

Strategic framework for Public Health

'Making Life Better' is the strategic framework for public health. It is designed to provide direction for policies and actions to improve the health and well being of people in Northern Ireland and to reduce health inequalities.

Making Life Better 2012-2023 is the ten-year public health strategic framework.

The framework provides direction for policies and actions to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Northern Ireland. It builds on the **Investing for Health** strategy (2002-2012) and retains a focus on the broad range of social, economic and environmental factors which influence health and wellbeing. It brings together actions at government level and provides direction for implementation at regional and local level.

The *Making Life Better* framework seeks to create the conditions for individuals and communities to take control of their own lives and move towards a vision of Northern Ireland where all people are enabled and supported in achieving their full health and wellbeing potential and to reduce inequalities in health.

Implementation

The Public Health Agency is the lead agency for regional implementation of the Making Life Better framework. Working across sectors, implementation will focus on strengthening collaboration and coordination to deliver on shared strategic priorities across sectors at a regional level, and on supporting implementation at a local level.

A key responsibility of regional arrangements is to facilitate links with other emerging strategies while focusing on delivery and continuing the cross-sectoral, multi-agency, collaborative approach that is central to Making Life Better.

Aware of this responsibility and in light of a number of strategic developments including the draft *Programme for Government 2016-21*, Community Planning and the transformation envisaged by *Delivering Together*, the regional implementation arrangements have been under careful consideration with regard to how *Making Life Better* could build on these developments and increase momentum for improving

health and reducing health inequalities.

The Network

Through strengthened partnership and collaboration, Making Life Better seeks to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities, reduce health inequalities and to create the conditions for individuals and communities to take control of their own lives and achieve their full health and wellbeing potential.

In order to do this, the PHA has launched the Making Life Better Regional Network. Launched on 4 June 2019, at its inaugural conference, the MLB Network aims to create the conditions for people and organisations, across sectors, to come together as partners, to work towards the vision of Making Life Better that: All people are enabled and supported in achieving their full health and wellbeing, to achieve better health and wellbeing for everyone and reduce inequalities in health.

The MLB Network seeks to help us in this vision through enabling us to:

- further develop and enable a connected whole-system approach;
- share learning and inform each other's efforts;
- create new connections and strengthen existing ones;
- work closer together in pursuit of our goal of a healthier Northern Ireland;
- showcase, expand and spread good practice across the region in line with the needs of local communities.

NISRA Data Portal

To facilitate the high-level monitoring of progress on the key **Making Life Better** indicators, a dedicated section has been developed on the [NISRA Data Portal website](#).

Key documents

- [Making Life Better – A Whole System Strategic Framework for Public Health 2013-2023](#)
- [Making Life Better – Key indicators](#)

[**Access all issues of Making Life Better News**](#)

Please find all the issues of Making Life Better News below:

[MLB News Issue 11 - Autumn 2025](#)

[MLB News Issue 9 - Spring 2025](#)

[MLB News Issue 8 Winter 2024/25](#)

[MLB News Issue 7 Autumn 2024](#)

[MLB News Issue 6 Summer 2024](#)

[MLB News Issue 5 Spring 2024](#)

[MLB News Issue 4 Winter 2024/23](#)

[MLB News Issue 3 Autumn 2023](#)

[MLB News Issue 2 Winter 2019](#)

[MLB News Issue 1 Summer 2019](#)

[**Learn about the Making Life Better regional network**](#)



MAKING LIFE BETTER *Network*

Creating the Conditions for Collaboration

Launched on 4 June 2019, at its inaugural conference, the MLB Network aims to create the conditions for people and organisations, across sectors, to come together as partners, to work towards the vision of Making Life Better that: All people are enabled and supported in achieving their full health and wellbeing, to achieve better health and wellbeing for everyone and reduce inequalities in health.

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Collaboration is at the heart of Making Life Better and our ambition for MLB is to provide a foundation and a forum that enables us to have a connected whole-system approach, to share learning, to inform each other's efforts, to showcase, expand and spread good practice across the region in line with the needs of local communities , to make new connections and strengthen existing ones and to work closer together towards our shared goal of a healthier Northern Ireland where people are empowered to take control of their own health and wellbeing.

The Network is a real opportunity to harness the years of experience, specific knowledge and expertise we have in Northern Ireland. The Network is not about something new but more about how we can do more and have more impact together. This requires commitment and we all have a role to play.

