

# Developing a Slí na Sláinte Route



Step by Step...



# Contents

## **1. What is Slí na Sláinte**

- Introduction
- current number of routes
- projected number of routes

## **2. Why Slí na Sláinte**

- personal and community benefits
- health benefits
- research findings
- IHF Approval

## **3. The Key Elements**

## **4. Developing a Slí**

- Step by step

## **5. Costs**

## **6. Appendix A**

- Sli Sign Types

## **7. Appendix B**

- Slí Leader Training

## **8. Contact Details**

# 1. What is Slí na Sláinte?

## Introduction

Slí na Sláinte is a simple and innovative scheme developed by the Irish Heart Foundation to encourage people of all ages and abilities to walk for leisure and good health. It uses attractive signage at Kilometre intervals on established walking routes. In addition to letting people know the distance they walk, the signs are designed to encourage people to walk more frequently and to enjoy the benefits of a healthier lifestyle.

A regular programme of walking has many benefits. It:

- keeps your heart strong
- improves muscle strength
- helps to manage your weight
- makes you feel good
- above all...is enjoyable and fun

Slí na Sláinte can be implemented in your locality by the Local Authority in partnership with the community and (optional) other appropriate commercial organisations, and become part of the approved list of Slí routes. The Slí Network is both nation-wide and international. Heart Foundations in ten countries have implemented the scheme to date.

## Current and Projected Number of routes

To date there are over 160 Slí na Sláinte routes installed nationwide.



## 2. Why Slí na Sláinte?

*“We have a very high incidence of heart disease in this country. To be doing something concrete about it is marvellous”*

**Dublin Walker, Oct 97**

Slí na Sláinte is an important and valuable facility for every community. The widespread appeal of Slí na Sláinte is due to the fact that it provides an easily accessible and inexpensive environment for regular exercise. Health messages are often negative and frightening which is why Slí na Sláinte was developed as a positive and fun incentive to improve people's health.

### **Health Benefits of Physical Activity**

*“Lack of physical activity is as important a cause of unnecessary heart disease as smoking, high blood cholesterol and high blood pressure. A lot of people of all ages in Ireland take very little exercise. Increasing exercise slightly will make you feel better and reduce risk of heart attack and other disease. Even walking briskly for only 10 minutes three times most days makes a big difference and doesn't need fancy trainers or other kit.”*

**Dr B. Maurer, President IHF**

### *What people say about Slí...*

Omnibus Research conducted by Lansdowne Market Research showed that;

- Three quarters of all those questioned walk for pleasure
- Seven out of ten Slí na Sláinte walkers are interested in calculating their distance
- Walkers on Slí na Sláinte routes walk for longer distances than the national average

Without any mention of Slí na Sláinte or the concept, 33% of respondents nationally have an interest in knowing distance walked. Follow up research showed that 63% of walkers on an existing Slí route thought that the distance signs were a benefit.

The research confirmed that the scheme is a worthwhile and important facility for the community, enabling users to effectively manage their health in a fun and positive way.

### **IHF Approval**

All Slí routes will be subject to an IHF approval mechanism. This will ensure a *National Quality Standard* and approved routes will be included in a special listing. All approved Slí routes will benefit from national promotion of the scheme.

### 3. Slí na Sláinte - the Key Elements

The Slí Development Team (SDT) will be able to consult the Irish Heart Foundation (IHF) on all aspects of Slí route development .

**In order for a Slí na Sláinte route to be approved by the IHF, the following key elements must be in place.**

The SDT should be confident of their ability to comply with each element of Slí route development.

#### 1. Funding

Written agreement from the Local Authority or other sponsor must be obtained stating that they are willing to fund the proposed route; including signs, installation and brochure.

In cases where the Local Authority is not the route sponsor, they must give their approval regarding location and safety for insurance purposes.

#### 2. Route planning

The route must be clearly planned and measured in Kms.

#### 3. Promotional Leaflet

A promotional Leaflet similar to the one attached is planned with route description and map showing key features and road names. This information should be forwarded to the Slí Office. **Plesae note that a digital pdf version of the brochure can be supplied to you so you can carry out your own printing. .**

#### 4. Slí Leader Panel

Slí Walking Leader Training is available to members of the community who are willing to promote the Slí route in their area and organise walks on a regular basis. SDT to identify suitable candidates for training.

#### 5. Safety and Accessibility

The route must be maintained to the highest standards of safety and be accessible to the general public at all times. Make sure that your local engineer has seen the route and it is fully approved before you start development.

