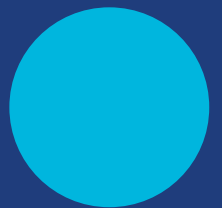
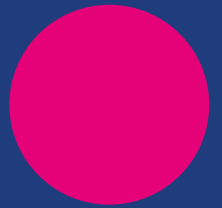
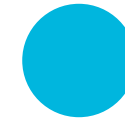




**Community
Development &
Health Network**



**Strategic Plan
2025–2030:
Creating Change
for a Fair and
Healthy Society**



About the Community Development and Health Network

The Community Development and Health Network (CDHN) is a regional community development infrastructure support organisation. With 2,400 individual members and 140 community and voluntary sector organisational members, CDHN raises awareness of the root causes of poor health and inequality highlighting their harmful impact on people, communities and society.

We work alongside communities, decision-makers and across sectors to build connections, recognise local strengths, share skills, produce evidence and take action to create a fair and equal society for all.

We focus on the structural factors that cause inequality and poverty in the first place. The social determinants of health, such as where people live, their jobs, social connections how much money they have, education, housing, clean air, and access to health services; all play a big part in shaping people's overall mental, physical and emotional health.

CDHN is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors and supported by a team of full-time and part-time staff. Our expertise includes health inequalities, social determinants of health, community development and community-led, place-based approaches, health literacy, community based participatory research, evidence informed policy analysis, and partnership working to make a difference, locally and regionally.





Background and context

Founded in 1994 by community health workers in our most disadvantaged areas, CDHN continues to work across Northern Ireland alongside people, communities, health and social care professionals, including pharmacists, social workers and decision makers to challenge social injustice and reduce health inequalities through community-led action, partnership, and advocacy.

Reflecting on our journey, and with renewed energy from our members and partners, we are committed to tackling the root causes of poor health by addressing the social determinants and using our strengths and ability to support practical, positive, community-centred solutions for healthier communities.

Health inequalities and environmental harms, such as pollution and climate change, disproportionately affect people and communities facing deprivation, exclusion and systemic discrimination.

We face mounting challenges: rising child poverty, increasing living costs, homelessness, food and energy insecurity, and the growing mental and physical toll on children, young people, low-income women, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. These challenges are deepened by racism, economic inequality, geopolitical instability, misinformation and loss of public trust in institutions.

Undoubtedly, improving population health and reducing inequalities demands coordinated, intergovernmental, cross-sectoral action. It requires meaningful collaboration

with community, voluntary, and statutory organisations to drive systems change and build inclusive, citizen-centred approaches. By placing people and place at the heart of prevention and public health, governments can better recognise and harness the depth of knowledge and experience that exists within local communities. Such collective action is essential, particularly as there is no one-size-fits-all solution—local health needs and conditions vary significantly, and policy must reflect this diversity.

The New Neighbourhood Care model for NI is a welcome and timely development. Partnership is at its core to make the shift towards prevention, primary, community, and social care. By working closely with local organisations and communities, the model supports more responsive, person-centred care that reflects the realities and priorities of each neighbourhood. It recognises that sustainable improvements in health and wellbeing are achieved when communities are empowered, when local expertise is valued, and when organisations work together to design services that meet people where they are at.

Our Strategic Plan 2025–2030, guided by our mission, vision, and values has been developed through a process involving CDHN staff, Board, our members, partners and stakeholders.

The plan sets six strategic priorities which we hope will reflect our belief that communities' active engagement is critical to finding solutions to the challenges they face. Their voices, experiences and participation must shape decisions at every level. To amplify these community-led solutions, CDHN will strengthen our digital capabilities, expand our communications, grow our evidence base, and invest in the next generation of leaders.

We will continue to strengthen partnerships, sustain momentum and work towards a fair and healthy, more equitable society for all.



Our VISION

A fair and equal society where everyone experiences their best health and wellbeing.

Our MISSION

Champion community development approaches to address the social determinants of health and end health inequalities.

Our VALUES

We are committed to living the following values in all aspects of our work:

Social justice and sustainable development

We believe in fairness and equality. Everyone should have the same chance for a healthy life, no matter where they were born or live. We work to create conditions where people have more control of their health and wellbeing, and a voice in decisions that affect them.

Equity

Human rights and anti-discrimination
We value diversity, challenge racism and discrimination, and will always work to build an inclusive and equitable society.

Participation & inclusion

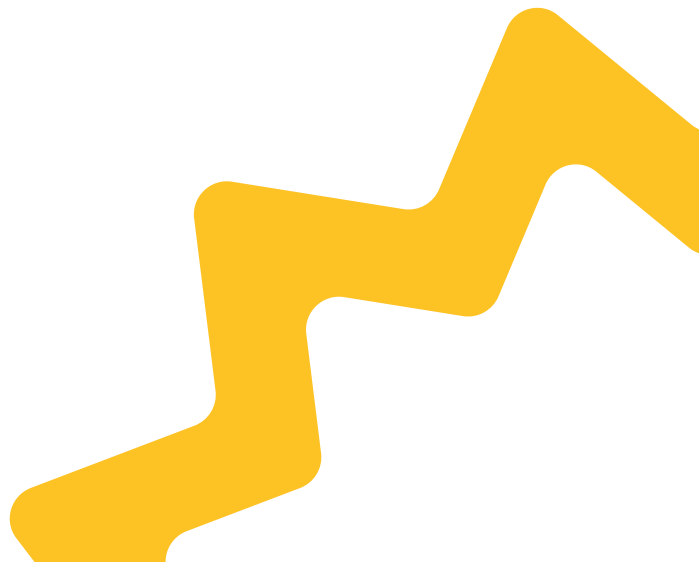
We support people to have a voice, be included and shape decisions through meaningful participation.

