



**Health
Information
and Quality
Authority**

An tÚdarás Um Fhaisnéis
agus Cáilíocht Sláinte

Protocol for review of national public health strategies in selected countries

10 August 2023

About the Health Information and Quality Authority

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) is an independent statutory authority established to promote safety and quality in the provision of health and social care services for the benefit of the health and welfare of the public.

HIQA's mandate to date extends across a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector services. Reporting to the Minister for Health and engaging with the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, HIQA has responsibility for the following:

- **Setting standards for health and social care services** — Developing person-centred standards and guidance, based on evidence and international best practice, for health and social care services in Ireland.
- **Regulating social care services** — The Chief Inspector within HIQA is responsible for registering and inspecting residential services for older people and people with a disability, and children's special care units.
- **Regulating health services** — Regulating medical exposure to ionising radiation.
- **Monitoring services** — Monitoring the safety and quality of health services and children's social services, and investigating as necessary serious concerns about the health and welfare of people who use these services.
- **Health technology assessment** — Evaluating the clinical and cost-effectiveness of health programmes, policies, medicines, medical equipment, diagnostic and surgical techniques, health promotion and protection activities, and providing advice to enable the best use of resources and the best outcomes for people who use our health service.
- **Health information** — Advising on the efficient and secure collection and sharing of health information, setting standards, evaluating information resources and publishing information on the delivery and performance of Ireland's health and social care services.
- **National Care Experience Programme** — Carrying out national service-user experience surveys across a range of health services, in conjunction with the Department of Health and the HSE.

Table of contents

1 Purpose and Aim.....	4
2 Process outline	4
2.1 Defining the scope	4
2.2 Search of relevant international sources	5
2.3 Review and extract relevant information on national public health strategies	6
2.4 Summarise the findings	8
3 Quality assurance process	9
References	10
Appendix 1 List of countries and associated resources.....	11
Appendix 2 Sample data extraction template	13

1 Purpose and Aim

The purpose of this protocol is to outline the process by which the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) will conduct an international review of national public health strategies in selected countries. The information contained in the review will inform the development of a national public health strategy in Ireland, through supporting the work of the Public Health Policy Unit in the Department of Health.

2 Process outline

It is important that a standardised approach to the process is developed and documented, to allow for transparency, aid project management and to mitigate risks.

Four distinct steps in the process have been identified and will be completed. These are listed below and described in more detail in sections 2.1-2.4:

- 1.** Defining the scope
- 2.** Search of relevant international sources
- 3.** Review and extract relevant information on national public health strategies
- 4.** Summarise the findings.

2.1 Defining the scope

Public health, as defined by Donald Acheson, UK Chief Medical Officer, in 1988, is “the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting health through the organised efforts of society”.⁽¹⁾ While covering a broad range of functions including disease prevention, health promotion and health surveillance, the ultimate goal of public health is the mobilisation of resources to assure the conditions in which all people can be healthy. While often underpinned by public health policy, more recently, national public health strategies have been developed which outline national health priorities and or provide a framework or roadmap for improving national health outcomes. Within this review, documents identified will be assessed broadly against the Oxford Textbook of Global Health (6th Ed.) definition of public health strategies: “Strategies may directly involve the health services which make contributions both to improving health, as well as to managing disease, but more often than not, strategies are multisectoral, address the broader determinants of health, and involve an ecological perspective which engages politicians, the corporate sector, civil society, local communities, and the public.”⁽²⁾ Further criteria

outlined in section 2.3 will be then applied to identified documents, to assess inclusion eligibility.

2.2 Search of relevant international sources

Information on national public health strategies for a select group of countries will be identified primarily from government resources (websites, reports and press releases), with representatives from key national-level organisations contacted for confirmation and additional resources as appropriate. The following countries have been selected for inclusion in this review:

EU/EEA

- Austria
- Czechia
- Finland
- France
- Portugal
- Spain
- Sweden.

Non – EU

- Australia
- Canada
- England
- New Zealand
- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- Singapore
- Wales.

These countries were selected based on a combination of factors including geographical proximity to Ireland, similar population size, organisation of health services, European Union membership and or availability of documents in English. The associated resources that will be searched for each selected country are detailed in Appendix 1. This list is not exhaustive and will be expanded as necessary, should information on national public health strategies be available elsewhere.

