
Improve Men's Health 'One Step at a Time' - a million men on the island of Ireland can't be wrong!

An ancient Chinese proverb famously states: *'a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step'*. For over twenty years, a diverse range of organisations from across the island of Ireland have been voluntarily coming together to build upon their first 'single step' in the field of men's health. This work has seen the celebration of Men's Health Week on the island grow from a small number of people handing out a few posters in 2005, to over 100 groups working together to plan and shape this week on an all-Ireland basis today: running hundreds of events; engaging tens of thousands of men; and, this year, reaching the target of making the *'Action Man - ten top tips for men's health'* booklet available to almost one million men.

The final countdown to [International Men's Health Week](https://www.mhw.org) (MHW) is being launched today. This week always begins on the Monday before Father's Day and ends on Father's Day itself. During 2026, it will run from Monday 15th until Sunday 21st June. It is celebrated in many European countries, as well as in the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and a number of other places worldwide.

Back in 2005, we were unaware of the full extent of men's poor health status and the specific health issues that they are contending with. However, this is no longer the case. In recent years, a broad [range of research](#) has highlighted the health challenges which face men on the island of Ireland and further afield. This research shows that these men experience a disproportionate burden of ill-health:

- Men continue to die, on average, younger than women do.
- Males in the most deprived communities have the worst overall health outcomes.
- Poor lifestyles are responsible for a high proportion of chronic diseases.
- Men have higher death rates than women for almost all of the leading causes of death, and at all ages.
- Male mental health needs often go undiagnosed and unaddressed.
- Late presentation to health services can lead to a large number of problems becoming untreatable ...

Lorcan Brennan, Training and Resource Development Manager in the Men's Development Network, comments:

"Although the health of men in Ireland is sometimes poor, it is not a 'lost cause' - and it can be improved in many significant ways. Men's Health Week offers an ideal opportunity to raise awareness of preventable health problems, support men and boys to live healthier lives, and encourage them to seek help or treatment at an early stage".

However, many men still say that they get the feeling that everyone is trying to weigh them down with 'health messages', and that they are always made to feel guilty about the things that they don't do, or that they do wrong.

Michael Lynch, Director of Men's Action Network, reflects:

"This image of 'Men Behaving Badly' is hardly a positive place to begin an honest conversation about health improvement with anyone. Of course, it is true that we all need to: eat 5-7 portions of fruit / vegetables a day; have at least 30 minutes moderate physical activity on five days a week; stop smoking; limit our alcohol consumption; keep an eye to our bits and bobs, maintain our social connections, seek help quickly when we need it ... but if we aren't already doing this, then we need to find practical and realistic ways to get ourselves into this routine".

During MHW 2026, everyone is being asked to adopt a different approach - to take ONE STEP AT A TIME and to work towards making progress rather than seeking perfection. Why?... because small, simple, realistic and practical steps can ultimately lead to big positive results.

Paul Barton, Programme and Development Coordinator for the Men's Health Forum in Ireland, adds:

"During Men's Health Week, everyone is being asked to think about what their 'step' might be to improve the health of men and boys on the island of Ireland.

We are calling upon policy makers to ensure that men have the resources to live long and healthy lives; service providers to offer appropriate tools, advice and support to males; men to take small practical steps to improve their own health; everyone to look out for and after each other".

To support men, the ever popular '[Action Man](#)' Manual has been updated, and is available in both hard copy and as an online download. **To date, 250,000 hard copies of this have been given to local men, with a further 750,000 electronic copies downloaded.** During Men's Health Week 2026, males are encouraged to get a copy of this free booklet, which has been specifically written for men on the island of Ireland.



The 'Action Man: ten top tips for men's health' manual doesn't preach or lecture, it simply explains:

- WHY an action is needed.
- WHAT can be done about it.
- HOW to find support if you need it.

Finian Murray, Co-Facilitator of the All-Island Men's Health Week Planning Group, and one of the authors of the Man Manual, explains:

"The ten top tips put men into the driving seat, and give them the tools and DIY instructions to make positive changes - if they choose to be their own 'Action Man'. It starts with a clear warning: reading this booklet could seriously improve your health, and encourages men to make progress one step at a time".

