



MAKING LIFE BETTER

WELCOME

NEWS

ISSUE 9 - SPRING 25

[Previous Issues](#)

CMO Foreword

Welcome to the Spring edition of the MLB Newsletter.

I am pleased to introduce you to my All Departments Officials Group (ADOG) colleagues Adele Brown, Programme Director, The Executive Programme on Paramilitarism and Organised Crime and Nichola Creagh, Director of Communities, Place and Local Government Group.

I am also delighted to welcome Mike Farrar, our Interim Permanent Secretary to the Department of Health and invite you to read Mike's introduction below.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the MLB Newsletter and remember to contact MLBNetwork@hscni.net if you want to submit an article for inclusion in a future Newsletter.



Message from DoH Interim Permanent Secretary

Having only recently taken up my post in the Department of Health, I feel I have joined at a very exciting time in the MLB world.

I know the next stage of MLB is currently being considered, taking into account many recent developments, including the new Integrated Care System (ICS) NI, roll-out of Multi-disciplinary Teams and the Live Better approach, whilst also considering the need for the most effective and efficient use of existing resources. I'm also aware our All Departments Officials Group colleagues met recently and discussed how they can support the delivery of MLB and work collaboratively to improve health, address the wider determinants of health, and reduce health inequalities.

I look forward to becoming involved in the very important work and would invite you, as MLB stakeholders, to contact the team at hdpb@health-ni.gov.uk for further information.

Get In Touch

If you have any questions about the content of MLB News, have work you want to share with the Network or wish to join please email : mlbnetwork@hscni.net

Mike Farrar
Interim Permanent Secretary
Dept of Health

All Departments Officials Group (ADOG) - Introductions

I'm Director of the cross-Executive Programme on Paramilitarism and Organised Crime, a multi-agency initiative involving 7 NI Civil Service departments, 22 statutory agencies, over 50 public bodies, and around 180 community and voluntary organisations. The Programme tackles the complex, long-standing issues of paramilitary activity, criminality, and organised crime.

Our work aligns closely with the Making Life Better (MLB) strategy. Both treat violence and coercive control as public health concerns and focus on addressing deep-rooted social issues. Like MLB, we support trauma-informed services and prioritise mental wellbeing and resilience. We also emphasise early intervention and evidence-led projects to prevent youth exploitation and community harm. Cross-sectoral collaboration is central to both approaches.

Through ADOG, we connect with others tackling violence and harm, and as we come towards the end of the Programme funding in 2027, we're keen to explore how to embed and scale the most effective, evidence-based outcomes we've achieved.



Adele Brown
Director
EPPOC

Many of you may be aware of the work of Community Empowerment Division through the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme. Neighbourhood Renewal is a place based programme that aims to close the gap between the quality of life for people in the most deprived neighbourhoods and the quality of life for the rest of society. Currently we target 36 areas with an investment of around £19m per year.

Poor health impacts not only on the life chances of the individual but also on their children and family. It will typically result in lost educational opportunities and on the ability to get and keep a good job. Unless we help disadvantaged communities tackle the problems of poorer health we won't make a significant difference to their quality of life. Doing this effectively requires real collaborative effort across all of government and as part of my role I lead, with my colleague, Joan O'Hara the Director of Urban Villages and Infrastructure in TEO, the NICS Cross Departmental Test and Learn Initiative. Membership of ADOG is a real help in providing access to the collective pool of knowledge and expertise of fellow ADOG members and providing opportunities for combining our collaborative efforts and sharing best practice. My hope for ADOG in the coming year is that we will pool our collective skills and experience and work with communities to make a real practical difference to the lives of people suffering from the greatest disadvantage. The work of the NICS Collaboration Test and Learn Initiative is endorsed by the NICS Board and offers a real opportunity to try out different and alternative approaches to how we plan, deliver and evaluate programmes and I am excited to see how that can support the work of ADOG and on what we can achieve.



Nichola Creagh
Director of Community
Empowerment Division.
Dept for Communities

SAVE THE DATE



Mark your calendars! You are invited to attend the Joint North South Public Health Conference, which will take place online on Thursday, 18 September, from 10 am to 12.30 pm.

The title of this year's all-island conference is 'Turning the Tide: Tackling the commercial and political determinants of health through policy and practice'.

The half-day conference will consider how those working in public health can help turn the tide on the commercial and political determinants of health.

It will also consider the challenges posed by misinformation (unintentionally sharing inaccurate information) and disinformation (intentionally sharing false or inaccurate information) in the public health arena.

Speakers will be announced in the near future. For updates about the 2025 Joint North South Public Health Conference, please [subscribe here](#).

Regional Health Literacy Group Planning Day

On 2 April Helen McNamee and Kathy Martin from Community Development and Health Network (CDHN) delivered health literacy training to the Regional Health Literacy Forum. It was a great chance to bring everyone up to speed with the same level of understanding about health literacy—whether as a refresher for long-standing members or as new insight for others.

The session also provided a wonderful opportunity for the Forum to come together, exchange ideas, and build connections with like-minded advocates of health literacy, and together we explored future plans and initiatives for the Forum's impactful work.



