

Action Plan 2015

Healthy Ireland Council

Role of *Healthy Ireland* Council

In the introduction to *Healthy Ireland, A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025*, the Taoiseach said “*we as Government are committing to playing our part and leading the way. We are in turn calling on leaders from every sector of society to join us, and to help us. By getting involved, by working together, we can make real progress on making Ireland a healthier nation.*”

The Healthy Ireland Council represents leaders from a wide spectrum of society helping the Government by providing advice, support and leadership and by reminding the Government of its commitment and the role it has to play.

The Healthy Ireland Framework sets out four high level goals, and takes both a lifecourse approach and a population wide approach.

However, an effective whole-system response to health and wellbeing also requires a particular focus on the early years of the lifecourse (maternal, infant and child health) to give every citizen the ‘best start’ in life, and a focus on the sections of our society, where we see inequalities in health outcomes, that need additional or specific support.

It is only through a combination of measures to empower and support people to take responsibility for their individual health and wellbeing, coupled with measures to address the wider environment, social determinants and public policy priorities, that we will make a healthier Ireland.

Goal four of the Framework is to ‘Create an environment where every individual and sector of society can play their part in achieving a *Healthy Ireland*’ and the work of the *Healthy Ireland* Council will be critical in creating the environment envisaged in this goal.

To support the achievement of this the Council aims to:

- connect and mobilise communities, families and individuals into a national movement with a common aim to support everyone to enjoy the best possible health and wellbeing
- get Ireland thinking and talking about health and wellbeing – what it means to be healthy and well and how people can best look after their own and their families’ health
- improve health and wellbeing by endeavouring to reduce (and not increase) health inequalities – that all people living in Ireland, regardless of their differing circumstances, can be part of, and benefit from, a healthier Ireland.

The work of the Council will complement, support and strengthen the wider work programme under the Framework and add a critical momentum and positive energy to the overall agenda.

Action Plan 2015

This initial action plan sets the direction for the Council in 2015. It recognises that the Council is new and needs time to establish procedures and ways of working but also recognises how important it will be in 2015 to take advantage of, and grow, the goodwill that exists toward it by delivering tangible benefits and demonstrating its significant added value.

Key Objectives 2015

1. To increase awareness of, and buy in to, the *Healthy Ireland* agenda among key stakeholders and wider society;
2. To support the launch and implementation of the National Physical Activity Plan;
3. Advocate for a focus on the health and wellbeing of children as a national priority;
4. Deliver the *Healthy Ireland* Council work plan for 2015.

1. To increase awareness of, and buy in to, the *Healthy Ireland* agenda among key stakeholders and wider society;

Effective communication and engagement with the public through a variety of channels will be a key enabler for *Healthy Ireland*. *Healthy Ireland* must reach all sectors of Irish society particularly those who traditionally do not engage with initiatives that seek to bring about positive lifestyle behavioural changes. The Council has a key role to play in the wider *Healthy Ireland* communication strategy which will be devised with input from the Council in early 2015.

2. To support the launch and implementation of the National Physical Activity Plan

The National Physical Activity Plan will be launched and implementation commenced in early 2015.

The *Healthy Ireland* Framework identifies this project as an exemplar of how *Healthy Ireland* will work and sees a role for the Council in developing linkages with and between partners and advising on priorities.

This presents an important opportunity for the Council to develop innovative ways in which it can support this priority and explore how it can enhance linkages with and between partners. This positive partnership approach will inform and sustain future *Healthy Ireland* activities and will demonstrate how we implement the whole of government, whole of society concept to promoting and building health and wellbeing.

3. Advocate for a focus on the health and wellbeing of children as a national priority;

The *Healthy Ireland* Framework emphasises the importance of a focus on early intervention and 'giving every child the best start in life' as a key driver of both overall population health as well as addressing inequalities.

The Council agreed at its October meeting that it wished to prioritise the health and wellbeing of children. The Department of Children and Youth Affairs' policy *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures, the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020* sets out government policy in this area. The Department of Health, through the Health and Wellbeing Programme, is the lead department for Outcome 1 of this policy, *Active and Healthy – Physical and Mental Wellbeing*. This presents an opportunity for the *Healthy Ireland* Council to develop actions that complement and align the *Healthy Ireland* Framework and *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* and

contribute to implementation of shared objectives. This action plan suggests collaborating with DCYA and its Advisory Council to achieve these outcomes and is a significant opportunity that will be pursued in 2015. (*Initial contact with DCYA suggests that such an approach would be welcome*).

