

All-Island Obesity Action Forum
National Concert Hall, Earlsfort Terrace, Saint Kevin's, Dublin
15th November 2022 – Meeting No. 28

Present:

Name	Organisation
Aileen McGloin (Chair) Anne Parle Tracey Thompson	safefood
Fionnuala Close Sharon Gilmore	Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland (FSA)
Niamh Arthurs	Association for the Study of Obesity on the island of Ireland (ASOI)
Janis Morrissey	Irish Heart Foundation (IHF)
Sarah O'Brien	Health Service Executive (HSE)
Louise Reynolds Jennifer Feighan	Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute (INDI)
Sarah Fitzgerald	Food Drink Ireland
Laura McGowan	Association for the Study of Obesity (ASO UK) - Northern Ireland Regional Group
Katie Hunter	British Dietetic Association Northern Ireland
Margaret Carr	Cancer Research UK
Christine Dale Darren Moan	Department of Health, Northern Ireland (NI)
Sophie Harrison	Sport Ireland
Colette Brolly David Tumilty	Public Health Agency (PHA)
Ciara Reynolds	Institute of Public Health
Catherine Curran	Department of Health Ireland
Esther-Mary D'Arcy	Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists (ISCP)
Janas Harrington	School of Public Health University College Cork
Neil Johnson	Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke

Apologies:

Name	Organisation
Sinead Powell	Diabetes Federation of Ireland
Philip Mynes	Diabetes UK, Northern Ireland
Mary Flynn	Food Safety Authority of Ireland
Ivan Perry	School of Public Health, UCC
Tom Sullivan	Chartered Society of Physiotherapy Northern Ireland

1. Welcome

Aileen McGloin (**safefood**) welcomed members to the 28th Forum meeting.

2. Roundtable introductions

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Members introduced themselves.

3. Minutes from previous meeting and any matters arising

Minutes from the previous meeting were accepted and there were no matters arising. Discussion on how to embed public patient involvement (PPI) to the Forum.

Action: exploration of PPI and how best to embed that in the forum. **AMcG** to speak with **JF** re her experience in this area.

4. Policy updates from the Departments of Health

Department of Health NI

AMcG presented the DoH NI updates on behalf of DM & CD. Key areas highlighted:

- The Fitter Futures for All strategy will be published as a consultation document in early 2023.
- There will be a workshop on obesity stigma in early 2023 to support policy development.
- Food supply including access to healthy nutritious foods are a key outcome and indicator that will also be part of this strategy.

Department of Health Ireland

CC offered the following highlights:

- The Healthy Weight campaign will be finishing at the end of the current week (20th November). There has been a mid-term review of the campaign and it has proven to be very successful. There have been 432,000 video views out of 600,000 TikTok users in Ireland representing excellent saturation rates. A full analysis of the impact of this campaign will be carried out at the end of the campaign and the results will be presented to this group at a later stage.
- The publication of The Clinical Practice Guideline for the Management of Obesity in Adults in Ireland by the HSE Obesity National Clinical Programme with ASOI and ICPO was very positively received.
- The guidelines for Food Parcels have been published and are available on the DoH website.
- The healthy eating guidelines for adults aged over 65 are nearly ready to be published.
- Plant-based foods guidelines are being developed, there will be two separate guidelines, one for increasing plant-based foods in the diet and the other for plant-based diets.
- The food reformulation taskforce will be organising an industry event on the 2nd of December to engage with industry.

Reaction to the adult obesity campaign was queried. CC stated that social listening reported a small level of negativity regarding personal responsibility, but the response was mainly positive. During campaign development there was engagement with key stakeholders and in particular, people living with obesity to ensure that the language that was used and the creative content was appropriate. The campaign videos can be viewed online: gov.ie - [Healthy Weight \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)

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Clarification was sought on the plant-based guidelines. **CC** confirmed that there were two separate guidelines, one on guidance to increase plant-based foods in the regular diet and there are separate guidelines for those who are following plant-based diets. It is hoped that the first set of guidelines will be published in late 2022 and specific restricted diets food-based guidelines will be in Q1 of 2023.

5. Member updates

Association for the Study of Obesity (ASO UK) - Northern Ireland Regional Group - LMcG

- Dr Nicola Heslehurst (Newcastle University) is now Chair of ASO UK.
- The ASO NI continue to host free and regular webinars, and these are available on the ASO website to view.
- A new learning resource for health professionals involved in the care and management of people living with obesity has been launched. This resource is called Explore Obesity.
- The UK Congress on Obesity will be held on the 14th & 15th of September 2023 and will be held in Belfast. There will be a patient lived experience lead plenary session as well as a plenary session with Prof. Susan Jebb, Prof. Russell Viner as well as Prof. Sadaf Farooqi. There will also be 3 Minute Theses and Rapid-Fire Communications as well as member symposiums, invited symposiums & sponsored symposiums. All this information will be circulated in the new year.

