

Health Literacy in a Healthy City: Making the Case and Taking Action

Date: Wednesday 10 December 2014, 12.15pm – 4.45pm
Venue: The Mount Business and Conference Centre, Belfast



Health Literacy is a core theme for Belfast as a member of the WHO Healthy Cities Network Phase VI (2014-2018). Health Literacy implies achievement of a level of knowledge, personal skills, and confidence to take action to improve personal and community health by changing personal lifestyles and living conditions. The benefits of improved health literacy are felt across society and between government, highlighted locally within the Northern Ireland Executive's Making Life Better strategy and through a number of initiatives occurring at local and regional level. This workshop will explore an understanding of Health Literacy within the context of Belfast, look at models of practice locally and across the UK and Ireland and agree a way forward with partners and stakeholders in Belfast.

Programme:

- 12.15pm** **Registration and light lunch**
- 1.00pm** **Welcome:** *Chair: Joan Devlin, Chief Executive, Belfast Healthy Cities*
- 1.05pm** **Opening address:** Health Literacy; An Equity Challenge. The Northern Ireland Response
Dr Michael McBride Chief Medical Officer, DHSSPS
- 1.15pm** **Making it Easy, Health Literacy in Scotland**
Christine Hoy, Primary Care Development Manager, Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland
- 1.35pm** **Health Literacy in Ireland,**
Fergus Dolan, Literacies Development Worker, National Adult Literacy Agency, Ireland
- 1.50pm** **Health Literacy in the City**
Linda Clark, Senior Health Improvement Specialist: Knowledge Management, Stoke-on-Trent Healthy Cities
- 2.05pm** **Health literacy at a local level**
Speaker - TBC
- 2.15pm** **Tea / Coffee**
- 2.30pm** **Health Literacy: Taking Action**
Erica Ison, WHO Expert Advisor
- 2.45pm** **Workshop - Developing health literacy in Belfast**
Small discussion groups
- 4.15pm** **Workshop feedback and next steps**
Erica Ison, WHO Expert Advisor
- 4.45pm** **Close**



Speaker information:

Erica Ison, World Health Organization Expert Advisor

Erica Ison is a Specialist HIA Practitioner, affiliated to Public Health Resource Unit, Oxford and WHO Expert Advisor.

Christine Hoy, Making it Easy, Health Literacy Scotland

Having produced a health literacy scoping study in 2009, the Scottish Government has now established a National Health Literacy Action Group and is implementing 'Making it Easy, A Health Literacy Action Plan for Scotland'. The action plan has drawn on the expertise of front line practitioners, policy makers, academics and those with years of experience with NHS boards and the third sector; they in turn drew on the direct experience of those who have struggled to engage with health and care services. Scotland's 2020 Vision for Health and Social Care focuses on prevention, anticipation and supported self-management. Actions include workforce awareness, test and spread health literacy innovation and a national online resource.

<http://www.knowledge.scot.nhs.uk/healthliteracy.aspx>

Fergus Dolan, Literacies Development Worker, National Adult Literacy Agency, Ireland

Fergus Dolan has worked for NALA (National Adult Literacy Agency) for 14 years. He coordinates adult literacy, numeracy, Family Literacy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) training and events for adult literacy tutors, managers and students. He has developed and edited adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL resources for websites and resource packs. He also develops and delivers Literacy Awareness and plain English training to a wide range of organisations. He is a former adult literacy and English language tutor.

The National Adult Literacy Agency has driven health literacy in Ireland over the last 13 years. Up to recently the Department of Health had no health literacy policy in place however there was reference to health literacy in a number of national documents. In 2013 the Department of Health published their new policy – 'Healthy Ireland - A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013 – 2025'. The policy recommends action to 'address and prioritise health literacy in developing future policy, educational and information interventions' by a number of partners. The partners named include the Department of Health, Department of Children and Youth Affairs, Department of Education and Skills, HSE Directorates, statutory agencies, Community and Voluntary bodies and the private sector.

Initiatives to date have included participation in the European Health Literacy Survey (HLS-EU), Department of Health national training programme with health promotion practitioners, Primary Care and adult literacy providers taking part in literacy awareness and Plain English training and projects specific to minority and cohort groups.

<https://www.nala.ie/literacy/literacy-in-ireland/policy-priorities/health>

Linda Clark, Senior Health Improvement Specialist: Knowledge Management, Stoke-on-Trent Healthy Cities

Linda Clark has been developing health literacy projects in Stoke-on-Trent over the past 3-4 years. A baseline survey conducted highlighted health literacy is poor in Stoke-on-Trent; 49% of adults have limited health literacy.

As health literacy skills enable people to understand their own and their family's health and health needs, poor health literacy has a negative impact on people's lives and their health.

Good health literacy has a positive impact on people's health and wellbeing, whereas poor health literacy has the opposite effect leading to less healthy choices, riskier behaviours, poorer health and more hospitalisations. It also impacts of costs of healthcare.



It is also the case that the poorer you are, the more likely you are to have poor health literacy. Almost half the adult population in Stoke-on-Trent has limited health literacy and this disproportionately affects those who are aged over 65 years, who are from more deprived neighbourhoods and who have fewer qualifications.

Completed health literacy projects in Stoke-on-Trent

- Action on health literacy in Stoke-on-Trent: Engaging South Asian men and Young men with Diabetes
- Health information materials in GP practices in Stoke-on-Trent: A multi-stage readability assessment

<http://www.stoke.gov.uk/ccm/content/social-care/health/health-literacy-ideas-exchange-event.en>