The list of countries may be updated to include additional countries should this information be deemed relevant to the review. Similarly, some countries may be removed from the list if information on national public health strategies cannot be

extracted due to a lack of information, or if a published national public health strategy cannot be identified. This will be documented.

2.3 Review and extract relevant information on national public health strategies

The review will extract relevant information on national public health strategies from official documents, reports and press releases, such as those published by government or state agencies and or bodies.

A national public health strategy will be included if it:

- provides a framework for improving health outcomes, including those related to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and other national priority health problems, such as noncommunicable diseases⁽³⁾
- contributes to the improvement of health outcomes by way of activities typically falling under the essential Public Health functions (EPHFs), as defined by the WHO:⁽⁴⁾
 - Monitoring and evaluating populations health status, health service utilisation and surveillance of risk factors and threats to health
 - Public health emergency management
 - Assuring effective public health governance, regulation, and legislation
 - Supporting efficient and effective health systems and multisectoral planning, financing, and management for population health
 - Protecting populations against health threats, including environment and occupational hazards, food safety, chemical and radiation hazards
 - Promoting prevention and early detection of diseases including non-communicable and communicable diseases
 - Promoting health and wellbeing and actions to address the wider determinants of health and inequity
 - Ensuring community engagement, participation and social mobilization for health and wellbeing
 - Ensuring adequate quantity and quality of public health workforce
 - Assuring quality of and access to health services
 - Advancing public health research
 - Ensuring equitable access to and rational use of essential medicines and other health technologies.
- contains some, or all, of the following five aspects:⁽²⁾
 1. Plan – with purposeful intended action.
 2. Ploy – competitive manoeuvring.
 3. Pattern – signalling a plan in a series of actions.
 4. Position – relevant to the outside world.

5. Perspective – an organisational personality.
- contains some, or all, of the following 10 features which facilitate strategy translation to public health practice:⁽²⁾
 1. Focus on populations rather than individuals.
 2. Address the social determinants of health and the impact of poverty on health.
 3. Be based on values of social justice and equity.
 4. Reflect a global perspective.
 5. Be aware of the dynamic relationship between the environment and health.
 6. Place priority on prevention rather than curative care.
 7. Understand the importance of systems and structures.
 8. Take a transdisciplinary and multisectoral approach.
 9. Ensure decision-making is based on:
 - a. vital statistics (population-based data)
 - b. data, scientific evidence and good research
 - c. surveillance and outbreak investigation.
 10. Be committed to advocacy and in tune with politics.

As all aspects of national public health strategies may not be contained within a single document, and make take various forms, relevant documents may include, but are not limited to:

- broad overview strategies (which may include themes, priorities and actions for example)
- strategy implementation plans and or frameworks
- strategy evaluation plans and or frameworks
- laws, rules and regulations
- policies and mandates.

Within these documents, relevant information may include, but is not limited to:

- strategy
 - timelines (that a strategy applies to)
 - governance
 - scope (for example, health-specific or applying to additional areas such as the environment)
 - aims
 - themes and priorities (for example, themes around empowering healthy living and addressing social determinants of health and or priorities such as equitable child and maternity healthcare)
 - implementation actions (for example, information around types of actions and with whom responsibility for implementation lies)

- outcomes (for example, information around desired strategy outcomes, measurable targets and outcome measurement methods)
- stakeholder engagement and consultation involved in strategy development and or implementation
- economic analysis supporting strategic priorities and or themes.

When identifying relevant documents the following are considered out of scope:

- public health service strategies, in which national health services are responsible for dealing with disease, but may not necessarily influence the major forces which cause disease.⁽²⁾ These strategies may focus on the delivery, transformation and or sustainability of public health services and examples include the *NHS Long Term Plan* (United Kingdom),⁽⁵⁾ *Healthier SG* (Singapore),⁽⁶⁾ *HEALTH 2030: Strategic framework for healthcare development in the Czech Republic until 2030*⁽⁷⁾ and *Te Pae Tata Interim New Zealand Health Plan 2022*⁽⁸⁾
- strategies published by public health agencies, faculties and or institutions, which outline organisational priorities for the delivery of public health domain functions, independent of the national governing body. Examples include the *UK Faculty of Public Health Strategy 2020 - 2025*⁽⁹⁾ and the *Canadian Public Health Association Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025*⁽¹⁰⁾
- global-focused public health strategies, such as *Public Health Wales: Our International Health Strategy 2017 -2027*.⁽¹¹⁾ For countries which often operate regionally, such as Australia and Canada, local, territorial or provincial public health strategies, such as *Healthy Canberra: ACT Preventative Health Plan 2020 – 2025*,⁽¹²⁾ are considered out of scope. However, national public health strategies will be included if identified
- specific public health strategies focused on certain conditions, diseases, age groups or predeterminants, such as mental health, antimicrobial resistance, children’s health and women’s health.

