
Present:

Fionnuala Close	Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland
Sharon Gilmore	Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland
Christine Dale	Department of Health Northern Ireland
Ciara Reynolds	Institute of Public Health
Shannon Montgomery	British Heart Foundation Northern Ireland
Oisín Foley	Sport Ireland
Neil Johnston	Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke
Ursula O'Dwyer	Department of Health Ireland
Laura McGowan	Association for the Study of Obesity Northern Ireland Network
Aileen McGloin	safefood (chair)
Anne Parle	safefood
Margaret Carr	Cancer Research UK
Niamh Arthurs	Association for the Study of Obesity Ireland
Esther-Mary D'Arcy	Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists*

Apologies:

Philip Mynes	Diabetes UK
Sinead Powell	Diabetes Ireland
Darren Moan	Department of Health Northern Ireland
Ivan Perry	School of Public Health, University College Cork
Janas Harrington	School of Public Health, University College Cork
Fidelma Carter	Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke

Colette Brolly	Public Health Agency
Janis Morrissey	Irish Heart
Sarah O'Brien	Health Service Executive
Edel McNamara	Health Service Executive

*Due to issues with the conferencing platform several attendees who joined the meeting via teleconference had to leave the meeting.

1. Welcome

Aileen McGloin (safefood) welcomed members to the 27th Forum meeting.

2. Roundtable introductions

Members introduced themselves.

3. Minutes from previous meeting and any matters arising

Minutes from the previous meeting were accepted.

4. Policy updates from the Departments of Health

Department of Health Northern Ireland – update provided by Christine Dale

- Detailed written update was provided and shared with members prior to the meeting.
- Key findings from the recent Health Survey Northern Ireland (2020/2021) were shared.
- Work continues on a replacement strategy for A Fitter Future for All, which ends in 2022.
- Work continues to take place on issues relating to calorie labelling, infant food labelling and marketing and advertising restrictions on high fat, sugar and salt foods.

Department of Health Ireland – update provided by Ursula O'Dwyer

- Nutrition Standards for Early Learning and Care Services and Nutrition Guidelines for Food Parcels have been finalised.

- Work on healthy eating resources for adults over 65 years old is nearing completion.
- Resources on increasing plant-based foods in the diet will be the next area of work.
- Developing a Nutrition Action Plan, this will identify areas for work not covered in the Obesity Policy and Action Plan.
- An adult healthy weight campaign will launch in September/October.

5. Member updates

No clarification was sought on the written updates provided in advance of the meeting.

6. Topic for discussion

The following points were noted:

- Ireland is adapting the Canadian clinical practice guidelines for the management of obesity in adults. Ireland is a European pilot site. Niamh Arthurs noted more information can be sought from Cathy Breen (ASOI) on the topic.
- IPARC and Sport Ireland are exploring the whole systems approach to physical activity including a systems toolkit and an active cities project. There have been preliminary discussions of linking in with the Healthy Communities Programme.
- Highlighting successful implementation of standards/policies was noted as an important part of changing culture and mindsets when implementing such interventions and policies.
- Public acceptability of calorie labelling was found to be high in a recent safefood report. The need to monitor unintended impacts of such policies was highlighted as important.
- The World Health Organisation (WHO) health and sustainability papers were highlighted.
- Awareness of the complexity of obesity needs to be raised, training and education of health professionals is one way to achieve this.

Action 1: share the link to the [Public acceptability of policies to address obesity](#) report.

Action 2: Christine Dale to check if a report on the Department of Environment and Rural Affairs consultation on the food strategy and sustainability was published.

Action 3: Ursula O'Dwyer to introduce Christine Dale to Kremlin Wickramasinghe from the WHO.

Action 4: Share Slaintecare Childhood Obesity training <https://childhoodobesity.ie/>.

Action 5: Laura McGowan to share a training resource on weight stigma <https://learning.publichealthscotland.scot/course/view.php?id=622>.

Action 6: **safefood** to explore including a patient representative at closed forum meetings.

Action 7: **safefood** to explore including a research discussion on the agenda of closed forum meetings.

