

Health Intelligence

The Health Intelligence unit within the PHA consists of a core team with skills in the following areas:

- information analysis, interpretation and presentation;
- survey design and analysis;
- evidence reviews;
- primary research design and implementation;
- developing briefs for market research/consultancy companies;
- developing topic specific briefing documents for PHA and its partner organisations;
- evaluation expertise.

They support the PHA broader roles of identifying and disseminating what works in public health; identifying issues and getting the message across; and working with others to develop and get knowledge/information out where it is needed.

[Access our reports and statistics here](#)

Determining what works

The PHA is committed to being evidence-driven and a key role of Health Intelligence is to conduct research to inform programme direction, review the evidence for particular approaches or interventions and to evaluate, or advise on evaluating, specific interventions or projects.

Recent examples include the evidence reviews on School food: top marks. A summary report on food in schools research in Northern Ireland, on teenage pregnancy and on smoking interventions.

Current evaluations include:

- Lifeline – the suicide crisis helpline service;

- evaluation of a project to maximise access to services grants and benefits in disadvantaged rural areas;
- evaluation of training programmes such as ASIST – suicide intervention skills training;
- evaluation of public information campaigns and evaluation of a breastfeeding DVD for new mothers.

Getting information where it is needed

Information is a vital resource for the PHA and its' partner organisations. Health intelligence works to ensure that it is available and fit for purpose.

A key element of this is working collaboratively with partners in the Health and Social Care Board, the DHSSPS, the Centre of Excellence in QUB, NISRA and many others to disseminate information and develop new or better sources of information on public health.

In any year a large element of health intelligence resource is taken up with -

- Ongoing support to public relations;
- Research and evaluation input to public information campaigns;
- Input into resource development such as public leaflets;
- Presentations by Health Intelligence staff or other PHA staff;
- Support to local health and well being offices on individual topics or projects;
- Development of the 'Core Tables' for the DPH annual report;
- Specific briefings on topics such as breastfeeding, suicide, trends in births, the all island traveller study, alcohol and life expectancy.

Specific research projects and campaign support

A small number of research projects are ongoing at any point. These tend to be focused on areas where there are gaps in knowledge such as the sexual health survey that explores the attitudes and knowledge of people in Northern Ireland regarding sexual behaviour.

Others are linked directly to campaign work. Health intelligence has a key role in the development of any public information campaign that the PHA runs. We review the evidence around what has been done elsewhere and what approaches appear to work best.

We then research the issue locally and establish the current level of knowledge among the public. This helps to target the campaign and is used in evaluating its impact. The team is also involved in the development of the brief to commercial companies, in the testing of concepts for campaigns and again in the post-campaign evaluation.

Recent and current campaigns include those for stroke awareness and smoking.

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