Health Service Executive - SO'B

- A primary care weight management programme is being delivered by dietitians across four of the CHOs.
- Alongside the National Institute of Preventative Cardiology in Galway the Advanced Practice in Evidence Based Weight Management Programme was delivered, it will be delivered to an additional 4 cohorts in 2023.
- The Department of Education have completed a consultation on the junior cycle curriculum. Initial findings suggest the learning outcomes for topics on healthy eating and physical activity are going to change to focus on the determinants of healthy eating any physical activity.
- On the 1st of December the Active Healthy Me programme will launch with [Cara](#). It is a six-week health and wellbeing programme for people with disabilities in adult day service locations.

It was queried if there will be a critical thinking component in the changes to the curriculum. **JH** advised that there had been a meeting with the National Council for Curriculum and there was very strong momentum for developing the practical critical appraisal/life-skills approach.

Association for the Study of Obesity on the island of Ireland (ASOI) - NA

- The Clinical Practice Guideline for the Management of Obesity in Adults in Ireland can be found on the ASOI website at aso.info/guidelines

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- The ASOI, HSE & ICPO held an event called [“Let’s talk”](#) which focused on child and adolescent obesity and the recording is on the HSE Health & Wellbeing YouTube channel.
- [30th European Congress on Obesity](#) will take place on the 17 – 20th May 2023 in the Dublin Convention Centre. The closing date for the submission of abstracts is the 14th of January.

Irish Heart Foundation - JM

A campaign titled [“Stop Targeting Children”](#) around junk food marketing to children calling for regulatory action will be launching on Thursday. JM asked for this to be shared through all relevant networks and channels.

**6. Topic for discussion
Obesity stigma – next steps**

The progress made since the last event on this topic and the input from those with lived experience in today’s event was acknowledged.

A further lunchtime webinar on stigma hosted for dietitians was suggested.

Action: AMcG to liaise with LR and JF on dietitian’s webinar.

The difficulty of promoting lifestyle messaging without amplifying weight stigma was acknowledged.

Language in policies was discussed and the need to review policies for stigmatising language.

In relation to the messaging around obesity, two aspects were highlighted, i) involve people with lived experience and ii) acknowledge obesity is complex.

The experience of policy development in Northern Ireland was discussed, including the involvement of people living with obesity and the use of person-first language as part of the new obesity strategy.

The evidence in relation to reducing obesity stigma was discussed. The following were highlighted as positive in reducing stigma:

- Education for all healthcare professionals as part of their training and ongoing professional development.
- Use of non-stigmatising imagery and language across media.

7. Next forum meeting & event

Topics suggested for upcoming events included:

- Environmental mapping and access to healthy environments (food and physical activity)

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- Food reformulation from the consumer perspective
- Cost of food and food supply
- Active travel
- Equity in relation to the whole systems approach

8. Any Other Business

SH informed the meeting that Sport Ireland have launched an Active Cities project across 5 cities. It will work with communities and support individuals to become more active. The project is focused across 4 key pillars – Active Systems, Active Environments, Active Societies and Active People.

Action: DT to contact SH to link with the Active Cities lead.

ED'A informed the meeting that ISCP are associated with the Enable Cities project, the project looks at physical activity access for people with disabilities.

9. Close

AMcG thanked everyone for attending and informed the meeting that a date for the next meeting will be circulated.

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safefood - update provided by Anne Parle

Transform Your Trolley 2022

The Transform Your Trolley programme was relaunched for a third year on Monday the 26th of September in partnership with the Healthy Living Centre Alliance. The programme will see 14 Healthy Living Centres across Northern Ireland delivering community-based programmes that support individuals and families to make small practical changes to the way they shop to support a healthier lifestyle.

START campaign

The latest phase of the START campaign began on the 17th of October with advertising across TV, radio, cinema, digital, out of home and social media. The campaign is again focusing on encouraging parents to continue to take steps towards healthier family habits by reducing the amount of treats they give their children and to give healthier snacks when children are hungry.

