

For Immediate Release

For Media Enquires
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IRELAND ON THE THRESHOLD OF BECOMING WORLD'S FIRST AGE FRIENDLY NATION WITH LAUNCH OF DUBLIN CITY STRATEGY

Dublin City Council and Age Friendly Ireland will, today launch the Dublin City Age Friendly Strategy at 3:00pm in City Hall. The move is the latest step in making Ireland one of the first age-friendly countries in the world, where older people are valued and their needs are considered.

Key note speakers will include Kathleen Lynch TD, Minister of State with responsibility for Older People, Christy Burke, Lord Mayor of Dublin, Brendan Kenny, Assistant CEO, Dublin City Council, Martina Queally, Regional Director of Operations, HSE, Hugh O'Connor, CEO Age Friendly Ireland, Ellen Reedin, Older Person Representative, Dublin City Age Friendly Alliance Prof Brian McGrath, President DCU, John Twomey, Assistant Commissioner, An Garda Síochána.

The Dublin strategy represents a framework for multi-agency partnership aimed at making Dublin city a great place in which to grow old and ensuring that all Dubliners are respected and valued, regardless of age.

The document targets 9 key domains including safety, health, outdoor space, buildings and transport, and sets out action points which include:

- Appointing a dedicated Garda with responsibility for older people in every Garda station in Dublin
- Introducing high-visibility, targeted area Garda patrolling in neighbourhoods with a high density of older people
- Rolling out a cross-agency partnership programme designed to support older people to remain in their own homes for as long as possible
- Establishing a network of age-friendly GP practices in Dublin
- Creating the country's first age-friendly hospital at Beaumont Hospital
- Providing learning opportunities for older people
- Hosting the world's first international age friendly universities conference in 2015
- Creating guidelines to promote age friendly workplaces

Minister Kathleen Lynch TD, Minister of State at the Department of Health with responsibility for Primary Care, Social Care (Disability and Older People) and Mental Health, said: "In 2013 the Government published the National Positive Ageing Strategy and launched Healthy Ireland, a national framework that aims to increase the health and wellbeing of people at all stages of life, including old age. Positive ageing and healthy ageing are in

everyone's interest and the Dublin City Age Friendly Strategy is one of the many ways that we, as a society, will realise the aims and aspirations of these two vital national documents."

"I am heartened to see the high level of partnership involvement from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors in this initiative. A partnership that I know is being reflected in other counties and cities around Ireland. I wish Age Friendly Ireland and the Age Friendly City and Counties Programme continued success. The Government is fully committed to supporting and encouraging all stakeholders in this journey."

Dublin City Council is one of 26 local authorities throughout the country who have signed up to the Age Friendly Cities and Counties programme, a World Health Organisation initiative which is being spearheaded here by Age Friendly Ireland. It is expected that the remaining 6 local authorities will have launched or committed to launch an age friendly strategy by mid-2015, making Ireland one of the first age-friendly countries in the world.

Hugh O'Connor, CEO of Age Friendly Ireland said: "We are all aware that people are living longer and that our older population is growing. The Central Statistics Office predicts that, over the next 30 years, the number of people in Ireland over the age of 65 will double and the number over 80 will quadruple. This changing demographic has major implications for public policy, service provisions, long-term planning, and society as a whole."

"Traditionally Government policy has viewed population ageing as a challenge due to the financial implications for health care and pension costs. While these challenges do exist, there are also significant benefits to be gained from our older population. The Age Friendly Cities and Counties programme embraces the multi-faceted challenges and opportunities that ageing presents by providing a structure and supports which enable local authorities to take the lead in changing how ageing is viewed, and how services are planned and delivered," he said.

The Lord Mayor of Dublin Christy Burke said: "As Chair of Dublin's Age Friendly Alliance, I am very pleased that Dublin City Council in conjunction with its key statutory, private and community partners are so supportive of Dublin City's first Age Friendly Strategy. This strategy is Dublin's opportunity to value our older citizens and to learn from their life experience. The development of this strategy is indeed urgent and timely. It will focus on improving the quality of older people's lives in Dublin over the next five years, creating an age friendly capital city to be proud of, for visitors and Dubliners alike."

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For further information or to arrange an interview, contact Andrew Mernagh, Lotus PR at 087-2911028 or email andrew@lotuspr.ie

Additional Information

What is the Dublin City Age Friendly Initiative?

The Dublin City Age Friendly Initiative is a multi-agency partnership project being spearheaded by Dublin City Council and Age Friendly Ireland. It aims to make Dublin a great place to grow old and a city where everyone is valued and respected, regardless of age. The initiative commenced in 2013 with the signing of the Dublin Declaration on Age Friendly

Cities and Communities in Europe. Since then an Age Friendly City Alliance has been established. This high-level cross-agency strategic partnership will oversee the implementation of the Dublin City Age Friendly Strategy. Five local area alliances have also been established in Dublin City Council's five administrative areas. Each area alliance will be supported by an older persons council, a service providers forum and an age-friendly business forum.

The Dublin City Age Friendly Strategy is the framework which will underpin the implementation of the initiative over the next five years and sets out the key actions to be taken in nine themes:

- Outdoor space and buildings
- Transport
- Home and community
- Information
- Safety
- Learning, development and work
- Social, economic and political life
- Health and active living
- Value and respect

What is the Age Friendly Cities and Counties Programme?

The Irish Age Friendly Cities and Counties Programme is based on the World Health Organisation model which encourages communities to support and enable people to age actively by developing policies, services and structures which recognise that older people have a wide range of capabilities and resources. The programme defines an age-friendly city as one which anticipates and responds to the needs and preferences of older people, respects their decision, protects the most vulnerable and promotes inclusion. The initiative is being spearheaded in Ireland by Age Friendly Ireland, a non-profit organisation funded by Atlantic Philanthropies and hosted by Dublin City Council.

The programme commenced in Ireland in 2009, with Louth becoming the country's first age-friendly county. To date, 26 local authorities have signed up to the initiative and it is expected that by mid-2015 all 31 local authorities will have launched or committed to launch an age friendly strategy, making Ireland one of the first age friendly countries in the world.