

Press Release

Date: 19th June 2018

SIGNIFICANT EU INVESTMENT IN COMMUNITY-BASED HEALTH AND WELL-BEING HUBS WELCOMED

10,000 people to be supported to improve their health

A four year, €5.01 million EU INTERREG VA funded cross-border project has been launched in Co. Antrim. The CAWT Community Health Sync (CoH-Sync) Project secured the EU funding for the development of a network of Locality Health and Well-being Hubs in the border region of the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and SW Scotland. These community-based and locally run Hubs will support individuals and groups to become more active in improving their own health and wellbeing by making better use of existing resources and facilities in their local areas.

The EU funding allocation has been secured by the Co-operation and Working Together (CAWT) Health and Social Care Partnership. This Partnership comprises the HSE, the Southern Health and Social Care Trust, the Western Health and Social Care Trust, the Public Health Agency and the Health and Social Care Board. NHS Dumfries and Galloway is also a CoH-Sync project partner.

The CoH-Sync Project will encourage people living in disadvantaged areas and in more rural outlying areas to sign up to a health and well-being plan and receive support from a health facilitator. The CoH-Sync project will focus on helping people to improve their health in the risk factor areas of physical activity, nutrition, smoking, alcohol consumption and mental health resilience. Such risk factors are known to be associated with the development of long term conditions or chronic illnesses such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, type 2 diabetes, obesity, and arthritis for example.

A public procurement exercise was undertaken in recent months and a number of providers were appointed to manage the Locality Health and Well-being Hubs. There are a total of 8 Hubs: 3 in the Rep of Ireland, 3 in Northern Ireland and 2 in Scotland. The Hub locations are Letterkenny/North Donegal; Ballyshannon/South Donegal; Co. Cavan/Co. Monaghan; Derry /



Strabane; Enniskillen/West Fermanagh; Armagh/Dungannon; Dumfries, Scotland and Stranraer, Scotland.

Welcoming the project Gina McIntyre, CEO of the Special EU Programmes Body said: **“This project will empower citizens, on both sides of the border, to manage their own health and social care needs. In doing so it will deliver upon some of the key outputs of the EU’s INTERREG VA Programme which is investing millions of euros in cross-border health projects that will positively transform the lives of tens of thousands of citizens and their families. I am delighted to see that the project includes early intervention health plans to help people take charge of their own physical well-being on a long-term basis.”**

Speaking at the event on behalf of Scottish partners in the project, Dr Margaret Whoriskey, Head of Technology Enabled Care and Digital Healthcare Innovation at the Scottish Government said: **“I am pleased that there will be two health and wellbeing hubs in the NHS Dumfries and Galloway area as part of this EU funded project. The CoH Sync project complements and supports our focus on prevention and early intervention by providing tailored support to individuals to enable them to change their lifestyle and thus live longer and healthier lives.”**

Chief Medical Officer for Northern Ireland, Dr Michael McBride commented: **“This EU funded health and well-being initiative is timely as within all the three regions where the project is being implemented, there is a strong focus on helping people to stay well for longer. This project will also contribute to reducing health inequalities and will provide valuable knowledge about what works in supporting people to improve and protect their own health.”**

Also commenting, the Minister with responsibility for Health Promotion, Catherine Byrne TD, said: **“We welcome this EU investment in promoting health initiatives and reducing health inequalities in communities on both sides of the border. All of the new health and wellbeing hubs, including three in the border region, will bring a new focus to working together at community level in supporting those people who are at risk of poor health.”**



Speaking on behalf of the CAWT Project Board, which is managing the overall project in the border area, Dr Maura O'Neill, Western Health and Social Care Trust, said: **“On behalf of the CoH-Sync Project Board, I am delighted that the health services has been able to secure additional European Union funding to deliver these Locality Health and Well-being Hubs. Our aim is to ensure that, through a partnership approach, people will be provided with the information, support and skills within their own communities to enable them to achieve a healthier lifestyle.”**

Commenting on the significant EU investment, Director General of the CAWT Partnership, Damien McCallion, HSE said: **“The CoH Sync project presents us with a fantastic opportunity for a cross sector, whole community approach to improving health and well-being and it fits in so well with current policy and practice for improving health and well-being and reducing the impact of chronic illnesses. On behalf of the CAWT Management Board, I wish the Project Board and appointed Hub providers every success with this initiative and look forward to hearing about progress as the project is rolled out.”**

Representing the successful bidders to the public procurement exercise, Seamus Ward, General Manager of Bogside and Brandywell Health Forum in Derry outlined how the community and voluntary sector are well positioned to access those people who are more marginalised and deprived and thus harder to reach. He highlighted that the EU funding enables the successful providers to work across borders towards health improvement and make accessing interventions more convenient for people who most need them, regardless of the jurisdiction in which they live.

Match-funding for the project has been provided by both Departments of Health in Ireland and Northern Ireland with support from the Scottish Government.

-ENDS

CAWT Community Health Sync (CoH Sync) project – Locality Health and Wellbeing Hubs location and providers

Health and well-being Hub Location	Provider
1. Letterkenny/North Donegal, Rep of Ireland	Donegal Local Development Company
2. Ballyshannon/South Donegal, Rep of Ireland	Donegal Local Development Company
3. Co. Cavan/Co. Monaghan, Rep of Ireland	Donegal Local Development Company in partnership with Monaghan Integrated Development
4. Londonderry - Derry / Strabane, Northern Ireland	Bogside and Brandywell Health Forum
5. Enniskillen/West Fermanagh, Northern Ireland	Arc Healthy Living Centre
6. Armagh/Dungannon, Northern Ireland	To be appointed
7. Dumfries, Scotland	NHS Dumfries and Galloway in partnership with third sector
8. Stranraer, Scotland	NHS Dumfries and Galloway in partnership with third sector

Notes to editors:

- The CAWT Community Health Sync project is scheduled to complete in 2022.
- The CAWT Community Health Sync project partners are the HSE, Western Health and Social Care Trust; Southern Health and Social Care Trust; Public Health Agency, Health and Social Care Board and NHS Dumfries and Galloway.
- The CAWT Community Health Sync Project has received grant funding totalling €5.01 million and is funded through the European Union’s INTERREG VA Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body, and match funded by the Northern Ireland Executive and the Irish Government with support from the Scottish Government
- The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in Ireland. It is responsible for managing two EU Structural Funds Programmes, PEACE IV and INTERREG VA which are designed to



enhance cross-border cooperation, promote reconciliation and create a more peaceful and prosperous society. The Programmes operate within a clearly defined area including Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and in the case of INTERREG VA, Western Scotland.

- The INTERREG VA Programme has a European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) contribution of €240 million and aims to address the economic and social problems which result from the existence of borders.
- For more information on the SEUPB please visit www.seupb.eu