Food supplements: Exploring our reasons for taking them

This research explored why adults on the island of Ireland may or may not choose to take a food supplement and the personal, social and psychological factors that influence food supplements use. The full report is available to view online: <https://www.safefood.net/research-reports/food-supplements>

Plant-based dairy alternatives: Products Available in Supermarkets on the Island of Ireland, and Consumer Behaviours and Perceptions

A research report was launched that provided an overview of the different types and the nutritional content of plant-based dairy alternatives to milk, cheese and yogurt, available online from a range of supermarkets on the island of Ireland. The report also looked at understanding people's attitudes and behaviours to consuming these products. The report is available to view online: <https://www.safefood.net/research-reports/plant-dairy-alts>

Secondary analysis of dietary survey data of children's diets on the island of Ireland

A research report entitled 'Secondary analysis of dietary survey data of children's diets on the island of Ireland - The role of snacking and treat foods in the diets of children aged 2-12 years on the island of Ireland' was published. The report investigated the role of snacking and treat foods and their association with dietary quality, food-related behaviours and body weight status in the diets of children aged 2-12 years on the island of Ireland, using food consumption data from three existing food consumption databases: the National Pre-School Nutrition Survey (NPNS) (2010 - 2011) and the National Children's Food Survey II (NCFS II) (2017 - 2018) in the Republic of Ireland, and the National Diet and Nutrition Survey Northern Ireland (NDNS NI) (2008/09 - 2016/17). The report is available to view online: <https://www.safefood.net/research-reports/childrens-diets-2022>

Public acceptability of policies to address obesity

This report explored public attitudes towards obesity and assessed public acceptability of policies and wider initiatives to address obesity on the island of Ireland. The report is available to view online: <https://www.safefood.net/research-reports/obesity-policies>

Hungry for change: the cost-of-living crisis

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The All-island Food Poverty Network hosted it's an event on the 20th of September in that explored the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on food poverty and what initiatives are taking place to support those experiencing food poverty. Speakers included Bertrand Maître from the Economic and Social Research Institute, Ayla Ibrahim Jarchlo and Sophie Watson from the Food Standards Agency, Laura Taylor from the Public Health Agency, Joana Caldeira Fernandes da Silva from **safefood**, James Elliott from the Department for Communities and Dr Megan Blake from the University of Sheffield. Recordings of the presentations are available to view online: <https://www.safefood.net/events/hungry-for-change>

Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland - update provided by Fionnuala Close

All-Island Food Poverty Network Conference

The FSA and Safefood co-hosted this year's All-Island Food Poverty Network conference on 20th September, focusing on the cost-of-living crisis. The FSA presented data on household food security in Northern Ireland and the Public's Interests, Needs and Concerns Around Food, which highlighted some riskier food safety behaviours among those experiencing food insecurity. Other presentations focused on recent food poverty data as well as initiatives to support those experiencing food poverty, both in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

The event was opened by the Minister for Communities in Northern Ireland and closed by the Minister of State with responsibility for Community Development and Charities in the Republic of Ireland.

Nutritional Standards Co-Creation Exercise with District Councils

Following a successful nutritional standards pilot exercise with three local councils in Northern Ireland during 2019, the FSA has now drafted an amended set of nutritional standards for council catering, along with draft vending standards and procurement policy. The purpose of the nutritional standards is to provide a framework by which local councils can provide healthier food and drink to consumers through their catering and vending facilities. A co-creation exercise is currently taking place in partnership with the 11 local councils in Northern Ireland.

Green Light Recipes

The FSA have produced a collection of recipes low in fat, saturated fat, salt and sugar. The recipes were launched to coincide with World Food Day on 16th October and are available on the FSA website. The meat, poultry, fish and vegetarian dishes are straightforward to cook and have been created with a focus on nutrition and traffic-light labelling.

Department of Health (NI) - update provided by Darren Moan

Future Obesity Policy Development

Policy development work on a replacement strategic framework for AFFFA 2012-2022 commenced in February 2021. Minister agreed to the establishment of a project and the indicative timeline leading to a new obesity prevention strategy in place in early 2023. A co-design Project Board has been established and five meetings have taken place to date.

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Membership of the Board includes people with lived experience, Academics, Government Departments, Health and the Voluntary and Community Sector. A project vision, themes, and principles have been agreed.

The current draft vision statement for the new strategy is 'to create the conditions in Northern Ireland which enables and supports people to improve their diet and participate in more physical activity and reduce the risk of related harm for those living with overweight and obesity'.