7. Next forum meeting & workshop

The following suggestions were made:

- The lived experience of obesity
- Obesity stigma
- Complex nature of obesity
- Whole systems approach
- Farm to Fork Strategy
- Lived experience of the child

8. AOB

safefood is carrying out a review of the All-island Obesity Action Forum and the format of meetings. Contact will be made with members to provide feedback on the forum, the structure of meetings and suggestions for change.

Irish Society of Chartered Physiotherapists (ISCP) - Update provided by Esther-Mary D'Arcy

The ISCP has recently approved its extensive review and update of its document – *The Role of Physiotherapy in weight management in adults*. This document will be circulated among the chartered physiotherapists in Ireland and will be available on the website.

As the Irish member of the Europe region of World Physiotherapy, the ISCP has a connection with the World Obesity Federation.

safefood – Update provided by Anne Parle and Aileen McGloin

START campaign

The current phase of the start campaign began on 16 May and ran for a period of five weeks with advertising across TV, VOD, radio, digital and social channels. The theme is 'Let's go easy on the treats', focusing on reducing consumption of foods high in calories, fat, sugar and salt.

Community Food Initiative Programme 2022-2024

In March, the new 3-year Community Food Initiative Programme was launched. Thirteen organisations will receive funding to run programmes that support the development of skills and knowledge around food and healthy eating, including 9 in Ireland and 4 in Northern Ireland. Seven of the thirteen CFIs are new to the programme, six were part of the previous 2019-2021 programme. <https://www.safefood.net/community-food-initiatives>

Evaluation of the Community Food Initiative (CFI) Programme 2019-2022

safefood funded 14 organisations to deliver projects from 2019-2021. Over the three years almost 5,250 families took part in a CFI activity including small projects and community events. The programme increased awareness and knowledge around healthy eating and enhanced skills related to cooking, shopping, planning and budgeting. All these are transferable skills that can benefit an entire community. Participants also reported mental health, social and emotional benefits. Evaluation of the programme highlighted several learnings that will inform future programmes. The full evaluation report is available online:

<https://www.safefood.net/research/reports/cfi-2019-2021>

Nutritional Standards in Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland

Updated Nutritional Standards for food served to staff and visitors across Health and Social care settings in Northern Ireland were launched in March. The food-based standards have been developed by the Public Health Agency, the Food Standards Agency and **safefood**. The Standards apply to all facilities that serve food or beverages to staff or visitors operating within health and social care settings. This includes catering facilities, privately owned retail units and vending machines. They aim to make the healthier choice the easier choice.

These standards were first introduced in 2017 have been updated taking into account the latest evidence and guidance. The standards are available to view online:

<https://www.safefood.net/research-reports/nutritional-standards-hsc>

Nutrition Standards for Early Learning and Care Services – Ireland

Developed by Healthy Ireland, safefood and the HSE in cooperation with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, these standards will inform, develop, and implement Healthy Eating Policy and Practice in Early Learning and Care Services. These food-based standards are based on the Healthy Eating Guidelines. These have been printed and delivered to all service providers in Ireland.

On the Ball – Healthy Know How for Active Kids

safefood continued its innovative partnership with The Irish Football Association that aims to use football to encourage healthy habits for kids. The partnership will see the Irish FA and **safefood** expand the delivery of its football based 'On the Ball – Healthy Know How for Active Kids' programmes and events via nutrition workshops, school programmes and festivals to an expected audience of over 3,000 children and 700 parents and carers across Northern Ireland in 2022. <https://www.safefood.net/news/ifa-partnership-continues>

Food labelling Policy – Republic of Ireland

The Department of Health has set up two distinct groups with the goal to develop an Irish policy position on the European Commission's food labelling package.

safefood is a member internal Department of Health (DoH) Working Group and the Food Labelling Inter-Departmental Working Group. Some of the work of the DoH Food Labelling working group included assessing relevant ROI dietary data to ascertain what foods should

be used to test different front of pack labelling models. The group used IUNA data to inform the decision and various aspects were considered including the contribution that those different foods make to the diets of the three age groups, such as, the provision of energy by foods that are very low in essential nutrients, the contribution of saturated fat to the total energy intake and the total intake of salt and sugar. The group also organised and hosted a workshop with relevant stakeholders to gather different perspectives on Front of pack labelling.

