



GAY HEALTH NETWORK (GHN)

SUMMARY REVIEW and ACTION PLAN 2008-2010

JUNE 2008

BACKGROUND

Established in 1994, Gay Health Network (GHN) is an All Ireland network of individuals and agencies involved in or interested in promoting HIV prevention and support and other sexual health issues.

In 2007 it was agreed to conduct a review of the GHN as follows:

- Review the structure of the GHN.
- Review the purpose of the GHN.
- Identify areas for projects and research through an informal needs analysis of the population groups among MSM.
- Develop a 3-year Action Plan based on the review.
- Review resources to implement the Action Plan.

A working group of the GHN membership was formed for the review and the development of an Action Plan, with the assistance of Peter Clarke.

The informal needs analysis included a review of achievements to date (GHN publications, campaigns, research etc.), and throughout this process, we sought to ensure that the findings were strongly linked with research, reports and work that has already been carried out nationally. In the main the findings are taken from and linked with:

- Vital Statistics Ireland – Findings from the All Ireland Gay Men’s Sex Survey 2000
- Real Lives – Findings from the All-Ireland Gay Men’s Sex Surveys 2003 & 2004
- National AIDS Strategy Committee (NASC) HIV and AIDS Education and Prevention Plan 2008-2012
- HIV Surveillance Reports on Diagnosed HIV infections among MSM in Ireland 2000-2007, Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC)
- The Irish Study of Sexual Health & Relationships 2006, DOHC

The findings identified the following needs among MSM population groups:

- Information awareness on HIV risk, exposure, testing and treatment.
- Increased access to condoms and lube, in particular for those residing outside urban centres, as well as information on the correct use of condoms.
- Advocacy on Stigma, and Disclosure.
- Support around sexual negotiations, behaviour change, problematic drug and alcohol use, and mental health issues.

The analysis also highlighted the areas of greatest need among men residing outside urban centres, men with little or no access to services, young men under the age of 20, men with low self esteem, and men with lower educational qualifications.

STRUCTURE OF GHN

GHN is an All-Ireland network of organisations and individuals with a shared ethos, sharing ideas, work and resources, with a shared commitment to achieving the purpose of the network. The network will continue to operate with a loose, informal structure, based on common and shared interests and responsibilities in promoting the work of the network.

PURPOSE OF GHN

GHN's purpose is to promote HIV prevention and sexual health awareness among men who have sex with men, with a focus on men living with HIV, and to combat the stigma associated with HIV.

GHN ACTIONS 2008-2010

The following tables outline details of GHN proposed projects and estimated timeframes for implementation from 2008 to 2010.

PUBLICATIONS	
Project	Estimated Timeframe
Younger MSM & Sexual Health and Well-Being	April 2009
Mainstream publication on Safer Sex, HIV & STI messages for MSM - for access and distribution to GPs and other settings nationally	September 2009
'Positive Sex' for HIV+ MSM and their partners	December 2009
Drug & Alcohol Use and MSM/LGBT	2010

RESEARCH	
Project	Estimated Timeframe
Publish data report from All Ireland Gay Men's Sex Surveys 2005 and 2006 (Real Lives 2)	Late 2008
Publish data report from All Ireland Gay Men's Sex Survey 2007	2009
Conduct a qualitative and quantitative study on the needs of HIV+ MSM	Commence 2008 / Publish 2010
Conduct All-Ireland Research similar to Vital Statistics Ireland 2000	Commence 2009 / Publish 2010

PREVENTION

Project	Estimated Timeframe
Develop strategies to increase access to condoms and lubricants for those residing outside urban centres	Ongoing 2008 to 2010
Promote the correct use of condoms through incorporating messages in publications, and through other innovative methods, e.g. condom workshops at key events	Ongoing 2008 to 2010
Seek to utilise LGBT Pride events nationally to promote safer sex messages for MSM	2008, 2009, and 2010
Increase delivery of safer sex messages through identifying channels of communication with population groups residing outside urban centres	Ongoing 2008 to 2010
Continue to engage with new communities, through the translation of all publications on GHN website, including promotion of the website	Ongoing 2008 to 2010

COMMUNICATION

Project	Estimated Timeframe
Increase sector-wide communication through the publication of a quarterly newsletter for distribution nationally	Quarterly 2008 to 2010

EVALUATION AND PLANNING

Project	Estimated Timeframe
Evaluate the effectiveness of GHN Publications	Late 2010
Review the effectiveness of this Action Plan, and commence planning for 2011 to 2013	Late 2010

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN

Membership

- GHN will meet approximately four times annually.
- Members of the network will form working groups with responsibility for specific projects, and will report on progress at full membership meetings.
- GHN will promote and encourage new members to the network, and partnerships for specific campaigns.

Funding

- GHN is committed to sourcing funding streams to ensure full implementation of the Action Plan.
- It is estimated that €165k funding will be required to implement all projects within the Action Plan.
- Up to 2008, the main funding streams have been GMHS/HSE, and AMI, with pro-bono advertising in GCN through GMHS.
- GMHS, HSE remains committed to funding GHN annually.
- AMI has committed further funding in 2008 and 2009.

Forthcoming Reports

Forthcoming project reports will inform, direct and assist with the implementation of this plan:

- HSE LGBT mapping exercise conducted in 2007, and due for publication in 2008/9
- HIV & STI activity mapping exercise, included as part of the NASC HIV & AIDS Education & Prevention Plan 2008-2012.
- Further reports from the All Ireland Gay Men's Sex Surveys.

GHN working group with responsibility for the review and development of the Plan:

Noel Walsh (Positive Voices and GCN), Mick Quinlan (Gay Men's Health Service), Paul Madden (Southern Gay Men's Health Project), James O'Connor (Open heart House), Susan Donlon (Dublin AIDS Alliance), David McCartney (The Rainbow Project), Con O'Rourke (Johnny).

