

Environmental Health in Disasters and Emergencies EHIDE

Newsletter

Dear colleague

It has been some time since you last heard from us and probably even longer since you first expressed an interest in EHIDE. Don't worry, we haven't forgotten about you and although you haven't heard much, you can be assured that a fair amount of work has been going on in the background.



International Federation of Environmental Health

IFEH

Firstly, an important step was realised last year when 'the gang of six' (see below) within EHIDE approached was taken under the wing of the International Federation of Environmental Health. For those of you not familiar with it, this is a worldwide umbrella organisation of professional bodies covering environmental health. Please see www.ifeh.org for further details of its work.

Numbers

Since the call went out for expressions of interest, to date we have had a total of 189 contacts from the Republic of Ireland and the four home countries of the UK. A series of 'Orientation Meetings' were held (Kimmage, Barnet, Wigan, Edinburgh and Castlereagh). A total of 66 people attended one of those meetings to find out a little more about what this proposal involves. More are planned before the end of this year and will be held in similarly diverse locations!

Training

From those figures, we have had positive indication from 15 people that they want to progress further. The remainder have not committed, but most want to remain on the books. The next step is for suitable training to be identified which will enable volunteers to be more 'marketable' to aid agencies and other INGOs (International Non-Governmental Organisations). We are currently in discussion with Concern (based in ROI) and the International Red Cross (in London). From these discussions, training will be identified and details made available in due course.

Funding

It goes without saying that a large element for consideration is the cost of getting involved and having to undergo training. Moves are afoot to gain access to funding which will either pay for or heavily subsidise basic training for volunteers.

Profile

The fact that the group is now within the auspices of the IFEH gives added credibility, since it is well-established as an international body within the public health field. It is proposed that a mailshot will go out to all major aid agencies signed by the President of the IFEH (Colm Smyth) informing them of the group's existence and potential as a source of trained personnel.



Photo of (from l to r) Martin Fitzpatrick, Colm Smyth, Peter Wright and John Sleith, taken at their meeting in Manchester in June 2007. The two remaining members of the 'Gang of Six' are Steve Cooper and Stewart Petrie.

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