Healthy Eating Guidelines for Older Adults in Ireland

Resources to accompany the guidelines have been finalised, including a booklet, facts on each shelf and two new diet plans that were developed by Healthy Ireland, **safefood** and the Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute. Healthy Ireland appointed a research partner to conduct focus group testing of the resources. **safefood** supported the Healthy Ireland research by developing the topic guide that will inform the discussions with the groups. Focus group testing is currently ongoing.

Exploring the world of food

A research report entitled 'Exploring the world of food: the perspectives of families with children' was published, the research aimed to understand how families make decisions about meals and snacks that are eaten at home. The research had a focus on families from low-income groups. The report is available to view online: <https://www.safefood.net/worldoffood>

Ongoing research

Completed but not yet published:

1. Portion control tools –do they work in practice?
2. Food supplements –exploring our reasons for taking them
3. Fiscal and pricing policies related to food and non-alcoholic drinks: a review of the evidence
4. Secondary analysis of dietary survey data of children's diets on the island of Ireland

Ongoing:

1. Review of international practice on building 'sustainability' into national healthy eating guidelines and practical implications for policy

2. Project Title: Reducing the exposure of children and adolescents to digital marketing of unhealthy foods:
 - a) How can the World Health Organisation 'CLICK' framework be implemented on an island of Ireland context?
 - b) Can the rights of the child to a safe and healthy diet provide a new approach to the regulation of digital marketing of unhealthy foods to children?

Ongoing in-house research piece:

1. Review of plant-based alternatives to milk, cheese and yoghurt

Invitations for tender:

1. Assessing Cost-Effectiveness of Overweight and Obesity Prevention Policies on the island of Ireland
2. Food messaging to children and adolescents – what works?
3. Communicating food poverty – understanding the current discourse on the island of Ireland

Nutrition podcasts

Two new episodes of the **safefood** Nutrition Podcasts were launched in December.

Barriers to physical exercise

In this episode, we talked to Maura Murphy from Irish Coalition for People Living with Obesity and Colin Dunleavy, Clinical Specialist Physiotherapist. We look at the barriers to physical activity for those living with obesity.

<https://www.safefood.net/nutrition/podcasts/barriers-to-exercise>

From research to resources - the importance of science

In this episode, we talked to Dr Charmaine McGowan, Scientific Officer at **safefood**, and dietitian Sarah Keogh who runs Eatwell, a food and nutrition consultancy for the food industry and the public. We look at the importance of research and how it translates into practical resources and communications for the general public.

<https://www.safefood.net/nutrition/podcasts/research-to-resources>

Food Standards Agency – Update provided by Fionnuala Close

Cheesecake Reformulation Guidance

The FSA in partnership with the College of Agriculture Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE) hosted a cheesecake reformulation workshop on 23rd of March 2022. The purpose of the workshop was to launch [guidance](#) developed to support industry to produce healthier cheesecake that meets the UK Government's guidelines for calories, sugar and salt. The workshop welcomed delegates from the manufacturing, retail, catering and education sectors. Speakers included food technologists from CAFRE who provided advice on how to reformulate cheesecake while still meeting consumer demand for taste and value, as well as Invest NI who provided an overview of relevant consumer insights and funding opportunities available to support industry with reformulation and new product development. The guidance is available on the FSA and CAFRE websites.

Healthier Product Innovation Award-NIFDA 2022 Food and Drink Awards

As part of the 2022 Northern Ireland Food and Drinks Awards, the FSA sponsored the 'Healthier Product Innovation Award'. This award recognised the commitment of a Northern Ireland business to offer healthier products lower in calories, sugar, saturated fat and/or salt. The award was won by [Shera McAloran, head of Karri Kitchen](#) for her success in developing innovative Asian fusion inspired meals that focused on increasing vegetable content, portion size and meeting the FSA's green and amber traffic light label criteria.