The thematic groups developed and agreed by the Project Board are Healthy Policies, Healthy Places and Settings, Healthy People and, Making it Happen: Collaboration and a Whole System Approach. Example topics for consideration under each theme are as follows:

Healthy Policies

Food Environment

- Reformulation and nutritional standards
- Food quality, safety and availability
- Advertising and promotion restrictions
- Consumer food & drink labelling

Active Environment

- CMO physical activity guidelines
- Active travel & infrastructure
- Health impacts in planning
- Outdoor recreation and facilities

Healthy Places and Settings

Healthy Learning

- Healthy childcare settings
- Healthy schools and colleges
- Lifelong health food education

Healthy Work & Community

- Healthy workplaces
- Healthy HSC settings
- Healthy communities
- Community planning

Healthy People

Prevention & Intervention

- Healthy growth/development
- Lifelong health for all, inc. pregnancy, disability & ageing
- Inequalities

Targeted/Specialist Services

- Tiered pathway from obesity prevention to treatment
- Reduction in chronic diseases associated with obesity
- Specialist services available

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Making It Happen: Collaboration and a Whole System Approach

Collaboration

- Cross UK policy development
- All Island partnerships
- Cross Departmental alignments
- International research and learning
- Commitment to co-design at all stages

Whole Systems Approach

- Local leadership and actions
- Regional coordination and implementation
- Evidence-based policies and interventions
- Collaboration and Involvement

Eight stakeholder workshops, covering the first three of these thematic groups, took place online between April 2022 and June 2022. A stakeholder workshop on the last theme Making it Happen: Collaboration and a Whole System Approach took place in person in October. Feedback gathered at each of these workshops is being collated and grouped, for consideration by the Project Board.

The principals developed to underpin the project development and subsequent strategy are:

- that the new strategic framework will take a whole system approach to addressing obesity and supporting people to achieve healthy weight, it will be health led but not solely health owned.
- Recognising that overweight and obesity can cause harm at any stage, and that there is an intergenerational dimension, the new framework will take a life course approach, but it may specifically target or prioritise certain groups (i.e., it may have a strong focus on childhood obesity).
- Given the disparities that exist in this area, the framework will have a focus on reducing food, physical activity and overweight and obesity related inequalities.
- Acknowledging the alignment with other policy areas, the new framework will seek to add value to existing frameworks (such as the new cancer, diabetes, food and the sport and physical activity strategies) and will not seek to duplicate activities or reporting arrangements.
- The framework will be outcome based, focused on how we improve life for people not just the activities and initiatives we undertake.
- The framework will provide an umbrella for actions to prevent and address overweight and obesity, from education and prevention through to inpatient surgery and tier 4 treatment.

Proposed Public Consultation

In advance of Minister Swann's last day in office, permission was sought to agree in principle to consult on the outline values and principles and themes in late 2022. This permission was given, and the intention is to develop a draft consultation document by the end of the year, with a view to public publication in early 2023. The date of publication

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may be impacted by any announcement on a date for Assembly elections in Northern Ireland.

Evidence Reviews

The Institute of Public Health took forward two evidence reviews to support the obesity project development. Both reviews were completed and passed to the Department to consider in October 2022.

The first evidence review, an 'Obesity Policy Options Matrix' included an evidence review to identify international policies relating to obesity prevention, collated in a 'policy options matrix'. This policy options matrix will then undergo policy mapping in conjunction with DoH NI and the Obesity Project Board to include the NI context. This will support evidence-informed decision-making to inform the new 10-year obesity strategy by presenting up to date knowledge on the effectiveness of selected regulatory measures focussed on reducing overweight and obesity.

The second evidence review was a research paper titled '*A whole systems approach to obesity prevention: a rapid synthesis of evidence to inform the Northern Ireland Obesity Prevention Strategy Project Board*' and is available online at <https://www.dropbox.com/s/ca8m1u7a45hhkxf/WSA%20approach%20to%20obesity%20prevention%20final.pdf?dl=0>.

Selected key findings from the review are:

- WSAs can be associated with improvements in BMI, parental and community awareness, community capacity building, nutrition and physical activity environment changes, and improved wellbeing of community members.
- Diet, healthy weight and physical activity interventions conducted in the community with a school component are more effective at preventing obesity.
- Facilitators to implementing a WSA were: strong leadership, relationship building, community involvement and capacity building; consistent language of WSA across sectors; allocating time, adequate resources, financial support, use population surveillance data, flexible approaches to systems and inclusion of robust evaluation.
- Systems science should be built into WSAs to obesity. To do so interdisciplinary teamwork to map the system is required. There is a need for skills from psychosocial scientists, clinical scientists, public health researchers, and researchers with systems science knowledge

A Fitter Future For All 2012 - 2022

First results from the Health Survey Northern Ireland 2020/21 have been published. Three-fifths (60%) of respondents described their eating habits as very good or good, while 29% stated their eating habits were fair and 11% said their eating habits were bad or very bad.

Around three-fifths (59%) of respondents reported that since the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic that they had been eating the same as before, while 18% reported eating more healthily and 23% reported eating less healthily.

More than a third (36%) of respondents reported doing 30 minutes of physical activity (enough to make them out of breath) on five or more days per week. Around two-fifths (39%) of respondents reported that since the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic that they had been active the same as before, while similar proportions reported doing more physical activity (31%) and less physical activity (31%).

