

## National Health Protection Service Conference 2023

### Draft Abstract

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### Ethics

Not applicable to this study.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

**Title (25 words)**

The Approach to Developing Ireland's First HSE National Health Protection Strategy and Lessons Learnt.

**Abstract (250 words)**

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of strengthening the health protection function within Public Health. To address this as a priority in Ireland, from January to October 2022 the then National Clinical Director for Health Protection (NCDHP) led the development of Ireland's first Health Protection Strategy 2022-2027. This study describes the approach to developing the strategy and lessons learnt.

In January 2022, the NCDHP convened a Strategy Development Team (SDT) and multi-disciplinary Strategy Development Steering Committee (SDC). The SDT prepared a briefing paper exploring the context for a national health protection strategy. Stakeholder analysis was conducted to inform the consultation approach. An experienced external facilitator facilitated two SDC consultation workshops (March and June 2022). Workshop #1 focused on defining the strategic vision, aim, and objectives. Workshop #2 verified objectives and identified enablers. A subsequent e-consultation invited feedback from key stakeholders (July 2022). Consultation outputs guided strategy development.

The strategy, published October 2022, outlines 10 strategic objectives and 11 associated enablers. Strengths of the strategy development approach included clear governance and oversight, review of the national and international policy context, comprehensive stakeholder engagement, and a detailed consultation plan developed with external facilitator expertise.

The development of the first HSE National Health Protection Strategy 2022-2027 was a critical step to ensure a clear framework for the delivery of national health protection functions going forward. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, public health bodies should strategically identify priorities for health protection beyond COVID-19. Key lessons from this study can inform and galvanise these efforts.