In this context, Appendix 1 details the commitments of Outcome 1 Active and Healthy – Physical and Mental Wellbeing of *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures*, to assist in exploring the potential role for the Healthy Ireland Council in supporting the implementation of the actions contained therein.

4. Deliver the Healthy Ireland Council work plan for 2015

It is proposed to hold quarterly meetings as well as the first *Healthy Ireland* Forum/Conference in 2015. This action plan details the key actions that will help the Council to establish ways of working, develop clear communication strategies and maintain a focus on the wider enablers of implementation such as stakeholder consultation, building a supportive culture, communication and leadership.

		into other action areas	Q2 2015
4	To advocate for 'Healthy Ireland' proofing of policy measures, including potential to reduce health inequalities, across all relevant areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council perspective to be incorporated into submissions/observations made by DH to relevant policy development • Chair, on behalf of Council , to revert to An Taoiseach identifying key actions – letter, meeting • Propose a contribution on the theme of health and wellbeing to a 2016 'proclamation' for a new Ireland 	Ongoing
5	Support and promote innovative national engagement events launched under <i>Healthy Ireland</i> in 2015	For example <i>Healthy Ireland</i> awards, health days/week/events	Ongoing
6	To contribute to the <i>Healthy Ireland</i> Website (once developed)	Healthy Ireland website in place which facilitates input from Council members	Q3 2015
7	Identify and use opportunities for collaboration between Council members which will not only raise awareness of <i>Healthy Ireland</i> but also promote the ethos of cross sectoral working	Case studies of cross sectoral work to be presented at Council meetings Mapping exercise across Council members to identify relevant areas of collaboration	Ongoing
Objective 2 of the Healthy Ireland Council: To support the launch and implementation of the National Physical Activity Plan			
	Action	Output	Timeline
8	Establish a subgroup of Council to identify how the Council can actively promote and support the launch and implementation of the National Physical Activity Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subgroup established • Subgroup proposes how they will promote and support both the launch and implementation of the National Physical Activity Plan. 	Q1 2015 Q2 2015
9	Council members to participate in the NPAP launch and other events in 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members participate in launch events 	Q1 2015
10	Actively promote the NPAP and its key messages to society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased media and public interest in NPAP. • Physical activity central to the actions of objective 3 (below) 	2015
11	Specific actions to be identified for (some) members and their organisations/networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members use their organisations and networks to promote NPAP and key messages 	Q3/Q4 2015
12	Advocate for actions which promote: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • opportunities for everybody to engage in physical activity, • the achievement of the recommended guidelines for physical activity in accordance to an individual's abilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of the importance of physical activity to a person's overall health and wellbeing 	Q3/Q4 2015

Objective 3 of the Healthy Ireland Council: Advocate for a focus on the health and wellbeing of children as a national priority			
13	Explore with DCYA and its Advisory Council opportunities for collaboration on children (and young people's) health and wellbeing through the <i>Healthy Ireland Framework</i> and <i>Better Outcomes Brighter Futures</i> (BOBF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a Council subgroup to identify opportunities for collaboration on children's health and wellbeing. Explore opportunities for collaborations between the two Councils in 2015. An agreement with DCYA on ways in which the Healthy Ireland Council can contribute to the achievement of key commitments in BOBF Council to interact directly with a representative delegation of young people utilising the participations structures established by DCYA e.g. Comhairle na nÓg 	Q1 2015 Q2/3 2015
14	Explore with the Department of Education and Skills how the Council can promote and support Wellbeing as a core element of educational reform	A meeting between Council representatives and the Departments of Health and Education & Skills to explore contribution of the Council in terms of Wellbeing within educational reforms.	Q3 2015
15	Advocate for actions to ensure that all children can meet the recommended guideline of at least one hour a day of physical activity	Increased cross sectoral awareness of the benefits of, and barriers to, participation in physical activity, including the effects on broader education and development, and health inequalities among children	Ongoing
16	Advocate the promotion of child and maternal health – giving every child the best start - as key foundation for 'health for life' through collaboration with partners to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve food literacy skills across society by raise awareness of how health inequalities influences family meals; explore ways to make healthy eating easier for families; and tackle food poverty among marginalised communities 	Specific output to be agreed following further discussion with DCYA	Q3 2015
Objective 4 of the Healthy Ireland Council: Agreement of a work plan for 2015			
17	Agree a 2015 work plan for the Council	Schedule of meetings and forum agreed in early 2015	Jan 2015
18	Council Meetings held as per the schedule	Meetings held	Ongoing
19	Host a first National Forum for Health and Wellbeing in 2015 with stakeholder	National Forum held	Oct 2015

