

# IPH Response to OFMDFM Consultation 'Everyone's Involved' - Sustainable Development Strategy Implementation Plan

25 Oct 2010

Below is the IPH Response to 'Everyone's Involved' - Sustainable Development Strategy Implementation Plan - a consultation from the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister

## 1 Introduction

The Institute of Public Health in Ireland

The Institute of Public Health in Ireland (IPH) aims to improve health on the island of Ireland by working to combat health inequalities and influence public policies in favour of health. IPH promotes cooperation between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in public health research, training and policy advice. Its key focus is on efforts to improve health equity.

The work of IPH ([www.publichealth.ie](http://www.publichealth.ie)) includes health impact assessment, building and sharing evidence for public health development, developing Ireland and Northern Ireland's population health observatory (INISPHO [www.inispho.org](http://www.inispho.org)), and providing public health policy advice in areas such as health inequalities, obesity, fuel poverty and food poverty.

Health is influenced by a wide range of social determinants, including economic, environmental, social and biological factors. IPH has a key interest and significant experience in raising awareness and developing work to influence these wider social and environmental determinants in ways which improve health.

Sustainable development and public health are inextricably linked, in ways which are described in section 3. Sustainable development is essentially at the heart of healthy communities and individuals as well as a healthy environment and sustainable economic development - all factors at the heart of public health.

IPH has been developing interest and expertise in building evidence and supporting action on linking sustainable development, health and equity. Relevant work includes a briefing paper on Climate change and health; reviews on the health impact of the built environment and the health impact of transport; annual updates on fuel poverty and; a report on an all island approach to health inequalities and social determinants.

IPH welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), Everyone's Involved: Sustainable Development Strategy Implementation Plan.

## **2 Key points**

i) IPH strongly supports the concept of the Sustainable Development Strategy as an overarching framework within which all Government policies should be developed. There is a lack of clarity in the current draft of the Implementation Plan as to how this might be achieved and in how targets set by the Sustainable Development Strategy would be carried across to the Programme for Government and to Public Service Agreements and Departmental Action Plans.

ii) IPH welcomes the stated commitments in the Sustainable Development Strategy regarding cross sectoral working to meet sustainable development targets. OFMDFM has a key leadership and coordinating role to play in ensuring the various sectors recognise and contribute to target setting and achievements. While we recognise the early stage of development of the Implementation Plan it is disappointing that to date (22 Oct 2010) there is little information from other sectors on how they plan to contribute.

iii) IPH welcomes the inclusion of health and equity as guiding principles of sustainable development in Northern Ireland. Reducing material consumption across the population in an equitable way can make a vital contribution to improving health and reducing health inequalities. We urge that the Implementation Plan recognises these principles throughout all six priority areas for action.

iv) At the same time, the three dimensions of sustainability, i.e. environmental, social and economic development must be at the core of all strategic objectives. Failure to explicitly state all three elements in a number of current objectives may lead to a devaluing of the omitted element in meeting that objective.

## **Contact details**

For further information on this submission, please contact:

Ms Teresa Lavin  
Public Health Development Officer  
Institute of Public Health in Ireland  
5th Floor, Bishop's Square  
Redmond's Hill  
Dublin 2  
Tel: 00 1 353 478 6300  
Email: [teresa.lavin@publichealth.ie](mailto:teresa.lavin@publichealth.ie)

Dr Jane Wilde  
Chief Executive  
Institute of Public Health in Ireland  
Forestview  
Purdy's Lane  
Belfast  
BT8 7ZX  
Tel: +44 28 9064 8494  
Email: [jane.wilde@publichealth.ie](mailto:jane.wilde@publichealth.ie)