



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.