

Your Health is Your Wealth: a Policy Framework for a Healthier Ireland 2012 - 2020

Briefing Document

Aim:

The aim is to develop a high-level policy framework for public health, to cover the period from 2012 to 2020. It will bring to reality the provisions in the Programme for Government with regard to the health and wellbeing of the whole population. The policy framework will be Ireland's vision for a healthier population that is protected from public health threats, living in a healthier and more sustainable environment, with increased social and economic productivity and greater social inclusion.

Process and Expected Outcomes:

It will seek to engage leaders and policy makers across government and society, to recognise that, because many of the causes of health and well being lie outside the health sector, improving the public's health is the responsibility of all sectors of society, and not just the responsibility of the health service public health workforce. It will identify practical ways to strengthen working between sectors to promote and protect the health and wellbeing of all sectors in our society. It will support ways to keep children healthy; ensure a healthier workforce; and contribute to positive ageing and a greater participation of those with disabilities and mental health issues in society. It will promote healthier lifestyles as well as improving the environment where we live and work, will address the emergence of risk factors and aim to reduce chronic diseases and their burden to families and society.

It will highlight achievements of public health policies to date such as reducing the mortality and morbidity from communicable diseases through vaccination, providing clean water and air, providing safer food, and control of tobacco in workplaces. In addition, the framework will summarise the growing evidence that supports a public health approach to improving health, and the economic and societal benefits of prevention and early intervention.

At a time of major health reform, this framework recognises the importance of ensuring that the public health function is supported, maintained and strengthened. The framework will set out how the public health function will operate over the coming years in order to achieve the vision.

Methodology:

A Working Group, chaired by the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) of the Department of Health and Children has been set up to review and assess the current state of public health in Ireland and internationally.

The **Terms of Reference** for the group are

To develop a policy framework for public health which addresses

- wider determinants of health and health inequalities
- chronic disease and lifestyle
- inter-sectoral and cross-sectoral approaches at policy and practice level
- protection from and responses to public health threats.

And which will encompass ethical, legal, organizational and professional practice issues for public health, having regard to

- the Programme for Government
- current resource constraints
- prevailing economic circumstances
- the views of stakeholders as identified through consultation
- the strength and weaknesses of the current system
- the policy framework for Health 2020 as set out by the WHO Euro region
- policies, practices, structures and other developments in other countries
- the evidence base for public health policy and practice.

Consultation Process:

To succeed in developing and implementing a first class public health policy, a 5-strand consultation process has been mapped out to ensure wide stakeholder engagement.

Strand 1 A consultation day, led by the Minister for Health, and with other Ministers present.

Strand 2 General consultation, inviting targeted organisations, as well as the general public, to respond to specific questions on public health priorities

Strand 3 Targeted consultation for Health Sector engagement.

Strand 4 A series of bi-lateral meetings with other relevant Government Departments and agencies

Strand 5 A facilitated workshop for community/voluntary organisations.

Timeline:

It is envisaged that an initial draft report will be submitted to the Department of Health and Children's Management Advisory Committee by the end of third quarter of this year, with a view to having a finalised report prepared to accompany a memo to Government by the end of 2011.