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These first results report can be seen at <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/health-survey-northern-ireland-first-results-202021>.

A Fitter Future For All Outcome Framework Update Report

The latest AFFFA Progress Report is currently being drafted and will be published shortly. A request will issue shortly for stakeholders to provide returns on outcomes covering the period June 2020-June 2022, to facilitate the preparation of a final two-year outcomes update report in early 2023.

Calorie Labelling And Restrictions

Work continues on a 4-nations basis to develop consultations, policy and interventions on issues such as:

- Calorie labelling in out-of-home sector
- Alcohol calorie labelling on packaged and non-packaged alcohol
- Infant food labelling and marketing
- Advertising restrictions on HFSS foods

The Department for Health and Social Care in England have begun an 'internal summary' of the evidence around obesity policy, which has paused work to finalise UK-wide consultations on alcohol calorie labelling, and infant food labelling and marketing which were developed in partnership by teams across the 4-nations. Calorie labelling in the out-of-home sector has been rolled out in England, and Scotland consulted on mandatory calorie labelling in the out of home sector between April and July 2022. Wales and NI both have published outcomes related to calorie labelling in the out of home sector as part of their Health Weight and AFFFA strategies, respectively.

Calorie labelling policy and powers are devolved in each of the 4 nations, whereas advertising restrictions are reserved to Westminster. The implementation of restrictions on advertising HFSS foods before the 9:00pm watershed and on a total ban on advertising HFSS foods online to children have now been delayed until January 2024, having earlier been announced to be taking effect from January 2023.

Active Living Sport And Physical Activity Strategy – Department For Communities

The latest sport and physical activity strategy 'Active Living' was launched by Communities Minister Hargey in March 2022. 'Active Living' will help to shape the future of sport and physical activity in Northern Ireland for the next decade and more. It will communicate the benefits of sport and physical activity and will bring long term benefits to the health of the population, the economy and to the educational abilities of children and young people.

'Active Living' will be delivered through the 6 key themes which the strategy is built around, these are:

- Recovery from the pandemic.
- Promoting participation, inclusion and community engagement.
- Promoting excellence in sport.
- Promoting partnership and integration.
- Providing inclusive and shared spaces and places.
- Promoting the benefits of sport and physical activity

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Work is ongoing to develop and expand the strategy co-design group to include additional colleagues, to begin to explore in greater detail the methodologies that will be needed to be observed in terms of robust measurement and reporting. A seminar focussing on Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) concepts and principles in the context of Active Living and specifically Theme 6, 'Promoting the Benefits of Sport and Physical Activity' is planned for late November, and will also focus on:

- population accountability
- turning-the-data-curve in the context of NI sports / physical activity data
- measuring the impact of programmes/services using performance accountability
- measuring improving performance – the theory
- choosing performance measures: Application of five-step method to implementing sports / physical exercise programmes/activities
- reporting for impact: examples of effective and ineffective ways of reporting impact.

Food Strategy Framework – Department Of Agriculture, Environment And Rural Affairs

DAERA ran a public consultation on the Northern Ireland Food Strategy Framework between September and November 2021. The draft strategy has six strategic priorities:

- Priority One: Building connections between health / wellbeing and food.
- Priority Two: Building Sustainable Economic Prosperity.
- Priority Three: Building a Food Culture and Food Conscious Society.
- Priority Four: Protecting and Enhancing our Natural Resources.
- Priority Five: Building Healthy Lives through Food Education.
- Priority Six: Building and maintaining appropriate Emergency Contingency plans across the supply chain (added due to COVID-19)

Strategic priority one intends to build on the connections between health, wellbeing and food, with a focus on **making healthy, nutritious and sustainable food the 'food of choice'**, and ensuring food is produced to the highest quality, safety and ethical standards. It will enhance **collaboration around policy agendas such as obesity, nutritional standards, food poverty**, and the principles of One Health (which recognises that the health of humans, animals and ecosystems are interconnected).

Strategic priority three will build on the connections between the economy, environment, and food, with a **focus on creating a healthy food culture, reconnecting people with knowledge of where their food comes from**, building a food citizenship movement and promoting our quality produce. It will enhance collaboration around policy agendas such as economic prosperity, environment, rural communities, and tourism

Strategic priority five will **build on the connections between health, education, farming, environment, and food**. It will enhance **collaboration around policy agendas such as food in schools, obesity, healthy eating, and nutritional standards**

A summary of the consultation responses is being prepared to support the publication of the final framework and a cross-departmental response document, though progress on this has been delayed due to the absence of an Executive.