Eating Well Choosing Better Newsletter

The FSA published the second edition of the Eating Well Choosing Better newsletter in June 2022. This newsletter was designed to support delivery of the FSA's Eating Well Choosing Better Programme by providing Northern Ireland food manufacturers, caterers and retailers with information on the latest developments in nutrition policy and resources to support engagement with food product improvement. The FSA will continue to collaborate with our stakeholders to assist with building the subscriber base across all sectors of the Northern Ireland food industry and other interested parties.

FSA university prizes

As part of a piece of work to develop closer working relationships with nutrition institutions in Northern Ireland, the FSA are awarding a series of summer prizes to undergraduate nutrition students from Ulster University, Queens University Belfast and CAFRE (The College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise). A prize will also be

awarded to a student at the Irish Section conference of the Nutrition Society this June for the best student presentation.

FSA involvement in Ulster University videos

The FSA were invited to take part in videos produced by Ulster University to promote their BSc nutrition courses with future students. The videos are an excellent resource for prospective students with speakers ranging from current students, lecturers, and nutrition employers. The FSA feature in the video to promote the [BSc Human Nutrition course](#). The videos have been promoted on social media by both Ulster University and the FSA in NI.

Launch of the revised Nutritional Standards for Health and Social Care catering settings

The Food Standards Agency in partnership with the Public Health Agency, safefood and Department of Health have launched [updated Nutritional Standards](#) which are designed to make the food on offer for staff and visitors in hospital restaurants, cafés, vending machines and retail outlets healthier. They have been produced in partnership with Health and Social Care (HSC) colleagues with the overall aim of helping to address overweight and obesity and improve staff and visitor health and wellbeing. The standards were originally introduced in 2017 and have recently been updated to take into account the latest evidence and guidance. This has led to, for example, increasing fruit and vegetables and wholegrains while decreasing the amount of saturated fat, salt and processed meats. In addition to specific guidance for each food group, the Standards now also address the topics of vending and the food environment. To note, the standards do not apply to patient food and beverage provision.

Children's meals survey

The FSA and district councils in Northern Ireland are conducting a survey looking at children's menus in local restaurants and hotels that serve any type of cuisine (i.e. American, Chinese, Indian, Italian, Mexican etc.). Multinational chain restaurants and other food outlets such as cafés, bakeries, service stations are excluded. The survey, which is being conducted by district council Environmental Health Officers between 23rd May and 5th August, will give an insight into the foods available to children when eating out in Northern Ireland, the most popular items on menus, how meals are priced, where they are made, whether there is any nutritional information on children's menus, and attitudes and perceived barriers to putting healthier options on the menu. Survey

responses will then be collated and analysed by the FSA with the aim of publishing a report later in the year. The results of this survey will inform future work on how the FSA and district councils in Northern Ireland can best support food businesses to provide healthier options for children and potential sampling and nutritional analysis of children's meals by district council's (January – March 2023).

Eating Well choosing Better Tracker Survey - 2021

The FSA has published the results of the [2021 Eating Well Choosing Better Tracker Survey](#). The survey collects information on Northern Ireland consumers' perceptions of healthy eating, healthier options and reformulation; consumer use of traffic light labels; consumer knowledge and understanding of the recommended daily calorie intake and consumer awareness of the FSA's healthy eating campaigns. Infographics for the [retail/manufacturing](#) and [out of home](#) sectors were also developed to help disseminate the key findings to the Northern Ireland food industry. The survey findings will be used by the FSA to inform future policy development and have been shared with relevant stakeholders and industry representatives.

Kantar report on Northern Ireland Take Home Food and Drink Purchases (2016, 2019 and 2020)

The FSA carried out research with Kantar Fast Moving Consumer Goods Purchase Panel to monitor take home food and drink purchasing in Northern Ireland (i.e. all food and drink purchased and brought into the home excluding takeaways delivered to the home and food ordered at restaurants). The data was collated into a [report](#) examining key trends and identifying food and drink categories that are of concern to dietary health in Northern Ireland. In 2020, Northern Ireland households increased their spend on take home food and drink purchasing by 13.2% when compared to 2019. It is recognised that the Covid-19 pandemic may have influenced this purchasing, and future studies are needed to investigate this further. The report is now available on the FSA website.

