

# Overview from CIEH Northern Ireland

## Meeting of Council

10 December 2009

Report from Graham Jukes, Chief Executive

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### 1.0 Summary and recommendations

- 1.1 This report summarises the key activities and progress on work in N. Ireland being led by Gary McFarlane in 2009 and not included within the 2009 work programme (i.e. work that has arisen during the course of the year).
- 1.2 The full 2009 work programme (set in December 2008) with updates on progress is provided at appendix 1.
- 1.3 The work programme for 2010 is provided at appendix 2.

### 2.0 Detail

- 2.1 Two important inquiries were conducted by the Assembly Environment and Health committees during 2009. The environment committee inquiry dealt with climate change, whilst the health committee looked at obesity. CIEH submitted papers to both these inquiries and, in the case of the climate change inquiry, was invited to make an oral evidence submission. This in turn led to a request from the committee for 2 further supplementary papers one of which dealt with housing in the context of climate change and the other the linkages between obesity and climate change. These submissions and the subsequent interaction have helped further our positioning with both the assembly committee and individual MLAs. In October 2009 the director was invited to accompany the environment committee, along with other leading NGOs, on a trip to the European Commission (funded by the Commission).
- 2.2 The director has been involved in central corporate CIEH work on climate change during 2009. This has included the development (and approval) of a CIEH policy position; the drafting and subsequent approval of an international position (on behalf of IFEH) in advance of the Copenhagen talks; the establishment of a practitioners forum and CIEH working group in order to develop a specific work programme; the delivery of a number of presentations and workshops around the EH role and contribution towards addressing climate change; and supporting the Director of Corporate Services in establishing a way forward on ensuring that our own house is put in order. This work will continue in 2010.

- 2.3 More specifically in NI, CIEH has been centrally involved in a coalition of NGOs who have come together to work collaboratively on climate change and in particular campaigning for statutory targets for NI akin to those of the climate change bill for England and Wales. Part of this effort includes raising public awareness around the issue. As part of the coalition CIEH in NI has been centrally involved in organising and supporting “the wave” event on 5 December. There are similar events taking place in London and Dublin. There is likely to be good media coverage of this event.
- 2.4 We have continued to support and assist the EH contribution and input to the review of public administration in NI during 2009. This has included supporting CEHOG’s representations to SOLACE regarding future operational arrangements for the EH Service in NI following the amalgamation of the current 26 district councils into 11 new authorities proposed from 2011. There have now been pilots established throughout NI between the newly established regional Public Health Agency and local authorities – spearheaded and led from within the local authority sector by EH.
- 2.5 Following on from discussions with the CEHOG Training Liaison Group, and building on previous work during 2008, we completed research in 2009 regarding future training needs for EHPs in the region. This work will enable us to more effectively inform the training and professional development programme for 2010. The data, analysed from over 190 responses from both practicing EHPs and Service managers suggests that the top three topics identified as priorities and aspirations for future training and professional development provision are evidence and research; partnership working and diversification of EH careers. The first two of these complement and reinforce previous and current CIEH priorities and plans, particularly EH 2012 and the current efforts and outputs from the Education team in particular around competency frameworks; experiential learning and evidence based practice. An introductory seminar on evidence based practice and in particular applying this philosophy and culture to standard EH work with a view to incorporating credible evaluation and subsequent writing up has already been delivered in partnership with the University. It is intended to develop or source appropriate training on partnership working (again probably in collaboration with others) in 2010.

### 3.0 Implications

Environmental	potential for environmental benefits as a result of CC efforts
Equal opportunities	none
Financial	None beyond support for post – 2010 work programme will be supported by reserves but this is not sustainable in 2011
Legal	none
Personnel	none
Public health	Linkages with PH benefits
Public relations	profile for organisation
Background papers	Available from G McFarlane, Director CIEH NI
Contact officer	Gary McFarlane, 02890243884, <a href="mailto:g.mcfarlane@cieh.org">g.mcfarlane@cieh.org</a>