GHN would like to extend their appreciation to Peter Clarke for his facilitation, and to all GHN members for their feedback.

FUNDING OF GAY HEALTH NETWORK Since it's inception in 1994 Gay Health Network(GHN) has promoted HIV awareness safer sex and sexual health aimed at gay, bisexual men in All of Ireland. Less than 3% to 5% of it's funds has gone on administration costs or meetings.

Funding Prior to 2005. In January 2005 GHN had €2,200 in the bank. In the previous years 2001 to 2004 GHN spent €47,454 on the following; Peer Work with Johnny €6,687, Printing €5,304, Design €2,985, Advertisements €9,666, Development of the Website €1,110, Research (VSI 2000) €8,741, and admin (meetings, distribution, etc) €2,7823.

Overall this was from funds received from the former East Coast Area Health Board under "section 65" (before year 2000) and €9,500 (in 2003) from Health Promotion Department DOHC for the HIV Testing Booklet "In The Know".

Funding From January 2005. Since January 2005 GHN received the following funds:

- *June 2005:* €5,000 from GMHP/HSE for the editing and reprint of the "Love Bugs" information booklet on STI's.
- *October 2005:* €12,500 from the government's *Once-Off Allocation for HIV/AIDS Projects 2005*
- *October 2005:* €5,000 was received from the HSE (Social Inclusion National Office) towards translating publications (text only) into Chinese, French, Irish, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and to place in PDF form on the GHN website for download.
- *November 2005:* the Health Promotion Department DOHC gave €9,500 toward the shortfall for the one off projects.
- *2006:* received €3000.00 from AMI (Alternative Miss Ireland)a community fundraising event.
- *2007:* received €5,000.00 from AMI
- *2007:* received €500 from GTF
- *2008:* GHN received 10,000 from AMI

Note: In the original submission, for the Once off Projects GHN had sought €95,550 which included a substantial amount for another Vital Statistic Research. There was a shortfall of €78,000. Nevertheless GHN welcomed the amount received and committed these to the following

Progress on the 2005 Submissions for which funding was received:

- Johnny Peer Group purchased a stand for use in promotions.
- Comic by BeLongTo; aimed at younger gay and bisexual men June 2007
- Play Safe Play Sex **Completed December 2007**
- PEP Leaflet is at the design stage and deals with prophylactics for treatment after exposure to HIV. **Completed January 2008**
- Translations: Translation of all above text only into seven languages and placed in PDF on website for downloading. Also printing of cards in different languages promoting this development. **Completed March 2008**
- **Re designed Website 2008**

All the projects ran over estimates nevertheless with support from AMI and GMHS they will all be completed by April 2008 which leaves very little funds in the account.

Gay Health Network Key Projects for Years 1994 to 2008

“On The One Road” Newsletter Distributed to over 400 groups and agencies all Ireland: 1st Edition **2008**.

“Rubber Up Campaign” Mobile Billboard Dublin Pride, Advertisements placed and Postcards(also promoting the translation on the web) distributed around Ireland. **2008**

“Translations on the Web” of safer sex, PEP, HIV Testing, Syphilis, and STI’s information into seven languages and placed in PDF on website for downloading. **2008**

Redesign of the GHN Website. 2008

PEP information Leaflet on HIV post exposure treatment: **January 2008**

“Play Safe Play Sex” comprehensive safer sex booklet: **December 2007**

Positive Voices and the “Charter of Rights” for HIV Positive persons in Ireland: **2006**

“Donnie Got Laid” Comic by BeLonGTo; aimed at younger gay and bisexual men: **June 2007**

Johnny Peer Group purchased a stand for use in promotions. **2006**

GHN Projects Completed between 2000 and 2004.

‘Vital Statistics Ireland’ the All-Ireland gay sex survey 2000. This joint research project (with SIGMA Research UK) has proved one of the most successful interventions by GHN. GHN members recruited 1,400 gay and bisexual men around Ireland.

“Love Bugs” Sexual Health Booklet for gay and bisexual men containing detailed information on sexually transmitted infections. (funded by HPU of the DOHC) *An updated version was published in June 2005 (funded by GMHP via HSE ECA)*

“In The kNow” A comprehensive booklet on the HIV test funded by the HPU of the DOHC.

Media advertising. Designing and placing of one-page adverts in Gay Community News. The adverts had various topics: such as HIV Positive Men, HIV stops with me, In the Know (on HIV Testing) Questions on HIV, Website

Leaflet distribution GHN members and Johnny and GMHS outreach engage in various promotions. From the installation and maintenance of information racks in gay social venues to using floats in the Gay Pride Parade. *(GMHS/HSE funds this and provides transport for Johnny Members)*

Web-site www.gayhealthnetwork.ie We established an Irish based gay sexual health information website providing easy access to sexual health information and links to relevant services.

Workshops, training and meetings GHN held regular meetings for members and special training workshops and also attended conferences with similar UK Network (CHAPS). Positive Voices workshops

Other GHN publications produced since 1994.

Play Safe Play Sexy Booklet: the Black and White Booklet –CD size-containing photographs of local men engaged in safer sex acts). **1999**

‘Pack of Cards’ *Play Safe Play Sexy* containing raunchy safer sex messages on each card. **1997**

HIV Testing Leaflet: A text only leaflet on the test. **1996**

Rubber Up (a cover for the safer sex pack containing 2 condoms and 2 lube supplied by GMHP... **1995**

Hepatitis B Leaflet (produced by Southern Gay Men’s Health Project for GHN) **1995**

Hot Healthy Horny: The first Safer Sex Booklet in Ireland aimed containing photos. **1994**