The Network is not about passive membership but about actively participating, sharing, learning, engaging and connecting with colleagues across the sectors with the ultimate goal of making a difference.

It is vital that this Network helps us all to build connections, to agree priorities, to share learning, to collaborate and align activity, to work together, to deliver at scale, and to improve outcomes for the public.

Membership and Meetings

The Network is open to those working in organisations who wish to improve health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities in health. If you wish to be involved please contact MLBNetwork@hscni.net

A primarily virtual network, information will be shared through e-newsletters and updates. The full Network will meet once a year at the MLB Regional Conference, and separate ad hoc events will also be arranged.

Structure

The Network will also connect with the MLB HSC Partnership and our All Department Officials Group (ADOG) – and ultimately the Ministerial Committee for Public Health - and also help inform our future strategic direction.

[View past events of Making Life Better between 2019-20](#)

Making Life Better Seminar Series 2019/20

In keeping with the aim of the network to share learning, create and strengthen connections and showcase good practice, the PHA hosted the MLB Seminar Series for 2019/20. Working in partnership we arranged a number of seminars spanning many different topics.

The presentations given at these seminars are available to download below.

Date	Topic	Venue
11 September 2019 - 10am - 12.30pm	Making Life Better through a palliative care approach with the All Ireland Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care	Chestnut Suite, Lagan Valley Island
23 September 2019 - 10am-12.30pm	Giving every child the best start in life – what the research says part 1	Seamus Heaney Homeplace, Bellaghy
21 November 2019 - 10am-1pm	Recognising and supporting the multi-professional standards of those delivering on the Public Health Agenda	Craigavon Civic Centre
10 December 2019 - 10am-2pm	Life Expectancy is Stalling with Public Health England and NHS Scotland	Riddell Hall, Stranmillis, Belfast
12 February 2020 - 10am-1pm	Cross-border Healthcare Intervention Trials in Ireland Network (CHITIN)	Fermanagh House, Enniskillen

Date	Topic	Venue
4 March 2020 - 10am-1pm	Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life - What the Research says Part 2	Malone House, Belfast
24 April 2020 - 10am-3pm	A Whole System Approach to Childhood Obesity	St Columb's Park House, 'Derry

Downloads

MLB Seminar 10.12.19 - Adele Graham Presentation.pdf	3.52 MB
MLB Seminar 10.12.19 - David Finch Presentation.pdf	3.23 MB
MLB Seminar 10.12.19 - Gerry McCartney Presentation.pdf	6.86 MB
MLB Seminar 10.12.19 - Helen McAvoy Presentation.pdf	2.32 MB
MLB Seminar 10.12.19 - Programme.pdf	537.92 KB
MLB Seminar 11.09.19 - Brendan O'Hara Presentation.pdf	1.36 MB
MLB Seminar 11.09.19 - Chris Matthews Presentation.pdf	69.45 KB
MLB Seminar 11.09.19 - Corrina Grimes Presentation.pdf	1.55 MB
MLB Seminar 11.09.19 - Programme.pdf	292.49 KB
MLB Seminar 23.10.19 - Andrew Percy Presentation.pdf	1.47 MB
MLB Seminar 23.10.19 - Jenny McNeill Presentation.pdf	971.71 KB
MLB Seminar 23.10.19 - Karen Winter Presentation.pdf	855.17 KB
MLB Seminar 23.10.19 - Maurice Meehan Presentation.pdf	1.41 MB
MLB Seminar 23.10.19 - Programme.pdf	46.64 KB
MLB Seminar 12.02.20 - PAIGE2 Presentation.pdf	746.05 KB
MLB Seminar 12.02.20 - Programme.pdf	625.37 KB
MLB Seminar 12.02.20 - REFLECTS Presentation.pdf	2.82 MB
MLB Seminar 12.02.20 - Rhonda Campbell Presentation.pdf	951.69 KB
MLB Seminar 12.02.20 - SPIT Presentation.pdf	1.83 MB
MLB Seminar 12.02.20 - WISH Presentation.pdf	4.7 MB
MLB Seminar 12.02.20 - WORTH Presentation.pdf	1.74 MB
MLB Seminar 04.03.20 - Deirdre McAliskey Presentation.pdf	1.3 MB

MLB Seminar 04.03.20 - Joanne O'Keeffe Presentation.pdf	1.21 MB
MLB Seminar 04.03.20 - Neil Humphrey Presentation.pdf	3.74 MB
MLB Seminar 04.03.20 - Programme.pdf	467.34 KB

MLB Conference 2019

The Inaugural Making Life Better Regional Conference was held on 4 June 2019 in Craigavon Civic Centre. Chaired by William Crawley, the conference aimed to reach out to stakeholders from across all sectors and, through keynote speakers, deliver sessions based on the six key themes of MLB and to launch the Regional Making Life Better Network.