If you'd like to learn more about CDHN please click on the link [CDHN](#)

Did you know?



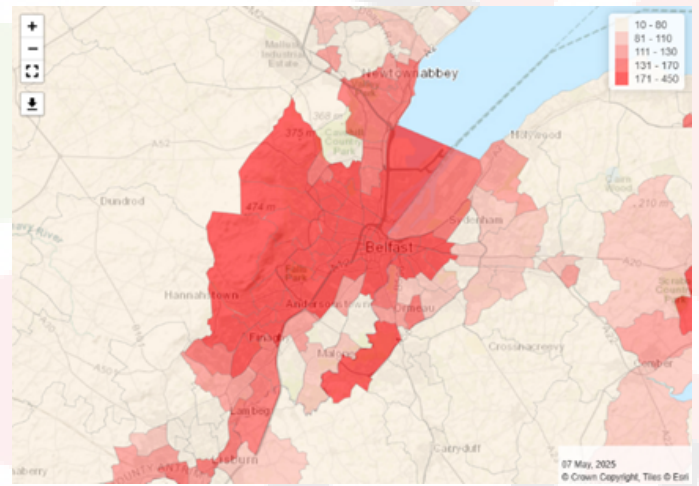
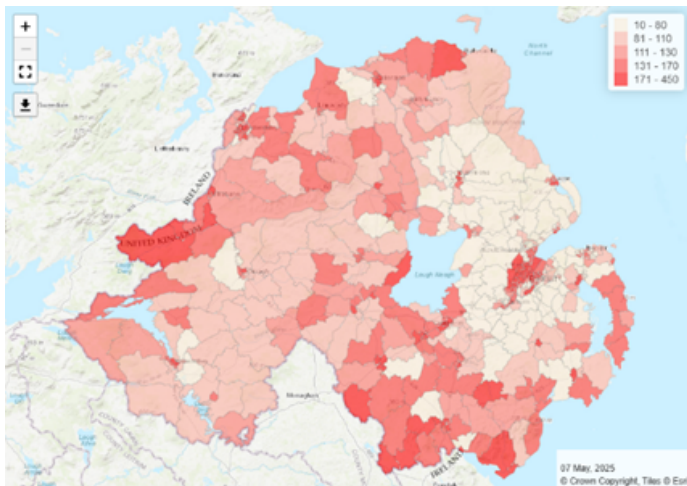
NISRA
Northern Ireland
Statistics and Research Agency
Gníomhaireacht Thuaisceart Éireann
um Staitisticí agus Taighde

DataPortal

The Making Life Better section on the NISRA Data Portal (data.nisra.gov.uk) now has over 368 tables and has recently been populated with tables from the PfG Wellbeing Framework which includes data across equality groups. This is the sixth article in a series which highlights the data and tools available on the NISRA Data Portal.

Social Welfare

On the Data Portal, tables relating to social welfare sit under MLB Theme 4 – Creating the conditions. In 2024, there were approximately 59,410 Pension Credit claimants in Northern Ireland. The wards with the highest number of claimants were Shankill (450), New Lodge (380), and Water Works (370). However, when interpreting these figures, it's important to consider the population size of each ward, as raw numbers alone do not reflect the proportion of residents receiving support. The map below illustrates the same output and was created using the map function in the Data Portal.



When you create an account and log in to the Portal, you can save your tables to a favourites list or save output using the save queries option, so you can retrieve them quickly. You can also use the widget function in the system to create an html version of table output or charts which can be saved to your desktop, website, blog etc. and will automatically update when new data is added to the corresponding table on the Portal.

To find out more about widgets, why not check out [the user guide and instructional video](#) on the [NISRA Data Portal FAQs and training materials page](#).

**On-line training sessions
will also be available.
Please contact
mlbnetwork@hscni.net
to register your interest.**

If you need further information or assistance relating to the NISRA Data Portal, contact us at info@nisra.gov.uk

*NICS staff requiring statistical input and advice
should continue to contact their
departmental statistics colleagues
in the first instance.*

All Departments Officials Group (ADOG) Meeting 22nd May 2025

The All Departments Officials Group (ADOG) is a key part of the structures for co-ordinating implementation of Making Life Better (MLB), the overarching strategic framework for public health in Northern Ireland.

ADOG is chaired by the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) and met on 22 May 2025.

During this meeting members discussed the way forward for MLB and the creation of a new Focused Action Plan. Members agreed that co-production and cross Departmental and sectoral working remains vital and agreed the new Action Plan will reflect this.



Presentations about the Prevention of Major Trauma in Children and also Quad Bikes, E-Scooters and School Bus Incidents were delivered by Dr Lisa Cromey, Specialty Registrar in Public Health, PHA and Dr Duncan Redmill, Clinical Lead NI Major Trauma Network. Sharan Dustagheer from Transport and Road Asset Management in DfI delivered a presentation on Active Travel.

CMO confirmed an MLB Conference will take place and further details about this will be included in future editions of this Newsletter.

ADOG provides an opportunity for all members to bring forward their Departmental issues to seek collective solutions, and all members were invited to bring forward agenda items for future meetings.

**The next ADOG
meeting will take
place Thursday
16th October 2025**