



**Community Development  
& Health Network**

# **Strategic Plan**

**2021 – 2024**



# Introduction

Community Development and Health Network (CDHN) is Northern Ireland's leading organisation working to empower communities, improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities using a community development approach. With over 2,200 members supporting tens of thousands of people, CDHN raises awareness of the root causes of poor health and health inequalities.

The organisation highlights the structural causes of health inequalities and encourages collaborative action across the social determinants of health. Through its work, communities and decision makers are supported to recognise and utilise assets, to work together to develop solutions, take action to improve lives, health and wellbeing and create a fairer, more equal society.

Our new Strategic Plan will shape our work into 2024 and is underpinned by our Mission, Vision and our Values. It is the result of a strategic planning process with staff and our Board of Directors and has been developed in the context of the wider policy arena as well as insights and experiences we have gathered from our membership base.

We expect the next three years to be very challenging. Inequality gaps have been steadily worsening over the past decade and COVID-19 has widened

those gaps even further. The pandemic has had an unequal effect on people and communities across the range of social determinants – including housing, education, income, employment, social isolation, access to services, health literacy and others.

The work of CDHN has always been important but now it is crucial. Our focus for the next three years is to ensure that the voice of people and communities, the lived experience, becomes and remains the central point for policy makers, decision makers and within local communities themselves.

CDHN is managed by a voluntary Board of Directors and employs a team of full time and part time staff with expertise in areas such as health inequalities, social determinants of health, participatory research, policy development and local Government.

## Mission

Using community development to end health inequalities.

## Vision

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

## Values

CDHN is committed to living the following values in all aspects of its work:

### **Social Justice**

We believe in a society based on fairness, where everyone is considered equal and our health and wellbeing is not determined by where we are born, live or work. We are committed to creating the social, economic and environmental conditions where people can have more control of their own health and wellbeing and have a voice in decisions that affect them.

### **Diversity**

We are committed to celebrating diversity and equality across the organisation and in the communities we serve.

### **Integrity**

We believe in being open, honest and accountable in all our interactions and building relationships based on trust and mutual respect.

### **Collaboration**

We believe that working in partnership to promote social justice and equality is the best way of ending health inequalities and poverty.

# Core Aims

## Aim 1

### Community Development

To support communities as a catalyst for change in ending health inequalities.

## Aim 2

### Policy & Practice

To influence policy and practice to support the ending of health inequalities.

## Aim 3

### Evidence

To build and use the evidence base which supports community-based approaches to end health inequalities and poverty.

Aim  
**1**

### **Communications**

To engage with all stakeholders to increase awareness of CDHN and its unique expertise.

Aim  
**2**

### **Governance**

To ensure the governance of CDHN complies with the requirements of the law and best practice.

## **Supporting Aims**

Aim  
**3**

### **Financial & Physical Resources**

To ensure that CDHN is sustainable and accountable.

Aim  
**4**

### **Human Resources**

To ensure that CDHN has the staff it requires to achieve its aims and priorities and these staff are effectively supported, managed and given the opportunity to develop.

# Core Aims

## Priorities for 2021 - 2024

### Aim 1:

## Community Development

To support communities as a catalyst for change in ending health inequalities.

### Priorities

- Enhance the knowledge, skills and capacity of communities to identify their assets, develop their communities and advocate a social determinants of health approach to tackle health inequalities.
- Innovate, test, evaluate and embed concepts to address health inequalities.
- Convene communities to network, learn from, and support, each other.
- Embed a culture of critical reflection within CDHN and its members to promote best practice.
- Grow and develop the membership of CDHN.
- Develop CDHN's internal capacity to respond to the need for collective action at local and regional level.

### Aim 2:

## Policy & Practice

To influence policy and practice to support the ending of health inequalities.

### Priorities

- Support communities to articulate their lived experience and work collectively to ensure it is at the heart of decision-making.
- Encourage policy-makers, decision-makers and practitioners to understand inequality as experienced in communities.
- Influence policy-makers, decision-makers and practitioners to use evidence to inform their work.
- Build relationships with policy-makers and decision-makers.
- Engage our members in initiatives to develop policy and practice.
- Promote and support health literacy policy and practice across all sectors.

# Core Aims

## Priorities for 2021 - 2024

### Aim 3:

## Evidence

To build and use the evidence base which supports community-based approaches to end health inequalities and poverty.

### Priorities for 2021 – 2024

- Build the evidence base on community-based approaches around health inequalities and the social determinants of health.
- Communicate and disseminate research literature on community-based approaches to reduce health inequalities.
- Promote the use of evidence-based research in the development of services and cross-sectoral actions in community settings.
- Promote the role of community based participatory approaches in health inequalities research.
- Ensure CDHN measures its impact and supports CDHN members to demonstrate the difference they make.



# Supporting Aims

## Priorities for 2021 - 2024

### Supporting Aim 1:

## Communications

To engage with all stakeholders to increase awareness of CDHN and its unique expertise.

### Priorities

- Review and implement a communications strategy to ensure effective internal and external communication.
- Build and activate a membership engagement strategy, targeted to serve all stakeholders.
- Grow public awareness and audience engagement on the Social Determinants of Health and causes of Health Inequalities.
- Embed Health Literacy by communicating in simple, accessible, and appropriate language.
- Investigate and invest in online and digital infrastructure for all communications and engagement.

### Supporting Aim 2:

## Governance

To ensure that the governance of CDHN complies with the requirements of the law and best practice.

### Priorities

- Ensure the board reflects the communities it serves and has the skills required to govern effectively.
- Regularly review governance performance and develop and implement a governance improvement plan.
- Effectively manage risk.
- Ensure CDHN complies with its legal requirements and has the appropriate organisational policies and they are effectively implemented and regularly reviewed.
- Approve and monitor the achievement of the Strategic Plan and annual Operational Plan.
- Manage and support the Director.

# Supporting Aims

## Priorities for 2021 - 2024

### Supporting Aim 3:

## Financial & Physical Resources

To ensure that CDHN is sustainable and accountable.

#### Priorities

- Develop, implement and review an income generation strategy.
- Continuously improve financial planning, management and reporting.
- Ensure CDHN has the physical resources it requires to adapt to the changing context and achieve its aims and priorities and these are effectively managed.
- Review current ICT infrastructure and develop and implement a digital strategy to underpin the organisation's strategic priorities.
- Develop environmentally sustainable work practices, activities, processes and facilities to improve ways of working (in line with our values).

### Supporting Aim 4:

## Human Resources

To ensure that CDHN has the staff it requires to achieve its aims and priorities and these staff are effectively supported, managed and given the opportunity to develop.

#### Priorities

- Ensure CDHN has the appropriate HR policies and procedures.
- Ensure that CDHN has the staff, skills and structure it requires.
- Ensure all staff receive regular supervision and appraisal.
- Ensure staff have the opportunity to learn and develop and work effectively as a team.



## Contact Us

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