	involvement.		
20	Develop an internal communications platform for council members (eg Moodle)	Online platform created	Q1 2015
21	Develop and periodically review a 'repository of ideas' to inform action planning into the future	Repository developed	Q2 2015
21	Develop a 'procedures' manual for Council	Manual developed	Q1 2015

Appendix 1

Better Outcomes Brighter Futures, The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020

Outcome 1: Active and Healthy - Physical and Mental Wellbeing (D/Health is the sponsor /lead for these commitments and other Departments and Agencies are identified as having a role as relevant.

Commitments.	Potential Role for Healthy Ireland Council?
1.1 Tackle the issues of childhood obesity and obesogenic environments through a mix of legislative, policy and public awareness activities and will give active consideration to the introduction of fiscal measures to support healthy lifestyles in the context of the annual budgetary process.	
1.2 Support children, young people and their parents to make healthier choices through education, addressing food poverty and ensuring that all educational and State institutions providing food and drink to children, whether directly or through franchised commercial services on-site, have a Healthy Foods policy and provide food that meets basic nutritional standards.	
1.3 Continue to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the School Meals Programme and consider inclusion of DEIS schools not currently benefiting under the programme, subject to resources becoming available.	
1.4 Tackle inequalities in health outcomes for identified vulnerable groups, including Travellers, Roma, refugee and asylum-seeking children, migrants, young people identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT), those experiencing poverty, and children and young people who are the responsibility of the State, whether in care or detention.	
1.5 Implement a new National Model of Paediatric Care and complete the building of the new National Children’s Hospital.	

Commitments.	Potential Role for Healthy Ireland Council?
1.6 Continue to support accessible and affordable youth and sport activities, which encourage young people’s overall personal and social development including healthy behaviours and engage young people who might be at risk of early school-leaving or engaging in criminal activity and anti-social behaviour.	
1.7 Address the high rate of premature and risky alcohol consumption, use of illicit drugs and the incidence of smoking among young people through a combination of legislative, regulatory and policy mechanisms.	
1.8 Implement a Vision for Change as it relates to children and young people, in particular to improve access to early intervention youth mental health services and coordination of service supports, with a focus on improving mental health literacy and reducing incidents of self-harm and suicide.	
1.9 Ensure there is equity of access to child and adolescent mental health services for all children, in particular those aged 16 and 17 years.	
1.10 Combine mental health promotion programmes with interventions that address broader determinants and social problems as part of a multi-agency approach, particularly in areas with high levels of socio-economic deprivation and fragmentation.	
1.11 Complete and implement a National Sexual Health Strategy as a strategic framework for the sexual health and well-being of the population, ensuring access for young people to age-appropriate information and services about relationships and sexual health.	
1.12 Complete and implement the National Physical Activity Plan; support the full implementation of the schools’ Physical Education Programme and encourage the Active Schools Flag Initiative.	
1.13 Enable hard-to-reach groups to access services by making health services (including mental health services) available in youth friendly, accessible and inclusive environments.	

Commitments.	Potential Role for Healthy Ireland Council?
1.14 Enable greater access to sports, arts and culture for all children and young people, including through facilitating collaboration between sports, youth, arts and cultural organisations and schools and preschools to enrich the educational experience of all.	
1.15 Continue to develop play and recreation spaces for both children and young people, from playgrounds (for multiple age ranges) to youth cafés, sports and leisure centres, and where possible look to weather proof these spaces.	