See Appendix 2 for the data extraction template.

Non-English documents and websites from the included countries will be translated where necessary via Google Translate or similar, with this noted as a potential caveat.

Any changes to the review will be reflected in the protocol and detailed under version history.

2.4 Summarise the findings

National public health strategies, where available for the included countries, will be documented and presented. Information extracted as outlined in section 2.2 from within these strategies will be compared across the selected countries, and similar and contrasting elements will be presented descriptively.

3 Quality assurance process

The review question will be undertaken in accordance with HIQA's HTA Directorate's Quality Assurance Framework and led by an experienced member of the team. Data extraction for each country will be done by one reviewer and checked by a second for inaccuracies. All summaries and reviews will be reviewed by at least two members of the senior management team, to ensure processes are followed and quality is maintained. To further ensure quality and accurate interpretation of the information included, an Expert Advisory Group (EAG) of relevant national and international experts in the field of public health will be constituted, input from this group will be sought as appropriate and a draft of the protocol and report will be circulated to them for review.

References

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8. Health New Zealand. Te Pae Tata Interim New Zealand Health Plan 2022: 2022 [Available from: <https://www.tewhatauora.govt.nz/whats-happening/what-to-expect/nz-health-plan/>].
9. UK Faculty of Public Health. UK Faculty of Public Health Strategy 2020–2025. 2020.
10. Canadian Public Health Association. Canadian Public Health Association Strategic Plan 2021-2025: Roadmap to change. 2021.
11. Public Health Wales World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centre (CC) on Investment for Health and Well-being. Public Health Wales: Our International Health Strategy 2017-2027: 2017 [Available from: <https://phwwhocc.co.uk/resources/public-health-wales-our-international-health-strategy-2017-2027/>].
12. Australian Capital Territory (ACT). Healthy Canberra: ACT Preventive Health Plan 2020–2025. 2020.

Appendix 1: List of countries and associated resources

The resources listed below will be searched for relevant data relating to national public health strategies (this list is not exhaustive and will be added to as necessary):

EU/EEA

- Austria
 - [Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection](#)
 - [Austrian Health Targets](#)
 - [Austrian National Public Health Institute](#)
- Czechia
 - [Ministry of Health](#)
- Finland
 - [Ministry of Social Affairs and Health](#)
 - [Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare](#)
- France
 - [The Ministry of Health and Prevention](#)
 - [Public Health France](#)
- Portugal
 - [Directorate General of Health \(DGS\)](#)
- Spain
 - [Ministry of Health, Consumer Affairs and Social Welfare](#)
- Sweden
 - [Ministry of Health and Social Affairs](#)
 - [Public Health Agency of Sweden](#)

Non-EU

- Australia
 - [Department of Health and Aged Care](#)
- Canada
 - [Health Canada](#)
 - [Public Health Agency of Canada](#)
- England
 - [Department of Health and Social Care](#)
 - [Office for Health Improvement and Disparities](#)
 - [UK Health Security Agency](#)
- New Zealand
 - [Ministry of Health - Manatū Hauora](#)

- o [Health New Zealand – Te Whatu Ora](#)
- Northern Ireland
 - o [Department of Health](#)
 - o [Health and Social Care Northern Ireland](#)
- Scotland
 - o [Public Health Scotland](#)
- Singapore
 - o [Ministry of Health](#)
- Wales
 - o [Public Health Wales](#)

Appendix 2: Sample data extraction template

Country (Reference)	Strategy information
Author(s) Title	
Timeline	
Overall aim(s) (measurement method(s) and target(s) where available)	
Governance	
Scope and collaboration	
Themes and or priorities	
Implementation action(s), lead(s) and key performance indicator(s)	
Supporting economic analysis	
Any additional information	
<i>Strategy development</i>	
Stakeholder(s) and or consultation method(s)	

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