.ie)  
Website: [www.publichealth.ie](http://www.publichealth.ie)  
Twitter: [@publichealthie](https://twitter.com/publichealthie)

