



**Cultivating health
and wellbeing within
the Irish community
in Britain**



www.irishinbritain.org

green hearts



Introduction:

Although it's no bigger than your fist, your heart has the mighty job of keeping blood flowing through the 60,000 miles of blood vessels that feed your organs and tissues. Having good cardiovascular health is an important element of optimal physical and mental wellness.

Coronary heart disease (CHD) is one of the main causes of death and disability in the UK and is responsible for 73,000 deaths per year. That's an average of 200 people every day, or one every seven minutes. Research also indicates that CHD is even more prevalent within the Irish community; emphasising the urgent need for a targeted heart health campaign.

The Green Hearts campaign has emerged as a response to the heart-health issues facing our diaspora. We look forward to evolving the Green Hearts concept with the aim of improving health, wellbeing and longevity of our dynamic community.

Irish in Britain extend sincere thanks to all of those helping us share the Green Hearts message.



BRIAN DALTON

Irish in Britain CEO



Irish in Britain are pleased to launch the Green Hearts initiative to promote positive and practical health messages for our diaspora in Britain. We are a resilient community, yet we often experience poorer health outcomes in areas of heart health, screening and treatment.

We aim to build awareness, capacity and pathways to health and wellbeing through our membership, associates and partnerships and we are committed to improving outcomes for our diverse community. We look forward to working in healthy collaboration this year and beyond.

AMBASSADOR ADRIAN O'NEILL



I am very happy to support this important initiative aimed at improving the health, wellbeing and active years of life among the Irish community in Britain.

Promoting awareness for the need for heart health and encouraging positive changes in lifestyle will certainly help reduce the risk of many common health issues.

PAUL FOLEY

President of the Provincial
Council of Britain



The Provincial Council of Britain GAA are very happy to support this project. It fits in very well with the GAA's player welfare recommendations relating to cardiac screening.

Did you know?

Knowledge of signs and symptoms of cancer is poorer among the Irish than the White British

DR. MARY TILKI



I warmly welcome the Green Hearts initiative. It offers a forceful nudge to Irish people living in Britain to take timely responsibility for their own health.

Much of the ill-health Irish people experience is preventable and although the earlier the better, taking action at any stage can reduce the risk of illness which limits life and lifespan of Irish people in Britain, their children and grandchildren. Heart health, like health in general requires a whole community approach and cannot be left to professionals.

Green Hearts aims to capture the skills and resourcefulness within the community to tap into the services which already exist to provide information, support and encouragement in ways which understand and respect Irish culture.

Is fear an tsláinte ná na táinte

DR. AISLING HILLARY



For decades, the Irish Diaspora have helped to build Britain in all facets of life, from teaching, to construction, to healthcare. Throughout this time, many have neglected their own health and have subsequently suffered more serious, sometimes premature, health conditions and outcomes that may have been preventable.

Although prevention is better than cure, lifestyle changes at any stage of life can provide enormous benefits to a person's health and wellbeing. The Green Hearts initiative will encourage engagement with a wide range of services and community groups, tackling health issues that have previously been ignored or avoided.

This exciting project is putting a much needed focus on the health of the Irish in Britain, thereby aiming to improve the overall quality of life of the Irish community.

Cultivating health and wellbeing within the Irish community in Britain

The Irish diaspora in Britain

Migration has been a defining feature of Irish society throughout the nineteenth and much of the twentieth centuries.

With the 1960s showing one of the largest waves of inward migration from Ireland in recent history, the age profile of the Irish community in Britain is an older one with a larger proportion in the over 50 age bands than in the rest of the population. As well as this distinctly older population, there is a sizeable population of second and third generation who identify as Irish - people with one or more parents or grandparents who were Irish. There is also a growing number of mixed heritage with one Irish parent and the other from a different culture and the Irish Traveller community is also a distinct cultural group of emigrants.

Analysis of the 2011 census suggests that emigration is once again on the rise in Ireland and according to the Office of National Statistics, England is home to over 517,000 people of Irish ethnicity. As such, our dynamic and diverse community presents equally dynamic and diverse health challenges.

Heart Health

Heart health is a sizeable concern for the Irish community with clear evidence of above average, and in some cases increasing, mortality among Irish men and women from coronary heart disease, hypertension and stroke. Research also suggests that high levels of cardiovascular disease in the Irish community probably increase the risk of vascular dementia.

Although the risk of heart disease increases with age, many contributing factors to poor heart health are lifestyle habits evolved over the course of a person's lifespan. It's also noteworthy that several of the risk factors for poor heart health are also the same as those associated with diseases such as cancer. The good news is that it's never too early or too late to start making positive changes for your heart, and when we look after our heart we automatically help reduce the risk of many other common health issues.

