



Network Newsletter May 2020

Welcome

Hi all. Welcome to the Gay Health Network Newsletter. As you will be aware, we have been unable to meet this year due to COVID 19 restrictions. We hope that you are all coping well with the shutdown and that you are managing to keep sane, healthy and safe during the crisis. To attempt to make up for the lack of meeting we thought it might be useful to let you know what has been happening since we last met. This Newsletter format may also provide a possible forum for Network members to catch up with each other's news (in future editions) should the shutdown become more protracted. The Newsletter is not meant to replace meetings. Rather, we hope to revert to meetings as soon as possible after social restrictions are lifted.



We last met on 27th April 2019 for our AGM. The main topic was the announcement of the introduction of PrEP. As we know the PrEP programme has been rolled out from October 2019. Our next meeting might usefully include a discussion on how this is working and to identify any concerns or issues with the programme.

Several attempts to meet as a Network, over the last year, have been thwarted due to lack of availability of members and diary clashes. In the meantime, the board have met both in person and virtually on more than 14 Occasions up to April 27th April 2020. This

Newsletter thematically outlines what we have been working on during this time.

Board Membership



The board has been endeavouring to expand its membership for some time. We have had a number of co-options and resignations over the time. Newly appointed board members have resigned due to new careers; inability to give the time required to the board's business and clashes with work commitments among other things. The current Board is now down to four members; Ciarán McKinney (Chair); Mick Quinlan (Treasurer); Bill Foley (Secretary) and Jamie Kenny (Board Member). The Board really need new members to bring energy and new perspectives. At this time, we would like to offer co-options to the board from within the GHN Member organisations. Having more Board members, from the membership, at board level would help to enhance the communication chain between the board and its member organisations. Board members co-opted in this way would not be representing their respective organisations but would work for the Board for the benefit of all the membership. What do you think of this? Would any organisation like to put forward people for nomination?

Financial Report

GHN finance were in a healthy state for the end of 2019 and we had applied to the SHCPP for 2020 funding. After a series of meetings with SHCPP, it was agreed that GHN would seek the usual €49,000 and that whereas previously this was used to fund the Personal Development Programme that from 2020 Belongto, Outhouse and Positive Now would deal directly with the SHCPP. This means that the €49k would go directly to GHN for

administration and communications (with communications being the vital component).

The 1st half of the fund was received in March. Also, towards the end of 2019 MAC AIDS via the Charity AIDS Fund (CAF) provided €8,184 to GHN. Committed funds for 2020 included the balance for the PrEP campaign and as a result of COVID-19 this excess was used for promotion in agreement with SHCPP. Furthermore, they agreed to provide more funds if needed. Note the 2019 accounts are been audited at present.



| Details Year | Credit | Debit | Balance |
|--|--------|--------|---------|
| 2020 | € | € | € |
| Brought Forward 1 st Jan | 41,731 | | |
| Income to April 28 th | 28,632 | | |
| Expenditure to April 28 th | | 10,127 | |
| Balance in Bank April 29 th | | | 60,237 |

Committed Funds (€60,237) Breakdown As Follows:

HSE Grant AID (€ 24,094), MAF/CAF (€8,778), GHF 2021 (€2,764) GHN General Funds (€24,601)

Strategy

GHN had commenced a process of building a strategic plan from Spring 2018. We had engaged an external consultant to assist with this process. The design plan process involved interviews with stakeholders; feedback to Board; Highlighting of Key Issues; Development of SWOT and PESTLE Analysis;



and Writing up Strategy report based on the outcome of the process. From early on the process was dogged with delays. The deadline for production of the report, as well as meeting targets along the way, were continually missed. As we neared the second anniversary of the commissioning of the report without a report being available the Board decide to terminate the process. We remain strongly committed to producing a strategy as a matter of priority. We now propose to do this in consultation with the membership. It is timely that two new posts have been secured by GHN and hopefully these vacancies will be filled in the next few months. Our aim is to involve the new posts in helping to devise a strategic plan in conjunction with membership and Network consultation meetings.