#### 6. Insurance

An appropriate public liability insurance policy (covering the liability of the SDT ) is in place with the Irish Heart Foundation.

The Local Authority should have existing public liability cover for the local Slí na Sláinte.

#### 7. Maintenance Arrangements

There must be a clear, agreed maintenance plan in place which must be signed by the local authority involved in the slí development.

#### 8. Promotional Plan

The SDT and Slí Leader Panel have an agreed plan of action to ensure regular usage of the route – i.e. launch, leaflet distribution, etc.

**Should you require further clarification on any element please feel free to contact the Slí na Sláinte office.**

## 4. Developing a Slí - Step by Step

Here are some basic steps to help you develop an approved Slí na Sláinte route in your locality. Remember that the IHF will be able to provide technical advice at all stages of development.

### Step 1

**Contact the Irish Heart Foundation**

You will be issued with *Developing a Slí na Sláinte Route - Step by Step and a Route Development Application Form*.

### Step 2

**Form a Slí Development Team (SDT) of two to five people**

**2.1 The SDT *must* include a representative from:**

- the Local Authority
- the local community

**2.2 You might also consider involving organisations such as:**

- Local Sports Partnerships
- Vocational Education Committee (to organise the Slí Leaders Course)
- Office of Public Works, or Coillte Teoranta (should the proposed route traverse their properties)
- local or regional Tourism Organisations
- the regional Health Board
- local development agencies
- Local Sports Partnership

### Step 3

Written agreement must be obtained from the Local Authority or alternate sponsor to say that they will fund the route/installation and brochure.

### Step 4

**Mark and measure your route**

- Get a scale map of the area where your proposed route is located and highlight your chosen route – giving an estimate of the route length and signs needed along the route.

### Step 5

- **Fill out Route Development Form** (attached) - and return with appropriate maps to the Irish Heart Foundation.

### Step 6 - START route development

Once the route development form has been completed and received – you will be contacted by the Slí na Sláinte office with:

- recommendations for your route
- an approximate costing for your route
- a visit date from the National Coordinator who will then survey the route in detail and provide you with an order form for signage.

### Step 7

**Produce a Brochure**

The National Coordinator will organise the production of the Brochure. The Slí Development committee must work closely with the IHF on the text, as well as proofing (see sample attached)

## Step 8

### Arrange a Slí Inspection

Before IHF approval can be given to a Slí na Sláinte route, it must be inspected by a representative of the Irish Heart Foundation. Should the route not be approved in the first instance, an outline of the appropriate remedial work shall be forwarded to the SDT. Once the remedial measures have been implemented approval will be given.

## Step 9

### Arrange a Slí Launch

Once you have chosen and agreed a suitable date, the National Coordinator will help you decide the most suitable launch for your Slí. Press releases and promotional material will also be provided on the day.

## Step 10

### Promote usage of the Slí

The panel of Slí Leaders will be involved in this important area of work.

## Step 11

### Maintain the route

Only routes which are maintained to the highest standards will be included in the official IHF list of approved routes. See Section 3 - *The Key Elements*.

## 5. Costs

When implementing a Slí na Sláinte route the following costs must be taken into consideration:

- Route Furniture
  - urban
  - rural/woodland
- Route Literature
- Installation
- Maintenance
- Slí Leader Training
- Slí Promotion

### Route Furniture

Generally, the cost of Slí furniture and accompanying brochure will be borne by the Local Authority. Approximate costings of a variety of different route lengths are shown below.

### Route Literature

A route brochure based on original artwork supplied by the IHF is essential for each Slí route and will be provided by the IHF

Design, printing and distribution costs are usually borne by the route sponsor, most often the Local Authority. It will be the responsibility of the Slí Development Team to agree funding of such promotional material along with route signs. Route sponsors (if not the local authority) must be deemed appropriate by the Irish Heart Foundation.

A maximum quantity of 5,000 brochures costs € 756.76 ex VAT

**The average cost of developing a 4km Slí na Sláinte route is between €4,000 and €5,000 (inc VAT) – this includes all directional signage, mapboards, 5,000 brochures (design and print) + delivery. This does not include installation – which is normally carried out free of charge by the local authority.**

**The length and nature of route i.e. how many Km points and additional signs required - urban or woodland environments and the number of junctions in the route**

### Urban Sign Costs

<i>Kilometer Sign + 3.4mt pole</i>	€225.40
<i>Left+right sign for junction</i>	€85.76
<i>2 x straight signs for junction</i>	€85.76
<i>2.4mtr pole for directional signs</i>	€50.40
<i>600 x 600 map</i>	€205.72

### Rural Sign Costs

<i>Kilometer Sign</i>	€61.00
<i>Left+right sign for junction</i>	€61.00
<i>Straight signs for junction</i>	€61.00
<i>1000x9000mm mapboard</i>	€514.61

### Walker Safety Signs



Since June 2002, new Slí Walker Safety signs are being installed on all routes where there is no footpath.