The Food and You 2 survey

The FSA has published a [report](#) on Northern Ireland consumers' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours around food including food safety, food security, food shopping, eating out, and food hypersensitivities. The report uses data from [wave 1](#) and [wave 2](#) of the recent Food and You 2 survey carried out between 2020 - 2021, with over 1000 participants from Northern Ireland.

UK Public's Interests, Needs and Concerns Around Food – Northern Ireland Report

The FSA has published a series of [reports](#) which provide a detailed 'snapshot' of people's interests, needs and concerns around food. This qualitative and quantitative research explored UK consumer views and priorities in relation to food hygiene and safety, but also around wider interests the public see critical in shaping their food choices and lives including:

- health and nutrition
- environment and ethics
- price quality and convenience
- consumer versus business power
- potential food futures

A Northern Ireland [report](#) has also been produced which highlights Northern Ireland specific data and any regional differences in consumer experiences or views.

Association for the Study of Obesity NI – Update provided by Laura McGowan

ASO NI:

The UK Congress on Obesity (UKCO) is due to take place on 7th-8th September 2022, in Lancaster – abstract deadline 17th June 2022. See website for full details: <https://aso.org.uk/event/uk-congress-obesity-ukco-2022> and early booking rate available until 30th July 2022.

2023:

UKCO will be held in Queen's University Belfast in Sept 2023. Follow @ASO for more updates coming soon.

Learning resources:

The Association for the Study of Obesity UK is proud of our high-quality events and learning for obesity researchers, healthcare professionals, clinicians, academics, scientists, and students who are working and/or studying in the field of obesity. See website for access to many high-quality webinars and events:

<https://aso.org.uk/events/archive>

Department of Health NI – Update provided by Darren Moan and Christine Dale

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%).
- These first results report can be seen at <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/hsni-first-results-20-21.pdf>
- 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 policy in place in early 2023. A co-design Project Board has been established three meetings have taken place. Membership of the Board includes people with lived experience, Academics, Government Departments, Health and the Voluntary and Community Sector. A vision and principles have been agreed and it is planned to hold workshops early this year these will cover the following Thematic Groups, as well as an additional workshop on Weight Stigma:
 - **Healthy Policies**
 - **Healthy Places**
 - **Healthy People**
 - **Collaboration and whole system approach**

- Due to the numbers of stakeholders wishing to take part, we arranged 3 sets of Health Policies workshops in April 2022 and 3 sets of Healthy Places workshops in May 2022. A further 2 sets of Healthy People workshops, looking at issues such as obesity prevention and intervention, and on targeted and specialist services across the full tiered pathway of services, are planned for the end of June 2022.

- 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

- 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.

Cancer Research UK - Update provided by Margaret Carr

CRUK has been active in campaigning for the junk food marketing bill to be re-instated after the WM government announced a year's delay to the plans.

In Northern Ireland CRUK sit on the Obesity Prevention Steering Group (OPSG) and the steering group for the development of the next Obesity Strategy for NI.

CRUK (and other charities in NI) are working with the Obesity Health Alliance (OHA) to explore opportunities to develop a NI summary of *Turning the Tide – A Healthy Weight Strategy* hopefully for publication later this year.

Sport Ireland - Update provided by Oisín Foley

National Policy Objectives

National Sports Policy (NSP)

- The National Sports Policy launched in 2018 acknowledges and sets the direction for the area of sport and physical activity. There is an emphasis on the importance of participation in sport particularly in relation to improving physical and mental health, protecting against a range of non-communicable diseases and contributing to a better quality of life. Twenty-four actions out of the fifty-seven in the Policy relate specifically to participation and will have a significant impact on our work in this area moving forward.

National Physical Activity Plan

- Sport Ireland are the lead agency for sport with responsibility for 7 actions within Healthy Ireland's National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland. Sport Ireland's network of Local Sports Partnerships and National Governing Bodies of Sport are also listed as partner organisations in over 20 separate actions which aim to increase physical activity levels across the Irish population. Within Healthy Ireland's 'A-Healthy-Weight-for-Ireland-Obesity-Policy-and-Action-Plan-2016-2025', The National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland is acknowledged as having a key role in the prevention of overweight and obesity across Irish Society.