Green Hearts Campaign

As a membership organisation with national reach, Irish in Britain is well placed to lead a collaborative heart health campaign that promotes awareness within the Irish community, relationships among organisations and parliamentary recognition. Our understanding of the culture, values and experiences of the Irish community in Britain is essential in the effective development and delivery of the Green Hearts message.

By continuing to advance partnerships and encourage a collaborative approach between organisations, we can efficiently and effectively deliver the Green Hearts message on a local and national scale.

Prevention is at the core of Irish in Britain's approach to heart health, with a focus on promoting positive lifestyle changes, social inclusion and early detection.





Did you know?

The Irish have the highest mortality rates relating to most types of cancer than the rest of the population of England and Wales

Green Hearts: Steps to improving heart health within the Irish community in Britain

- Develop a Green Hearts framework that directs the implementation of heart-health initiatives within our member organisations.
- Lead the development of Green Hearts initiatives in local community groups and organisations, particularly within sporting organisations, such as GAA clubs.
- Facilitate partnerships and collaborations between organisations
- Promote early detection and health checks
- Create awareness of heart health preventative measures and promote heart-healthy lifestyle changes
- Improve recognition of the Irish community in Britain by Public Health England, the NHS, HealthWatch Local Authority and other bodies responsible for health



Green Hearts Objectives

Our aim is to develop and lead a collaborative, culturally sensitive and nationwide heart health campaign that improves the health, well-being and healthy years of life among the Irish community in Britain.

Heart Health

1. Prevention

- Based on British Heart Foundation and Public Health England guidelines, and our research on the Irish community, develop an operational framework for improved heart health facilities within our member organisations. Parameters to include catering, physical activity, social inclusion, awareness events and signposting commitments.
- Lead a national campaign that promotes early detection, in particular blood pressure monitoring, and includes signposting to national/local campaigns including One You and relevant service providers
- Promote the 'Green Hearts challenge' and uptake of health heart lifestyle habits within the wider community

2. Awareness

- Facilitate Green Hearts awareness events within our member organisations and GAA clubs

- Lead a national Green Hearts awareness social media campaign
- Promotion and cross-promotion of member organisations services within the community

3. Partnerships

- Facilitate collaboration between sporting bodies, public authorities, members organisations and the corporate sector
- Identify community organisations to host community health events in collaboration with statutory, charity or BME sectors

4. Intergenerational

- Facilitate the development of a range of inclusive activities within our member organisations e.g. football, yoga, walking, aerobics
- Build on the inclusive infrastructure within sporting organisations to implement green heart activities



5. Cultural and Collective Health

- Promote the Green Hearts message through culturally appropriate avenues
- Generate an awareness and understanding of the crossover between heart health, cancer, diabetes and brain health

6. Sustainability

- Provide an online resource portal for organisations and the public with up-to-date and relevant materials
- Encourage peer-support/volunteer led activities within participating organisations
- Continue to develop and update campaign in line with PHE and BHF and emerging data on the Irish in Britain

7. Research and Representation

- Collect relevant health data via screening campaign and workshops
- Make representations to relevant bodies to ensure inclusion of Irish community in research
- Signpost to up-to-date evidence via bibliography, newsletters and publications
- Facilitate research collaborations

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

- From the outset, use a logic model to measure the qualitative and quantitative effectiveness of the campaign
- Report and share the findings of the Green Hearts campaign with participants, the public and relevant government bodies
- Aim to develop a best practice standard that can be replicated within other Irish diasporas

Did you know?

There is clear evidence of excess, and in some cases increasing, mortality among Irish men and women from coronary heart disease, hypertension and stroke



LEND YOUR SUPPORT

As an Individual

- Take our Green Hearts challenge! Download your free Green Hearts guide from the website.
- Become a Green Heart Champion, get in touch to find out how you can make a difference as a volunteer
- Host a Green Hearts awareness event at your workplace or local community organisation
- Make a donation

As a Business

- Become an official sponsor
- Find out how you can implement a Green Hearts initiative within your organisation
- Make a donation

As a Member Organisation

- Host a Green Hearts awareness event
- Find out how you can implement a Green Hearts initiative within your organisation

As an MP or Councillor

- Take our Green Hearts challenge! Download your free Green Hearts guide from the website.
- Engage in Green Heart awareness events
- Identify and support your local Irish Community service
- Make a donation



Get involved or find out more: Visit: www.irishinbritain.org
Email: health@irishinbritain.org | Tel: 07795677475 | Facebook: GreenHeartsliB