

# Men's Health Week 2013

**ACTION MEN- TURNING WORDS INTO ACTIONS!**

# MEN'S HEALTH WEEK 2013

BE YOUR OWN ACTION HERO  
TAKE 1 | JUNE | 2013

**STARRING A CAST OF MILLIONS**  
SHOWING AT A VENUE NEAR YOU 10TH-16TH JUNE

 **Man Matters**   **FORUM** 

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## Briefing Paper

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# Men's Health Week 2013: Briefing Paper

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## Why do we need to focus upon men's health issues and needs?

Men, on the island of Ireland, experience a disproportionate burden of ill-health and die too young ...

- Local men die, on average, almost five years younger than women do.
- Males have higher death rates than women for all of the leading causes of death.
- Poor lifestyles are responsible for a high proportion of chronic diseases.
- Late presentation to health services leads to a large number of problems becoming untreatable ...



Indeed, while many of these conditions are preventable, their prevalence among men may, in fact, rise in the future.

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## When is Men's Health Week (MHW)?

Men's Health Week (MHW) always begins on the Monday before Father's Day and ends on Father's Day itself. This year, it will run from Monday 10<sup>th</sup> until Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2013.

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## Where is MHW celebrated?

MHW is celebrated in most European countries, as well as in the USA, Australia, New Zealand and a number of other places worldwide.

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## What are the aims of MHW?

Internationally, the core aims of MHW each year are to ...

- Heighten awareness of preventable health problems for males of all ages.
- Support men and boys to engage in healthier lifestyle choices / activities.
- Encourage the early detection and treatment of health difficulties in males.

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## Is there a specific theme this year?

Each year, individual countries focus upon a specific theme. The theme for 2013 in Ireland is: *"Action Men! - Turning Words into Actions"*

This is different to the theme in England and Wales - which will focus upon mental health.

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## Why 'Action Men!'?

Not too long ago, we were unaware of the full extent of men's poor health status and the specific health issues that they face. However, this is no longer the case. Therefore, we cannot ignore the needs of almost half of the population of the island of Ireland.

In recent years, a broad range of research has highlighted the health difficulties which face men in Ireland and further afield. For example ...

- *Men's Health in Ireland* ([www.mhfi.org/fullreport.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/fullreport.pdf))
- *Getting Inside Men's Health* ([www.mhfi.org/gettinginsidemenshealth.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/gettinginsidemenshealth.pdf))
- *Men's Health in Northern Ireland: Tackling the Root Causes of Men's [ill] Health* ([www.mhfi.org/manmattersbriefing1.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/manmattersbriefing1.pdf))
- *A Report on the all-Ireland Young Men and Suicide Project* ([www.mhfi.org/ymspfullreport.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/ymspfullreport.pdf))
- *Facing the Challenge - The Impact of Recession and Unemployment on Men's Health in Ireland* ([www.mhfi.org/IPHreport2011.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/IPHreport2011.pdf))
- *The State of Men's Health in Europe* ([www.mhfi.org/menshealtheurope.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/menshealtheurope.pdf)) ...

This evidence clearly shows that men's health could be improved in many significant ways. However, men require structural support and cultural encouragement to do this.

The Republic of Ireland was the first country in the world to have a National Men's Health Policy ([www.mhfi.org/menshealthpolicy.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/menshealthpolicy.pdf)). This was founded upon a comprehensive review of men's health evidence (both nationally and internationally), as well as consultations with a range of stakeholders - including men themselves. Northern Ireland still lacks any dedicated formal framework / guidelines for assessing or meeting men's health needs.



Now that we know what many of the key men's health issues are, it's time to do something about them. This year, Men's Health Week calls for action on men's health. There is a role for everyone. Men's health is not just an issue for individual men. While it is crucial for men to take responsibility for looking after themselves, their health can often be determined by other factors outside of their personal control. Thus, there is also a need for policy-makers and service providers to recognise the role that they need to play, and to do something practical about it.

Frequently, we simply blame men for their own state of health, and focus upon the shortcomings of individuals without recognising that there are also wider social determinants of health. MHW 2013 calls upon everyone to do their bit to improve the lot of men and boys, and to start turning words into actions.

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## What were the themes for MHW in previous years?

Previous MHWs in Ireland have focused upon ...

- 2005 - Obesity
- 2006 - Mental Well-Being
- 2007 - Long-Term Conditions
- 2008 - Health in the Workplace
- 2009 - Access to Services
- 2010 - Physical Activity
- 2011 - Supporting Men and Boys during Challenging Times
- 2012 - What's Your First Instinct ... Fight? Flight? Find Out?

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## Who is the target audience?

The purpose of MHW is to draw attention to the health and well-being issues affecting men and boys, and to encourage / promote personal, structural and systemic change where possible. This, therefore, implies that any messages and engagement needs to target:

- Males themselves
- Policy / decision-makers
- Service providers
- Public awareness and preconceptions

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## Who can be involved in this week?

MHW gives everyone (health professionals, service providers, youth groups, sporting bodies, community organisations, employers, Churches, policy makers, family workers, the media, parents, individuals ...) an opportunity to encourage men and boys to take better care of their health and to seek help or treatment at an early stage.