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A high level overview of responses, agreed earlier by Minister Poots can be found at <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/daera/Northern%20Ireland%20Food%20Strategy%20Framework%20High%20Level%20Overview%20of%20Response....pdf>

Institute of Public Health - update provided by Ciara Reynolds

In terms of obesity related memberships and roles:

- A member of the advisory group on a cancer awareness survey being operated by NCCP which may provide insight on the level of awareness of obesity as a risk factor.
- IPH is interim chair of the Northern Ireland Breastfeeding Strategy Research Workstrand. IPH is supporting the planning and organisation of the 6th Annual Spotlight on Breastfeeding Research Conference taking place on the 10th of March 2023.
- A member of the Northern Ireland Regional Obesity Prevention Implementation Group.
- A member of the National Healthy Weight for Children Oversight Committee, operated by the HSE.
- A member of the NI Obesity Prevention Policy Project Board

In terms of research and evidence-based activities:

Northern Ireland

- A consultation on the new NI Obesity Prevention Strategy is expected before the end of year. The Institute have supported NI policy leads with the development of a paper on whole systems approaches (WSAs) to obesity prevention and has conducted a review of systematic reviews on a number of obesity prevention policy measures ('policy options matrix'). The WSA paper was developed in collaboration with academic experts in UK universities - Dr Gavin Breslin, Ulster University; Dr Laura McGowan - Queen's University Belfast and Prof Wendy Wills - University of Hertfordshire. The WSA paper and the policy options matrix were presented to the Department of Health on the 27th of September and the Obesity Prevention Strategy Project Board on the 25th of October. The WSA paper will be published on the Institute's website in the next few weeks. We will share with the group when available. The policy option matrix was submitted to the Department of Health for mapping to the Northern Ireland context in September and is confidential at this time.
- Laura McQuade and Prof Roger O'Sullivan from IPH made a presentation on 25 October to the DOH - NI Obesity Project Board on their forthcoming report: Using psychobehavioural segmentation analysis to understand healthy weight management behaviours. We will share with the group when the report is published.

All island

- The Institute supported the publication of the Ireland North and South Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth in late August. This was the first year that data specific to children and youth with disabilities was featured. The report is part of the Active Healthy Kids Global Alliance and will be presenting data for Ireland and Northern Ireland on key indicators including sedentary behaviours, overall physical activity, organised sport and physical activity, active play, active transportation, diet, obesity,

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family and peers, community & government. More information and results can be found at the following link: [Children and teens more physically active but inequalities remain, Ireland North and South Report Card finds - Institute of Public Health](#)

Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists - update provided by Esther-Mary D'Arcy

The ISCP document on the Role of Physiotherapy in Weight Management in Adults has now been extensively revised and was approved by the Board.

Irish Heart Foundation - update provided by Janis Morrissey

New advocacy campaign on food marketing to children

At 11am on Thursday 17th November, at Buswells Hotel, Dublin 2, we will launch a new campaign calling on the Government to fulfil its Programme for Government pledge to a new Public Health Obesity Act, including a full ban on online junk food marketing; moving the broadcast watershed from 6pm-9pm; and removal of all junk food advertising from public transport, buildings and other infrastructure.

The campaign is based around a hard-hitting video piece focused on junk food advertising to children online; billboard adverts calling out the extent of junk food marketing to children; and a radio ad. These were informed by quantitative research among 500 parents and 500 teenagers and a qualitative piece by a representative sample of 50 teens who maintained a food diary over the course of a week detailing all the food ads they saw and what they ate.

All AIOAF members are welcome to attend the launch and are requested to share the campaign/sign the petition on <http://www.irishheart.ie/>

Online Safety Bill

The Online Safety and Media Regulation Bill 2022 is continuing its passage through the Oireachtas. Whilst we have secured critical amendments on junk food marketing, we are still seeking to stop self-regulation of advertising as part of the process.

WHO Schools Health Literacy Demonstration Project

Work continues on this flagship Irish Heart Foundation project which aims to create and prove the effectiveness of a unique and innovative intervention that improves health literacy levels in adolescents, sits within the Wellbeing curriculum and supports positive health behaviours that can be carried into adulthood. A registered World Health Organisation National Health Literacy Demonstration project, and the only such project to focus on primary prevention and young people. It is run in partnership with UCD and DCU. Further information is available [here](#).