Sport Ireland Participation Plan

- The Sport Ireland participation plan was launched in 2020 and sets out how Sport Ireland will deliver on the ambition of both the Sport Ireland Strategy and the National Sports Policy focusing specifically on increasing participation in physical activity across the country.

National Participation Initiatives

EU Week of Sport

- Sport Ireland continued its role as the National Co-ordinating Body for the European Week of Sport for 2021. In 2021 ten funded bodies held flagship events nationwide, including the sold-out Sport Ireland Campus Family SportFest event, held on the National Sports Campus. Five LSPs held flagship #BeActive Night events across the country on the evening of Saturday 25th. In addition to this, over 160 events were

registered on the Sport Ireland EWOS event directory website page. Sport Ireland will once again co-ordinate the European Week of Sport in 2022.

Operation Transformation

- Sport Ireland partnered again this year with Operation Transformation in January and February to deliver events to engage and activate thousands of followers of the show. Sport Ireland and their national network of Local Sports Partnerships delivered a programme of national walking and running which took place alongside the operation transformation television programme. Sport Ireland will continue their work with Operation Transformation in 2023.

Lets Get Back campaign

- The “Let’s Get Back” communications campaign was rolled out in 2021 and encouraged the Irish public to return to sport and physical activity following the Covid-19 pandemic. The campaign was supported by Sport Ireland’s nationwide network of Local Sports Partnerships and National Governing Bodies.

Women in Sport Week

- To celebrate International Women’s Day, Sport Ireland hosted a Women in Sport Week from 7-11th March. Many Local Sports Partnerships and National Governing bodies hosted webinars, online exercise events and highlighted coaches, officiators and female leaders in their sport throughout the week.

Get Ireland walking, cycling and running initiatives

- Get Ireland Walking continues to work on a number of programmes and initiatives with the aim of maximise the number of people participating in walking - for health, wellbeing and fitness - throughout Ireland. Sport Ireland is seeking to develop a physical activity for health culture in Ireland through the development and continued support of Get Ireland Running, Get Ireland Cycling and Get Ireland Swimming initiatives.

Local Participation Initiatives

Local Sports Partnership Programmes

- Sport Ireland has always placed a particular emphasis on ensuring sport is progressive and attracts participants from every corner of Ireland, from every age group and from all social backgrounds. The Local Sports Partnership (LSP) network, an initiative of Sport Ireland, aim to remove barriers that prevents participation in

sport. Sport Ireland are currently in the process of developing an LSP network strategy which will shape how LSPs activate their communities for years to come.

- In 2021 alone Sport Ireland (through Core, Covid-19 and Dormant Account Funding) allocated in excess of €18.5m to the 29 established Local Sports Partnerships. This included an increase in LSP programme funding to develop, expand and roll out evidence informed projects targeting communities of disadvantage. Sport Ireland's strategy to increase investment in LSP programming supported both the return to safe in person opportunities as well as building on the virtual opportunities developed throughout the pandemic. LSPs continued to ensure that everyone in our society has the opportunity to share in the enjoyment as well as the **mental** and physical health benefits of sport and physical activity.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic Sport Ireland also invested an additional 2.1M into the LSP network to support the resumption of sport and physical activity. 1.6M was allocated to Local Sports Partnerships through the COVID-19 Small Grant Scheme. Through this scheme, Local Sports Partnerships (LSPs) operated a local scheme for clubs and community groups to support their communities in returning to physical activity. Additionally, the Covid-19 Grassroots Programme Fund invested in programmes targeting grassroots sport and underrepresented communities.
- In 2021 over 270,000 people participated in locally delivered participation programmes supported by the Local Sports Partnerships. This includes 18,450 females taking part in 212 initiatives focusing particularly on Women in Sport.

