

**Key press contact**

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About the Institute of Public Health in Ireland (IPH)

The remit of IPH is to promote cooperation for public health between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in the areas of research and information, capacity building and policy advice. Our approach is to support both Departments of Health and their agencies in both jurisdictions, and maximise the benefits of all-island cooperation to achieve practical benefits for people in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

In keeping with best practice in tackling health inequalities, IPH works with a range of other government departments which play a role in population health and the achievement of population health priorities set out in both jurisdictions.

Benefits of North South cooperation in public health

Cooperation between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland achieves practical public health benefits in both jurisdictions by:

- providing richer and comparative information on public health approaches, policies and actions in both jurisdictions
- taking advantage of opportunities to share resources, staff and experience of best practice, and achieve economies of scale in public health intervention
- initiating and supporting change when policies or actions are shown to be successful in one jurisdiction and translated to the other
- learning from natural experiment where different approaches are adopted in different locations
- innovating and developing new approaches when there is a shared problem or need.

What we do

IPH work includes raising the profile and understanding of public health issues and this work is communicated through our website www.publichealth.ie.

At the heart of public health is recognition of the importance of action across the social determinants of health. This has been a key understanding underpinning the work of IPH since its establishment in 1999. There is strong evidence on the gap between the health of the best and the worst off, and the fact that the lower the person's social position, the worse their health. Action needs to focus on reducing this gradient in health as well as working to support improvements in health in vulnerable groups.

Our top priority is to reduce health inequalities and the gradient in health.

We are committed to working in partnership with others at government, organisational and community level, and have a strong record of partnership work.

IPH works in a number of key areas. Our work is underpinned by a commitment to fairness and social justice. We provide policy and information support with a particular focus on policy areas which impact on public health and health inequalities.

These areas include:

- 1. Social determinants and health inequalities**
- 2. Public health policy**
- 3. Strengthening prevention**
- 4. Healthy communities**
- 5. Evidence-informed policy and practice**

In addition to this work the Department of Health has asked IPH to support work to develop a new public health framework for the Republic of Ireland and to assist in the development of a plan for rare diseases.

Supporting Government and Departmental Priorities

IPH is a resource for both Governments and Departments of Health, and their agencies. Our work supports priorities and targets in Northern Ireland (NI) and the Republic of Ireland (RoI).

In the Republic of Ireland, they include the Department of Health (DoH) Statement of Strategy 2008 -2010, which reflects relevant elements of the Programme for Government and Towards 2016, the 10 year Social Partnership Agreement; Tackling Chronic Disease; Developing and Implementing the Policy Framework for the Management of Chronic Diseases; Quality and Fairness; and the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion, which contains a number of health elements.

In Northern Ireland they include the Programme for Government; Shaping a Healthier Future; Investing for Health, the public health strategy; the disease service frameworks; and a raft of social policies in key areas such as poverty, sustainable development, transport and housing.