Integrity

We act with honesty, openness and accountability. We build relationships based on trust, compassion, and mutual respect, and ensure our actions reflect our values.

Collective action & community empowerment

We believe that empowered communities can create lasting change by working together to end poverty and health inequalities.



Our GROUNDING TRUTHS

We believe that everyone has the right to good health.

Deep-rooted inequalities mean that not everyone has the same chance to live a healthy life.

These truths guide our work:

In Northern Ireland some people die younger and experience more years in poor health because of factors such as where they live, their jobs, quality of their homes, their education, clean air, how much money they have and their access to health services.

These health inequalities are unfair and preventable. They are driven by the social determinants of health, not just personal choices or lifestyles. Overemphasising individual behaviour change in public health can make the burden of inequalities worse for the least well-off population groups.

Community development approaches help people to identify what matters to them, recognise power imbalances, participate in public policy and decision making, and take collective action to improve their health and wellbeing.

Health is also shaped by the support people get, the conversations they have, and the systems they interact with every day. By investing in organisations and people to build skills in health literacy, communities can better understand and manage their health.

Achieving health equity requires long-term, society-wide action that tackles the root causes of poor health.

Evidence shows that community-led approaches addressing the social determinants of health, play a vital role in keeping people healthy, improving health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities.

To close the health inequalities gap, we must actively involve the diverse range of people experiencing the most disadvantage, including minority and marginalised groups, and work together for real, lasting change to achieve health equity for everyone.

Our LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

More people regularly work together to create positive social change on those issues that affect people's health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities at personal, community and national levels.

Communities will always be actively involved in decisions and actions that affect their lives.

Communities, organisations and government recognise the impact community development has in improving health and wellbeing, and adopt this approach in the planning and delivery of targeted programmes.

There will be acknowledgement at policy and planning level that Community-led solutions offer fresh thinking and better use of resources, and lead to improved outcomes for everyone.





The impact we aim for

01

A fair society where everyone has an equal chance to live a healthy and fulfilling life.

03

Power, money and resources are more fairly shared across societies, reducing the gap between richest and poorest people.

02

Health and wellbeing outcomes are less affected by the social determinants of health.

04

People and communities have greater control over their health and the decisions that affect their lives.

Strategic Priorities 2025–2030

These will guide
our work over the
next 5 years. We
will report on each
priority's progress
area every year.



01

Tackle health inequalities through community development by driving long term change in community-led, place-based approaches to address root causes and advance health equity.

A

Strengthen CDHN's unique role in advancing strong cross-sectoral collaborations to address wider determinants of health.

B

Co-design and develop flexible and holistic community-led prevention and early intervention models for scale up.

C

Engage with place-based settings and facilitate interventions to ensure genuine impact in reducing health inequalities.

02

Grow healthy communities by recognising local strengths, and delivering evidence informed training, mentoring and support programmes to empower people and organisations promote inclusion and improve health and wellbeing.

A

Expand CDHN's training offer and deliver targeted training e.g., community development, health literacy, social and environmental determinants of health, community-led partnership approaches across sectors.

B

Refine and co-deliver mentoring and support for organisations to embed community development in their work.

C

Develop early-career engagement, community and youth leadership, collaborative leadership and peer-learning opportunities.

03

Bring people together through collective action and participation by creating opportunities for collaboration and shared learning across sectors and communities.

A

Champion lived experience, ensure inclusion of marginalised and minority voices in all health equity work and challenge discrimination.

B

Facilitate the development of networks, communities of practice, and shared learning spaces.

C

Raise CDHN's profile with our members, policy makers, media, funders and the community and voluntary sector to promote for health for all.



04

Influence policy and public understanding by developing and using evidence to shape thinking, and advocate for improved “health in all policies” that can reduce poverty and health inequalities.

A

Generate and share robust evidence on the impact of community development on health and social wellbeing to strategically push for society-wide changes.

B

Co-produce research with communities, practitioners, academics and decision makers.

C

Contribute to relevant fora and networks to advance communities’ needs and advocate for community development approaches to reducing health inequalities.

D

Promote and embed health literacy evidence and engage with people and communities to co-design, accessible, clear and trustworthy public health communications.

05

Champion environmental justice in health equity by highlighting how climate and environmental risks disproportionately affect marginalised communities and deepen health inequalities.

A

Develop capacity and apply an environmental justice lens across all our work.

B

Raise awareness of how environmental issues interact with social determinants of health and contribute to poor outcomes.

C

Measure and improve our environmental impact and social value.

06

Strengthen our organisational sustainability and impact by ensuring our work is effective, resilient and aligned with our community development values.

A

Implement a diverse and sustainable funding model.

B

Improve CDHN systems and processes through digital tools.

C

Invest in our staff and embed a learning and personal development culture.

D

Measure, evaluate and disseminate our impact clearly and widely.

E

Ensure our ways of working and relationships reflect our values.



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