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## How can my organisation be involved?

Absolutely everyone can do something to support and celebrate MHW 2013. The focus for this year (i.e. *'Action Men - Turning Words into Actions'*) lends itself to a wide range of ways to mark this occasion. However, anything which encourages men and boys to lead healthier lifestyles, to be more aware of preventable health problems, and to seek early detection and treatment for health difficulties is very welcome.

A range of practical ideas for how you or your organisation can be involved in MHW 2013 can be found online at: [www.mhfi.org/mhw2013celebrateit.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw2013celebrateit.pdf)

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## Are there any ways that I can promote the week?

There is a common logo / image pack which can be used by everyone who wishes to raise awareness of the week. There is also a MHW 2013 poster. These are important promotional tools - as one of the key aims is to let as many people as possible know about the week. These are available, free, to anyone who wishes to use them. See [www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-image-pack.html](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-image-pack.html) for more details.



Promotion of MHW could take the form of:

- Putting-up a poster.
- Advertising MHW on your own website.
- Creating a link from your website to the MHW 2013 website ([www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2013.html](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2013.html)).
- Sending an email to everyone in your contacts list about Men's Health Week and asking them to forward the message.
- Inserting the MHW logo ([www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-image-pack.html](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-image-pack.html)) into your outgoing emails.
- Becoming a fan of the Men's Health Forum in Ireland's Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/MensHealthForumIreland](http://www.facebook.com/MensHealthForumIreland)) and sending the link to all your online friends.
- Including information about MHW in your mailouts / newsletters.
- Telling others about what is happening in your area during MHW by posting details on the MHW website ([www.mhfi.org/mhw/submit-an-event.html](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw/submit-an-event.html)).
- Reminding your colleagues to follow all the latest MHW news on Twitter ([www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL](http://www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL)).
- Encouraging the men you know to get involved in some of the activities taking place around the country ...

Doing one or more of these simple (and cost-free) things would contribute hugely to MHW 2013!

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## Who has planned Men's Health Week 2013 in Ireland?

MHW in Ireland has been planned by a broad range of partners who contributed to an inter-agency Planning Group. This body met, and had ongoing communication with each other, between January and May 2013. It was convened and coordinated by the [Men's Health Forum in Ireland](#) (MHFI). MHFI works alongside other Men's Health Fora worldwide to focus attention upon male health issues.

The theme for this year's MHW (i.e. Action Men) offers an opportunity for a very wide range of agencies to participate. Indeed, the planning process for 2013 drew upon the insight, expertise, support and contacts of individuals from ...

Amen

ARK (Queen's University and University of Ulster)

Belfast Community Sports Development Network

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

British Medical Association NI

Colin Neighbourhood Partnership

Community.ie

Man Matters Project

Marian House Nursing Home, Kimmage Manor

Marie Keating Foundation

Medical Students' Committee in Northern Ireland

Men Alone in No-mans-land

Men's Action Network

Men's Development Network

Fír Le Cheile (Men Together)  
Football Association of Ireland  
Gaelic Athletic Association  
Health Service Executive, Dublin / North East  
Helplink Support Services  
Inspire Ireland  
Irish Cancer Society  
Irish Football Association  
Irish Heart Foundation  
Irish Men's Sheds Forum  
Irish Rugby Football Union  
Irish Sports Council  
Man Alive - Cancer Focus NI

Men's Health Forum in Ireland  
Mental Health Ireland  
National Youth Council of Ireland  
Northern Health and Social Care Trust  
Northern Ireland Chest, Heart and Stroke  
Safefood  
Samaritans  
See Change  
Southern Health and Social Care Trust  
Sport Northern Ireland  
Sure Start Fathers' Network  
Western Health and Social Care Trust  
YouthAction Northern Ireland

... as well as a range of other interested individuals from across the island of Ireland.

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## What is the Men's Health Forum in Ireland?

The Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) is a diverse network of individuals and organisations, men and women, from both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The Forum was established in 1999, and operates on an all-island basis. At present, it has one temporary self-employed worker, but is, primarily, structured, organised and run using the expertise, resources and enthusiasm of volunteers.

MHFI is a charitable organisation which is registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee. The Forum seeks to promote all aspects of the health and well being of men and boys on the island of Ireland through research, training, networking, health initiatives and advocacy. It is managed by a Board of Trustees.

One of MHFI's core areas of work is the coordination of Men's Health Week (MHW) activity on the island of Ireland each year. More details can be found at: [www.mhfi.org](http://www.mhfi.org)

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## How can I find out more about MHW?

To find out more about Men's Health Week 2013, contact ...

Colin Fowler  
Director of Operations  
Men's Health Forum in Ireland  
Tel: 0044 751 9945261  
Email: [colin@mhfi.org](mailto:colin@mhfi.org)



or visit ...

Website: [www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2013.html](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2013.html)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/MensHealthForumIreland](https://www.facebook.com/MensHealthForumIreland)  
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/MensHealthIRL>

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