MSM Working Group SHCPP

The MSM Working Group was set up by SHCPP following the recommendations of the National Outbreak Group. This multidisciplinary group was established in 2016 to respond to the national increase of HIV and STI's in Ireland. They stood down in September 2018 with a recommendation that a working group continue to monitor outstanding actions from the Outbreak Group. It also aims to continue to monitor HIV and STI patterns and services and coordinate planning and resourcing. GHN continues to be a member of the Working Group alongside other GHN member organisations. It provides an opportunity to monitor both PrEP treatment programmes and STI treatment services among other things vital to our aims and objectives. GHN advocated to the Group that funding for specific gay (MSM) specific services should be protected and ringfenced

in the future. This derived from the change in focus of 'KnowNow' programmes outside Dublin. 'KnowNow' Dublin was subsequently closed down and re-launched as 'MPOWER'.

LGBT Ireland Strategy Report



Board Members took place in LGBT Ireland Strategy group consultation process with Department of Justice and Equality. A comprehensive GHN submission was made. The Assertion by Department of Justice and Equality that the Strategy implementation would have to be cost neutral severely limit its scope. The Strategy document was eventually published in November 2019. It is largely the result of workshops carried out with LGBTI+ organisations in the consultation stage. As such it lacks an overarching vision for the development and resourcing of LGBTI+ services. It is a 5-year strategy. While we believe the actions are limited in their reach it is important that they are achieved within the lifetime of the Strategy. We hoped that the on-going input from LGBTQI+ organisations, including GHN and its member organisations, over the course of its life span can help to sharpen its focus and build local LGBTQI+ services.

Fast Track Cities / U = U



GHN Board members were involved in the Fast Track Cities consultation process. 4 Irish cities have signed up to Fast Track Cities programme. These are Dublin, Cork, Galway and Limerick. The aim of the programme is

summed up in the 90% 90% (05). That is 90% of those infected with HIV are diagnosed. 90% of those diagnosed are on treatment. 90% of those are undetectable. And, finally, the aim to reduce stigma of those living with HIV to zero. Ireland is doing well on the first three measures with general agreement that the first component needs to be improved considerably. We need to encourage more gay men (MSM), particularly in the younger age groups, to test. Some funding will be associated with the programme and this may be used for a national HIV testing programmes and campaigns including the U=U campaign. GHN continues to be represented at the consultation process and will continue involvement when meetings resume.

Newly Diagnosed Drop-In Group



GHN worked with POZ Now and HIV Ireland and Outhouse counsellors to help set up a HIV positive peer support group. The Group is called +Friends and was launched September 2019. This group has been meeting regularly since Late 2019 with support from the various groups. Contact with the group can be made through the social media platform www.meetup.com

EMIS-2017 Ireland

Board members were involved in the publication of Irish data from EMIS- 2017. The Irish section of the report EMIS-2017 Ireland was published on 3rd October 2019 just after the full European report (published on 23rd

September 2020). Two community reports were also published by GHN and are on the GHN and man2mand websites. The community reports were also widely circulated in the GCN editions in November and December 2019. The findings have implications for future strategy of GHN and its member organisations. A plan to review the report's findings at a GHN Network meeting were postponed due to cancellation and suspension of GHN network meetings. It will be addressed at the next Network meeting.

Forthcoming EMIS Community Reports: The SHCPP has kindly agreed an SLA towards a further two EMIS-2017 Ireland community reports on 'Men Living with HIV' and 'Men from Afar' also towards a 2nd EMIS-2017 Community Report.



Mick is coordinating these, and Daniel McCartney has kindly volunteered to write up the two Irish reports. Mick is working with Axel Schmidt and the European Network on the 2nd Community report.

GHN 25th Anniversary

Happy
25th
Anniversary!

GHN turned 25 in 2019. We had hoped to mark this momentous achievement with a special event. However, we were unable to make arrangements by end of 2019 and had decided to postpone celebrations and acknowledgements to 2020. However, Coronavirus has prevented us from furthering plans. We have decided to proceed with planning in the hope that restrictions will be lifted by December. We are in the process of consultation for the production of three short filmed presentations that will review GHN achievements over the years. The presentations will be commissioned from those who have been involved in our work over the years and who can provide particular insights on various themes including; Information Design; Research; and Community Networking. We are currently aiming for the films to be uploaded to GHN website in time for World AIDS Day in December. We hope we will be able to host a formal launch, but this will depend on the status of COVID 19 restrictions at the time.