Colin Fowler, Director of Operations for the Men's Health Forum in Ireland, concludes:

"For over twenty years, organisations and individuals from across the island of Ireland have been working collectively and voluntarily to ensure that Men's Health Week is now one of the biggest events in the local health calendar. However, we all need to continue to improve men's health one step at a time. After all, the 'Action Man' manual shows that a million men on the island of Ireland clearly think that this is the way to go".

ENDS

[followed by Editor's Notes]

EDITOR'S NOTES

1. For more information or an interview, contact one of the members of the All-Island Men's Health Week Planning Group ...

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2. The 'Men's Health in Numbers' publications provide an up-to-date and comprehensive overview of key statistics on men's health on the island of Ireland. They are available for free downloading from the Men's Health Forum in Ireland website at ...

- Trends on the Island of Ireland - www.mhfi.org/MensHealthInNumbers1.pdf
- Republic of Ireland Men's Health Report Card - www.mhfi.org/MensHealthInNumbers2.pdf
- Northern Ireland Men's Health Report Card - www.mhfi.org/MensHealthInNumbers3.pdf

3. The 'Do You Know Your Numbers?' z-card for men is available online at:
<https://mhfi.org/MensHealthInNumbers.pdf>

4. International Men's Health Week always begins on the Monday before Father's Day and ends on Father's Day itself. During 2026, it will run from Monday 15th until Sunday 21st June.

5. The overarching 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.

6. During 2026, the key message for the island of Ireland is to take one step at a time and work towards making progress rather than seeking perfection - because small steps can ultimately lead to big results.

7. Men's Health Week is celebrated across Europe, the USA, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and other countries worldwide.

8. On the island of Ireland, Men's Health Week is coordinated by the Men's Health Forum in Ireland, with input and support from over 100 partner organisations.

9. The [Men's Health Forum in Ireland](#) is a charity which works on an all-island basis to improve the health of men and boys. It is a voluntary network of individuals and organisations, men and women, which seeks to identify the key concerns relating to male health and to increase understanding of these issues.

10. Financial support for the week was received from Health Service Executive Health and Wellbeing and the Public Health Agency.

11. Key information on Men's Health Week 2026 on the island of Ireland is available online ...

- Full overview of Men's Health Week 2026: www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2026.html
- Men's Health Week posters and images: www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-image-pack.html
- Briefing paper which answers the most common questions about the week: www.mhfi.org/mhw2026toolbox.pdf
- Latest events and developments: www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek and www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL

12. Each day of Men's Health Week 2026 will focus upon a specific issue ...

- Monday 15th June: Trash the ash (and save the cash)
- Tuesday 16th June: Prevention is better than cure
- Wednesday 17th June: Food for thought
- Thursday 18th June: Rethink what you drink
- Friday 19th June: Be mind fit
- Saturday 20th June: Let's get physical - be more than a sports spectator
- Sunday 21st June: Father's Day - the important role that fathers play in their children's lives

13. 50,000 free hard copies of the 'Action Man - ten top tips for men's health' manual have been given out to men across the island of Ireland in the lead-up to Men's Health Week 2026. A PDF copy of this Man Manual can be accessed online at: <https://mhfi.org/ActionMan.pdf>

14. The social media hashtags for the week are: #MensHealthWeek | #SmallStepsBigResults | #ProgressNotPerfection

15. A large scale webinar, at Noon on Monday 15th June 2026, will help to kick-off Men's Health Week (see: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_BHM8-3lhRLGxxPMTFw0eLA) It will feature ...

- **Daragh Fleming** - poet, author, social media influencer and mental health campaigner
- **Bobby Kerr** - entrepreneur, radio broadcaster and throat cancer survivor
- **Dave Smith** - founder of the 'Be OK Garage' wellbeing programme for 'petrol heads'
- **Lewis Byrne** - social prescriber and health screening advocate
- **Bláthín Casey** - HSE Project Manager

To support accessibility, an Irish Sign Language (ISL) interpreter will be present for the full duration of the webinar.

16. Get a taste of some of the events taking place during Men's Health Week 2026 at: <https://mhfi.org/Events2026.pdf>