Signs come in both English and Irish/English versions.

### Sign costs are as follows:

English Version	€145.60
English/Irish Version	€162.40
4mtr pole (per sign)	€84.00

An average rural route, with no footpaths, will need 2-3 Walker Safety signs.

### Installation

Installation of the route will also be the responsibility of the Local Authority. In *most* cases the Local Authority will have their own work team available to undertake such work, however occasionally a contractor may be brought in to complete the work. Costs will vary due to this factor.

### Maintenance

Should the route require any remedial work, a nominal fee of €250 per annum should be budgeted for by the Local Authority and Slí Development Team.

### Slí Leader Training

The Irish Heart Foundation have developed a training course which may be implemented by Local Sports Partnerships, Vocational Education Committees, Health Boards, Local Authorities or other relevant organisation. Costs incurred by the organiser will include venue, tutors fee (evening and full day session) and refreshments. See Appendix B for further details.

### Slí Promotion

Promotion will be necessary to ensure regular usage and create awareness of the route. The Slí Development

Team, with the help of the trained Slí leaders should develop a promotional plan. The Irish Heart Foundation will

be on hand at all times to assist with promotional efforts.

### **Tips for developing your Slí na Sláinte route.**

- **Simplicity:** Choose a route, which is simple rather than one, which has lots of turns and zigzags.
- **Circular:** The best routes are in a circle – starting and ending at the same point. Avoid figure of 8 routes or more than two routes, which can confuse walkers at junctions.
- **Medium Length:** Ideally, routes which are between 3km and 5km are the most suitable to develop as Slí na Sláinte as they can be walked in about 30-60 minutes.
- **1 or 2 Routes:** In general one Slí na Sláinte is adequate for any one area. Often communities have two or three routes in mind. Depending on funding etc, it is not always possible to mark both routes on the ground. Sometimes the best option is to install signs for one route and then detail the second one on the mapboard and on the brochure.
- **Seating**

# Appendix A - Sli Signs Types



**1. Rural Km Markers** - located at the start of each route and for every Km thereafter., in rural/forestry areas



**2. Rural Directional Makers** – same as Km Markers. Located at junctions to direct walkers along route.



**3. Finger Posts** – can be attached onto existing posts or onto a new 3.4mtr pole.



**4. Walker Safety Sign** - used on roads with no footpaths where road may be narrow or dangerous for pedestrians.



**5. Urban Km Sign** - located at the start of each route and for every Km thereafter.



**6. Urban Directional Signs** – located at junctions in urban areas. Normally attached onto existing posts with banding but can be attached onto new 2.4mtr posts.

## Appendix B -Slí Training

<b>Walking Leaders Training Course</b>
<b>Duration = Weekend Residential</b>
<b>Cost:</b> €80 Including accommodation breakfast, lunch and all course material.
<b>Aim:</b> To train participants to <i>a) motivate people in their locality to take-up walking as a form of health enhancing physical activity and b) plan and lead safe, enjoyable, health-enhancing walking sessions for small groups.</i>
<b>The course covers a wide range of issues such as:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Current recommendations for health-enhancing physical activity for adults, and how they relate to walking.</b></li><li>• <b>The main elements of a health enhancing walking session.</b></li><li>• <b>Prescribing walking programmes suitable for people of different fitness levels.</b></li><li>• <b>Advice on issues such as posture, technique, stretching, intensity, clothing etc.</b></li><li>• <b>Practical management of a walking group.</b></li><li>• <b>Safety issues</b></li><li>• <b>Planning walking sessions and programmes.</b></li><li>• <b>Motivations and tips</b></li><li>• <b>Developing a Slí na Sláinte route</b></li><li>• <b>How to start your own walking club.</b></li></ul>

### **The Slí na Sláinte Department:**

*National Co-ordinator*

Edel Byrne

**Slí na Sláinte Office  
Irish Heart Foundation**

**4 Clyde Road**

**Ballsbridge**

**Dublin 4**

ebyrne@irishheart.ie

**Tel: 01 6685001 / Fax: 01 6685896**