Communications Platforms



Work has been continuing on updating and adding to GHN platforms including man2man websites. Information regarding EMIS and PrEP and COVID-19 was put online over the last number of months. This work is continuing (see COVID-19 and GHN below). Importantly we have updated the man2man programme on www.ghn.ie that includes a historical outline of the work of GHN since 1994 see, <http://gayhealthnetwork.ie/man2man-programme/>

COVID-19 AND GHN



Coronavirus
COVID-19

Man2Man.ie

PUBLIC HIV, STI & PrEP SERVICE RESTRICTIONS

For latest details go to www.man2man.ie and click on links
For updates on COVID-19 go to www.hse.ie/coronavirus

Early on GHN communications and the man2man programme were heavily involved with the SHCPP in gathering and circulating information on the Restrictions to HIV, STI and Prep services in the wake of COVID 19. Promoting the information on our Facebook and Twitter Posts was also achieved. The info was also produced in French, Portuguese and Spanish. In the meantime, we searched for information on COVID-19 & SEX and initially re-circulated the link for mantotman.nl but there wasn't any established health authority information. The New York Health Department issued one on the 23rd March (see the NY Health Department COVID-19 and Sex information) and a copy of this was circulated to SHCPP and HIV Ireland by GHN. Soon after SHCPP set in motion the assembling of a similar information for Ireland in a collaboration between GHN, HIV Ireland, SHCPP as well as other medical and public health personal. This information was online in March 2020 and soon after GHN also issued a poster statement. GHN arranged the translation of the information into four key languages and also included the www.sexualwellbeing.ie information and this was circulated in downloadable PDF at <http://man2man.ie/resources/> GHN has held some meeting with the SHCPP and have commended them on their quick response and reasonable guidelines issued. Overall, the reach and response on man2man Facebook is very high. 41,000 for services and 45,000 for sex info. (18k in three languages)



SEXO e a COVID-19
INFORMAÇÃO PARA VOCÊ

<http://www.pt.man2man.ie/resources/>
<http://gayhealthnetwork.ie/NEWS/>

Coronavirus
COVID-19

Man2Man.ie

Gay Health Network

Gay Health Forum

The Annual Gay Health Forum held in 2019 was a huge success and the Board wish to use this newsletter to formally thank the organisers especially Siobhan O' Dea, Susan Donlon and Adam Shanley (who replaced Susan for HIV Ireland). There were also substantial funds raised thanks to Siobhain, and as a result there is just over €2,500 available for the next Forum. GHN, GMHS and HIV Ireland agreed to jointly organise this and GHN will provide the coordination and admin. It was agreed to postpone the 2020 GHF and hold it instead in 2021. Further details will be circulated on this and we look forward to the discussion of ideas when COVID 19 restrictions are lifted.

Recruitment

Noel Sutton, GHN Development and Outreach Coordinator, completed his contract with GHN in February 2020. Thank you to Noel for all his work.

We're Hiring

Two Exciting Positions!

Communications Director

Operations Manager

www.gayhealthnetwork.ie/news



We are delighted to announce that GHN has secured financing for two new posts: Communications Manager and Operations Manager. These posts are being advertised as this newsletter is distributed. There are two interview panels made up of two board members, one SHCPP and one from another NGO organisation. We hope to interview from June 7th. This would mean a successful candidate might be able to start in August.

If you know anyone who might be interested and qualified please pass this information and link <http://gayhealthnetwork.ie/news/>

National Representation / Working Groups



GHN continues to be represented on the Committees for:

- EMIS 2017
- Department of Justice and Equality's LGBTI Inclusion Strategy Consultation Group
- MSM Working Group
- HIV Fast Track Cities

GHN Member Contact Details

| Name | Generic Contact |
|---|--|
| Gay Health Network | info@ghn.ie |
| BeLonGTo | info@belongto.org |
| Cork Gay Project | info@gayproject.ie |
| Gay Mens Health Service (GMHS) | gmhsclinic@hse.ie |
| Gay Switchboard Ireland | director@gayswitchboard.ie |
| Gender Orientation Sexual Health and HIV (GOSHH Limerick) | info@goshh.ie |
| HIV Ireland | info@hivireland.ie |
| LGBT Ireland | info@lgbt.ie |
| Outhouse | info@outhouse.ie |
| Positive Now | positivenow321@gmail.com |
| Sexual Health Centre Cork | info@sexualhealthcentre.com |
| Sexual Health West (formerly AIDS West) | info@sexualhealthwest.ie |

Note associate members not included

Bill Foley (Secretary GHN)

May 2020