High Risk Prevention Project

The Irish Heart Foundation's High-Risk Prevention Project in General Practice is an exciting new project supported by the HSE. Under the HSE High-Risk Prevention Programme, those at high risk of cardiovascular disease are entitled to one annual GP visit and one practice nurse visit. High-risk patients require support to actively manage their risk factors. This is

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challenging to achieve through an annual visit, particularly for vulnerable people and people in deprived areas. To prevent these high-risk patients from developing chronic disease a more intensive approach is required. A lifestyle behaviour change programme was co-designed with patients and GP practice staff to support those in deprived areas who are eligible for the HSE High-Risk Prevention Programme. This programme is carried out through the local GP practice recruiting patients who are identified as needing greater support to reduce their risk of heart disease. Six practices in disadvantaged areas in Leinster are recruited to deliver this innovative programme. We are working with UCD School of Medicine to assess the impact of the two intervention arms over a 12-month period. For more information see [our website](#).

Public Health Agency - Update provided by Colette Brolly

Food in Schools - The PHA continue to be members of the Department of Education's Food in Schools Forum. The PHA continues to support and influence the implementation of the revised Nutritional Standards.

Food in Schools Policy - The PHA jointly funds a Food in Schools Co-ordinator (with the Department of Education) who supports schools to implement the Food in Schools Policy. The PHA also chairs the Food in Schools Management Group to ensure the action plan is being delivered.

EYOPP – The PHA continue to support the roll out of an Early Years Obesity Prevention Programme. Training is offered by HENRY and the Clinical Education Centre, who have been trained as trainers. Delivery is completed by all 5 HSCTs across NI and Surestarts. Families with children aged 0-5 are engaged in line with set criteria. The PHA has also signed up for NI to be a research site for a HENRY RCT. NIHR have approved the research funding and next steps are pending.

FLO - The PHA and Public Health Dietitians Group are leading on a pilot Workplace Weight Management Programme entitled Florence (FLO). FLO is a technology enabled care motivator that supports HSC Trust staff to lose weight by sending regular text messages of information/encouragement over a 12-week period. The PHA have funded 2 cohorts and are currently awaiting evaluation of the programme.

Nutrition Education programmes - A suite of nutrition webinars has been developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to support nutrition education and improved nutritional outcomes where cost is a consideration. Topics include "Mealtime tips and fussy eating", "Healthy happy kids-lunchbox ideas" and "Healthier diet healthier you". The PHA has also developed a YouTube channel to host these webinars, along with time-lapse recipe videos produced by the Public Health Dietitians Group (PHDG).

As part of PHA's commissioning, Public Health Dietitians (PHD) are undertaking a review of nutrition education training with a proposed tiered structure for nutrition education & training and the potential for offering accreditation for higher tiered training.

Active Travel - The PHA continues to support and promote active travel in three key settings: schools (regional Active School Travel programme), workplaces (Leading the Way

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with Active Travel – key workplaces in Belfast and the Western area), and communities (Community Active Travel programme in 12 disadvantaged communities in Belfast). Plans are in place to procure a holistic, regional Active Travel Programme from approximately September 2023. An evaluation will be procured in November 2022 to support the development of the specification for the holistic regional AT programme.

The Daily Mile – PHA is an active member on the Northern Ireland network and support initiatives across the region, such as the annual Santa Run. As of August 22, there were 434 primary schools and early years settings registered to participate in the Daily Mile. The PHA and the Education Authority (EA) have jointly funded University of Ulster to undertake a data linkage study in 22/23 exploring health inequalities and uptake of the Daily Mile across Northern Ireland.

Regional Physical Activity Trust/PHA Forum – Physical activity leads in PHA and Trusts have commenced a programme of work to further promote the importance of physical activity in Early Years and Later Years. A stakeholder event for Early Years and a Workshop for Later years were held in April 2022 and an action plan of work is being taken forward.

Physical Activity Referral Scheme (PARS) – The regional physical activity referral scheme which was launched in 2019 and severely impacted by Covid is now seeing referrals to the scheme at pre Covid levels. The scheme is operational across 58 sites and since April 202 4573 referrals have been made to the scheme.

Walking for Health – The PHA insures 1870 walk leaders to lead walks across Northern Ireland. Walk leader training is commissioned from local health trusts, all resources for the programme are currently being updated.

Breastfeeding - The Breastfeeding Strategy Implementation Steering Group is due to meet at the beginning of December 2022. The Department of Health has extended the Strategy for a further year to allow time for the review given the delays caused by the pandemic.

Examples of PHA support for breastfeeding include:

- Continuation of the delivery of UNICEF Baby Friendly training
- Enhanced support to Tiny Life with improvements to the Regional Breast pump loan service
- Development of support videos for families with a baby in the neonatal unit to increase breast milk consumption.
- Breastfeeding education and support to mothers continue to be supported and adapted through contracts with La Leche League, NCT and Breastival.
- Further development of organisations taking part in the Breastfeeding Welcome Here – examples this year include Translink, Ulster GAA along with universities and regional colleagues.