Association for the Study of Obesity on the Island of Ireland - Update provided by Niamh Arthurs

Obesity Canada Clinical Practice Guidelines (CPG) adaptation, 2021-2022

The ASOI, in an effort led by secretary Dr. Cathy Breen, successfully won the bid to adapt the clinical practice guidelines (CPG) for the management of obesity in adults published by Obesity Canada. Ireland is adapting the guidelines as a European pilot site, while Chile will represent South America in this pilot programme supported by Obesity Canada. This project involves wider stakeholder engagement in Ireland with over 60 specialists across clinical practice, academia and people with lived experience of the disease collaborating to adapt the guidelines. Adapting the CPGs will help to ensure high quality, standardised and non-stigmatising care standards to support services within the new HSE model of care. This adaptation process was recently detailed at the 29th

European Congress on Obesity in Maastricht. The adapted guidelines for Ireland will be available on the [ASOI website](#) once complete. Please see further details [here](#).

ASOI Education and Research Group

This sub-group of the ASOI was established in 2021 with the first meeting held in June 2021. The group comprises of wider ASOI members and some of the ASOI committee representing dietetics, physiotherapy, medicine, psychology, public health, research, patients and the public. Currently the group is developing a repository of obesity-related research outputs from authors and co-authors based on the island of Ireland. This work is funded by the ASOI and supervised by Sarah Browne at University College Dublin. The completed research repository will be available on the ASOI website.

The 'Obesity Stigma Education 4 All' is another working group with national membership wider than ASOI and integrated under the ASOI Education and Research umbrella in late 2021. This group is chaired by Grainne O'Donoghue with secretaries AnneMarie Bennett (Trinity College Dublin) and Susie Birney (ICPO). The group aims to develop core competencies and obesity education for healthcare professionals (HCPs).

Sláintecare Childhood Obesity Education Project, 2021-ongoing

The ASOI and many of its committee members are part of the Sláintecare Childhood Obesity Education Project along with RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences, The Child and Adolescent Obesity Service in Children's Health Ireland at Temple Street and the ICPO. Through these collaborative efforts, this timely project led by Dr. Grace O'Malley developed and to date has provided free online, accredited childhood obesity education to over 1200 HCPs and health professional students in Ireland. Through the delivery of free high-quality training (available at: www.childhoodobesity.ie) the project aims to empower HCPs to develop their knowledge and improve access to care for children and adolescents with obesity. By improving training, the project supports HCPs in providing children and families with better quality care.

Award for World Obesity Day 2021, September 2021

In September 2021, the ASOI alongside the Irish Coalition for People Living with Obesity (ICPO) received a joint award from the European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO) and the European Coalition for People Living with Obesity (ECPO) for numerous advocacy efforts for World Obesity Day in March 2021. This included a live webinar with patient voices, a panel of HCPs, and a powerful video of people living with obesity living

their best lives. The entire event [can be watched back here](#). The joint campaign with the theme 'Addressing Obesity Together' generated lots of media and press engagement [which is summarised here](#). The full press release from EASO and ECPO to announce this award is available in the media section on the ASOI website or [can be viewed here](#). Committee members of ASOI and ICPO came together to thank EASO and ECPO for this award which can be seen in this [short video](#).

Overweight and Obesity Let's Talk Event, October 7th 2021

ASOI in collaboration with the HSE Obesity National Clinical Programme and the ICPO hosted this successful online Obesity Education and Awareness Event on October 7th 2021. The event aimed to increase knowledge and awareness of obesity and stigma amongst public, patients, clinicians and policy makers and empower individuals to seek treatment and support. There was significant media engagement for the event including national, regional and online coverage. Almost 2000 registered to attend the virtual event; 1198 of which were Members of the Public and 756 were HCPs. In total 828 (42%) people attended on the day and the recording [Available here](#) has more than 750 views. Plans to collaborate again for a similar event in October 2022 are in place.

Living with Obesity Campaign and launch of ICPO image bank, October 21st 2021

The ASOI supported ICPO and ECPO with this campaign day by promoting the launch of the new [European image bank available here](#).

The initiative aims to reduce visual weight stigma by highlighting the importance of representing obesity and individuals affected by obesity through the use of appropriate, respectful and non-stigmatising imagery. The ASOI continues to advocate and encourage the use of such images and respectful language around obesity across all sectors of society including policy, education, healthcare and media. Please see further details on the [ICPO website here](#).

EASO Stakeholder Session, January 14th 2022

The ASOI is recognised by EASO as having strong collaboration with patient representatives and advocacy groups. To that effect, committee members including patient representatives were asked to speak at this virtual EASO event with the theme of collaboration between national organisations and patient organisations, and public patient involvement. The title for this event was 'Working together: how can researchers and patients cooperate for policy change on obesity?'. Please see further details [here](#).