Chief Medical Officer, Dr Michael McBride, opened the conference and welcomed delegates to the inaugural conference and launch of the Regional Making Life Better Network. Dr McBride highlighted how the MLB Network is designed to help us come together as partners to work towards MLB's vision of improved health and wellbeing through sharing learning and good practice, networking, and building and strengthening relationships across organisations and sectors. This can only be done together and by the registered attendance at the conference, it is clear that many share in this vision. Dr McBride encouraged delegates to engage in conversation, make new and strengthen existing connections and to commit to making life better for the populations we serve.

[Main Stakeholders gather for Making Life Better conference | HSC Public Health Agency \(hscni.net\)](#)

The MLB network aims to:

- Re-energise action to deliver on MLB and to share information and learning with the view of discussing how best to move forward through strengthened partnerships and collaborative approaches.
- Bring partners together to work towards a vision of improved health and wellbeing through sharing learning and good practice, networking, and building and strengthening relationships across organisations and sectors.
- Recognize the good work that has been done to date on the delivery of Making Life Better and to galvanise collective efforts for greater collaboration and

better outcomes into the future

The morning continued with a keynote address from Prof Neil Gibson considering why health and wellbeing matters, the current situation in Northern Ireland and the particular challenges faced in Northern Ireland. Professor Gibson closed noting the need for more prevention and not cure; consideration of the potential transformation power of technology; and Northern Ireland is the perfect place to lead the way due to its manageable size, improving data and demonstrable public interest. Parallel sessions around each of the 6 themes of Making Life Better were held throughout the day as detailed in the table below.

The afternoon session began with a keynote address from David Finch, The Health Foundation, who considered health as an asset. Mr Finch discussed the current context for health and inequalities across the UK, the need for a focus on prevention and health creation, the economic value of health and then how we can reframe the conversations we have about health through the language we use.

Following the afternoon parallel sessions, delegates came together for a Q&A panel to consider our next steps. The panel included:

- Dr Naresh Chada, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health
- Professor Neil Gibson, Chief Economist, EY
- Dave Finch, Senior Fellow, Healthy Lives Team, The Health Foundation
- Dr Adrian Mairs, Director of Public Health (interim), The Public Health Agency
- Caroline Gillan, Head of Programme for Government, The Executive Office

Dr Adrian Mairs, Director of Public Health (interim), Public Health Agency, closed the conference noting both the interesting discussions started at the conference and also the challenges set to all of us working to improve health and wellbeing and what our next steps and considerations need to be. Dr Mairs noted the aim of the conference and of the Network, to bring stakeholders together, to re-energise action and to share information and learning with the view of discussing how best to move forward through strengthened partnerships and collaborative approaches. To help drive this, Dr Mairs committed, if there is willing, to making the MLB Conference an annual event and also announced the first MLB Seminar Series which will take place in autumn/winter 2019/20. Dr Mairs closed the conference thanking the keynote speakers, session speakers and organisers.

Downloads

Collaboration and Collective Impact (Session by Community Evaluation NI) 0.pdf	309.48 KB
Derry & Strabane's Green Infrastructure Plan (Session by Derry City & Strabane Council) 0.pdf	5.29 MB
Improving Outcomes for Children in NI (Session by Incredible Years ASD Programme) 0.pdf	1.41 MB
Improving Outcomes for Children in NI (Session by NCB) 0.pdf	936.75 KB
Interventions to Combat Loneliness for Older People (Session by Place-EE) 0.pdf	1001.99 KB
The Marmot City Initiative (Session by Coventry Council) 0.pdf	3.15 MB
Treating our Health as an Asset (Keynote Presentation by David Finch) 0.pdf	2.69 MB
Cancer services team NHSCT.pdf	2.48 MB
Impact of the Built Environment on Mental Health and Wellbeing (Session by Urban Scale Interventions) (2).pdf	

Downloads

Attachment	Size
Making Life Better (MLB) News_ issue 11_ Autumn 2025.pdf	3.29 MB
Print	