



## Development of the National Mental Health Promotion Plan: Report prepared for the Department of Health, Ireland

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**Funded by:** Department of Health, Government of Ireland

**Background:** This report was commissioned by the Department of Health to support the drafting of the National Mental Health Promotion Plan (“the Plan”), developed in the context of the *Healthy Ireland Strategic Action Plan 2021-2025* (Department of Health, 2021) and the implementation of *Sláintecare*. Building on the national mental health policies in *Sharing the Vision: A mental health policy for everyone* (Department of Health, 2020), *Connecting for Life: Ireland’s National Strategy to Reduce Suicide* (Department of Health, 2015), the *Sláintecare Implementation Plan* (Department of Health, 2021a) and the *Stronger Together - HSE Mental Health Promotion Plan (2022-2027)* (HSE, 2022), the Plan will be underpinned by a whole-of-government approach and will provide strategic direction for promoting positive mental health and well-being at a population level in Ireland over the next decade.

### Aims & Objectives:

To support development of the Plan, the project aimed to outline the following areas:

- 1) current conceptual frameworks for the development of the Plan
- 2) international policy models, including key policy structures and processes to support implementation of intersectoral mental health promotion
- 3) draft priority areas for action building on the *Stronger Together - HSE Mental Health Promotion Plan (2022-2027)* and drawing on international evidence and current policy priorities.

**Design & Methods:** The development of this work builds on current national policy priorities, existing mental health promotion infrastructures and initiatives, and current international best practice on implementing a whole system approach to mental health promotion and the experience internationally of developing and delivering intersectoral mental health promotion policy at a country level. Thus, the following activities were conducted:

- The **desktop review** included mental health policy documents from the following selected countries; Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, England, Finland and New Zealand (along with Ireland’s own current mental health strategy by way of comparison). Within their broader mental health policies, each country included mental health promotion approaches and these were reviewed in terms of their conceptual underpinnings, priority areas and modes of implementation.
- A series of online **roundtable discussions** was undertaken with international experts in countries with leading developments in mental health promotion including; Australia, Canada, England, Finland, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The 16 participants are experts in mental health promotion based at international agencies and national-level departments of health and public health agencies, and non-governmental organisations.

- The **scoping review** examined studies, journal articles and policy documents (peer-reviewed and grey literature) published from 2012-2022. Databases were searched in November-December 2022, and policy documents from countries that are considered leaders in the area. Using Arksey & O'Malley's (2005) scoping framework, 32 selected studies were analysed using an integration of the WHO Mental Health Action Plan (WHO, 2013), Ireland's Well-being Framework (Government of Ireland, 2022) and the Sharing the Vision policy (Department of Health, 2020) as a framework for analysis and narrative synthesis.

#### **Findings & Results:**

The findings from this project outlined a conceptual framework for the National Mental Health Promotion Plan, identifying a set of strategic policy directions and evidence-based priority actions for promoting positive mental health and wellbeing at a population level in Ireland over the next five years. Drawing on the findings from the scoping review and consultations with international experts, the cross-governmental level policy processes and structures needed to support the implementation of the Plan were outlined. Key priority areas for action were identified, drawing on a synthesis of the international evidence, and aligning with existing national policy priorities, especially in relation to the *Stronger Together* HSE Mental Health Promotion Plan 2022-2027.

#### **Dissemination:**

Barry, M.M., Keppler, T., Sheridan, A. (2023). *Development of the National Mental Health Promotion Plan: Executive Summary Report prepared for the Department of Health, Ireland*. Health Promotion Research Centre, University of Galway.

Barry, M.M., Keppler, T., Sheridan, A. (2023). *Development of the National Mental Health Promotion Plan: Report prepared for the Department of Health, Ireland*. Health Promotion Research Centre, University of Galway.

#### **Presentations:**

Keppler, T., Sheridan, A, Barry, M.M. (2024). *Development of the National Mental Health Promotion Framework: Scoping Review of International Intersectoral Mental Health Promotion Policy Approaches & Structures*. Oral presentation at 'Implementing a Systems Approach to Mental Health Promotion: From Policy to Practice', Health Promotion Annual Conference, University of Galway, 13 June 2024.

**Knowledge Translation:** The findings from this project informed the drafting of the Department of Health's *Pathways to Wellbeing – National Mental Health Promotion Plan 2025-2030*.