World Obesity Day, March 4th 2022

The theme of World Obesity Day (WOD) 2022 was 'Everybody Needs to Act'. With support from an EASO grant, the ASOI and the ICPO co-created a series of educational videos on various themes relating to obesity. Short promotions of these videos were shared across social media and individuals were encouraged to show their support of this campaign day by sharing short statements on how each of us individually or as a group act for obesity. Full videos are available to ASOI members-[please see here](#). Support and awareness of this campaign day was leveraged by media including wide coverage across broadcast, print and digital communications and social media.

European Congress on Obesity (ECO), May 4th – 7th 2022

The ASOI funded three ASOI members to attend ECO 2022 online. This included one student, one allied HCP and one academic/public health/other category member. Several ASOI members were involved in speaking, chairing and attending ECO online and in person in Maastricht, The Netherlands.

The ASOI are very proud of committee member Dr. Louise Tully who was shortlisted to present her PhD thesis at ECO and received the Best Thesis Award from EASO. Further details are [available here](#).

Patient Representative Activities (Maura Murphy and Susie Birney)

ASOI patient representatives are fundamental to pursuing the legacy and aims of the ASOI and are involved in numerous activities on an ongoing basis. The following represents a snapshot of some key involvements of our patient reps in the last year:

- Ongoing media engagement.
- MedCafé Education for HCPs.
- Safefood Podcast – 'Barriers to physical activity'.
- 'Overweight & Obesity Lets Talk' virtual event.
- ECPO Patient Lounge- ICPO Image Bank.
- Home Economic Teachers Annual AGM.
- Obesity stigma education to the following groups of third level students:
 - UCC physiotherapy students
 - NUI Obesity Masters
 - DCU Nursing Students
 - UL Dietetic Students
 - TCD Dietetic Students
 - UCD Physiotherapy Students

- UCC Dietetics Students
- European Society of Endocrinology.
- World Obesity Federation online 'SCOPE' education-Obesity and Diabetes.
- EASO Stakeholder Session-'Collaboration between Patient Organisations'.
- World Obesity Day – (Novo Nordisk European event).
- ECO2022 – EASO Physical Activity session, ASOI and Obesity Canada Clinical Guidelines Adaptation Workshop, 5 Way debate Obesity Management.
- World Health Organisation Obesity Report.

AOB / Plans for 2022/2023

The ASOI has several specific activities planned to further cultivate and build academic, public, patient and clinical relationships in research, practice, education and throughout society. This includes continued collaboration and involvement at upcoming events, leveraging the CPG adaptation and continued media engagement to raise awareness and ultimately reduce obesity stigma and negative encounters experienced by those with obesity.

The ASOI won the bid to host the 30th European Congress on Obesity (ECO) at the Convention Centre in Dublin from May 17th – 20th 2023. ECO 2023 will draw world experts together for a four-day meeting in Dublin that explores the science, prevention and treatment of obesity from all angles including the vital voice and perspective from people living with obesity.

The Institute of Public Health - Update provided by Ciara Reynolds

In terms of obesity related memberships and roles, the Institute of Public Health is currently:

- 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.
- A member of the Northern Ireland Breastfeeding Strategy Research Workstrand and supporting the planning and organisation of the Annual Spotlight on Breastfeeding Research Conference
- 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, the Institute of Public Health is/has:

- Supporting the NI Obesity Prevention Policy Project Board by developing a policy options matrix and mapping exercise and co-developing an academic paper on a Whole Systems Approach to obesity prevention to support the development of the new NI Obesity Prevention Strategy 2023-33.
- Drafted a report on 'Using psycho-behavioural segmentation analysis to understand healthy weight management behaviours'. This is currently in the process of being peer reviewed.
- Recently drafted a response to the Northern Ireland Food Strategy Consultation.
- Supporting the publication of the Ireland North and South Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth, which will be launched in in Fall 2022. This will be the first year that data specific to children and youth with disabilities will be 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, family and peers, community & government.