Nutritional Standards in HSC - Work continues to support the implementation of the revised nutritional standards in HSC settings. The launch of the new standards took place in March 2022 with support from the Health Minister. We are moving to phase 2 of

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implementation support which includes five Band 4 Nutritional Standards Coordinators, one in each Trust area. It is hoped that the recruitment process will be complete in the new year.

Weigh to a Healthy Pregnancy - PHA continues to offer the Weigh to a Healthy Pregnancy (WTHP) programme to all eligible pregnant women with a BMI of 38 and above. Redeployment of staff during the pandemic had an impact on the outcomes of the project but as we continue to move through the rebuild and recovery phase we are seeing increased numbers engaging in the programme with the benefits of a hybrid delivery (face-to-face and telephone consultations).

Whole System Approach to Obesity Prevention. A whole system approach to Obesity Prevention is being developed in Northern Ireland.

- 30 staff from PHA and ROPIG have been trained on WSA – 4 sessions delivered by Leeds Beckett in April/May 2022.
- A presentation was made to SOLACE representatives on WSA in April 2022.
- A ROPIG Task and Finish Group has been established and has met on 4 occasions.
- A briefing paper has been developed and circulated to Councils to elicit expressions of interest to become early adopter sites.
- 6 Expression of Interest have been received.
- IPH evidence synthesis has been developed to support the inclusion of WSA in new obesity prevention strategy.

New Obesity Prevention Strategy

The PHA is represented on the project board for the development of the New Obesity Prevention Strategy for NI led by DoH.

Cancer Research UK - Update provided by Margaret Carr and Malcolm Clark

UK-wide

Since June, our primary UK-wide cancer prevention advocacy work has been shifting to our new SmokefreeUK campaign – pushing for measures (esp. in England) to 'stop the start' and to 'start the stop'.

However, our obesity policy work continues, particularly in partnership with advocacy alliances. We have helped to defend obesity legislation against the push back of successive recent Prime Ministers; working with Obesity Health Alliance to show support for these measures across the political spectrum.

In addition, we conducted polling which showed that 3 in 5 people do not support a delay to the junk food ban. And we published new obesity prevalence projections, incl. for NI: https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/sites/default/files/cancer-stats/adult_overweight_and_obesity_prevalence_projections_18-05/adult_overweight_and_obesity_prevalence_projections_18-05.pdf

We continue to work with OHA to respond to threats to implementing HFSS advertising restrictions. We also are analysing the latest wave of our UK-wide Youth Obesity Policy

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Survey (which looks at impact of marketing and other factors) and will be publishing relevant findings over the next 6 months.

England

We celebrated the successful implementation of location based HFSS promotion restrictions in England on 1 October. And – despite a concerted effort by opponents to quash the measure entirely – the HFSS volume-based price promotions restrictions are only officially delayed being introduced by 1 year.

We have also been active at Labour Party Conference and beyond in trying to ensure Labour maintains its support for junk food marketing restrictions, including on multi-buy promotions.

Scotland, Wales and NI

Made progress towards introduction of legislation in Scotland and Wales to restrict HFSS price promotions. We welcomed the inclusion of a Promotions Bill in the 2022/23 Scottish Government's legislative programme and will be supporting the public affairs work needed to help get that Bill passed. We submitted a response to the recent consultation on the specifics of what the restrictions should cover.

In Wales, we worked closely with Obesity Action Cymru to develop a comprehensive response to the Welsh Government's obesity policy consultation (submitted at end of August). And continue to look at how we can keep the positive momentum in Wales going.

In NI we continue to support the work being done on developing a new obesity strategy. And are also working with partners there to draft and publish a NI-specific version of Obesity Health Alliance's *Turning the Tide* Healthy Weight Strategy.

Association for the Study of Obesity NI Network - Update provided by Dr Laura McGowan (LEAD)

Updates to ASO UK – new Chair Dr Nicola Heslehurst, Newcastle University

Webinars and online events still running regularly (free), sign up via ASO website to receive the newsletter

ASO UK new expert learning and online resources collection for obesity (for health professionals and allied HPs involved in the care and management of people living with obesity) curated by ASO and EASO - 'Explore Obesity' (supported via an unrestricted educational grant from Novo Nordisk)

UKCO 2023 – Confirmed as 14th & 15th Sept 2023 (Thursday and Friday) held at Riddel Hall, Stranmillis Road, Queen's University Belfast.

- Plenary sessions from: Patient and public representatives, Professor Susan Jebb, Professor Russell Viner, Professor Sadaf Farooqi
- Three-minute thesis session
- Rapid fire communication session
- Oral abstracts (member-led and invited, plus sponsored)