

## National Updates

### Age Friendly Housing Technical Advisor in every Local Authority in Ireland

On Tuesday the 8<sup>th</sup> of December, in Dublin's Custom House, Minister of State for Planning and Local Government, Peter Burke, TD, Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage, officially launched the local authority based 31 Age Friendly Technical Advisors. This launch is an important occasion, representing another substantial development in the joint policy statement, Housing Options for Our Ageing Population which was launched in February 2019 by both Department of Housing and Department of Health. Age Friendly Ireland has supported the development and implementation of the policy document and in response to Action 4.13: 'Local Authorities will identify and assign an individual on their housing teams to work with older people in terms of sourcing appropriate accommodation', all Local Authorities have assigned a staff member to undertake this role so that this resource is available in all of the 31 local authorities across the country.



Speaking at the launch, Minister Burke said: 'The specific Action which brings us here today is Action 4.13, which introduced a novel idea that local authorities should appoint a member of staff as a technical advisor on age friendly housing with the intent that this person would be

a resource for older people, for the local authorities, and indeed for anyone who wants to access information about age friendly housing. In late 2019, my Department wrote to the Chief Executives of local authorities asking them to do this, and, in the wholehearted way in which they have embraced other elements of the Age Friendly Ireland programme they all agreed to do so.'

On behalf of the Local Authority sector, Jackie Maguire, Chief Executive of Meath County Council, host to the Age Friendly Ireland Shared Service said: 'Today's launch is a significant occasion, representing another substantial development in the joint departmental housing policy and also acknowledging the sterling work of local authorities, both Departments, the Age Friendly shared service and partner organisations on the Implementation Group.'

In July 2020 Ireland's new Programme for Government pledged a mission and vision of an Age Friendly Ireland. The approach taken in the agreed programme for government is to support older people to live in their own homes and communities with dignity and independence, for as long as possible.



An Roinn Tithíochta,  
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreacht  
Department of Housing,  
Local Government and Heritage



An Roinn Sláinte  
Department of Health

### Athboy, Co Meath officially recognised as an Age Friendly Town

**Cathaoirleach of Meath County Council, David Gilroy who is a local resident and business owner, led a walkability audit of Athboy with a difference.**

Cathaoirleach, David Gilroy and Minister for Justice, Helen McEntee today jointly launched the 'Age Friendly Athboy' report which documents a walkability audit in Athboy town, County Meath and the changes that the town is making to become more Age Friendly. The project was led by the Meath Age Friendly Programme, in partnership with Age Friendly Ireland and Dementia: Understand Together, the Health Service Executive's national dementia awareness campaign. Cathaoirleach, David Gilroy got involved with the project from the start, he brought locals and businesses together to address the accessibility of Athboy town.

Local Age Friendly Programmes across the country carry out walkability audits in towns and villages as a way of assessing how walkable a community is for older people, people with disabilities and all members of the community. For the Athboy project, Dementia: Understand Together brought in additional technical expertise around designing the built environment for people with dementia who may experience cognitive or visual impairments.



Speaking at the launch, Minister McEntee said "I am delighted to be in Athboy this morning for the socially distant declaration of Athboy as an Age Friendly town. In recent years Meath County Council has been at the forefront of driving the Age Friendly ethos locally and nationally, which I was very proud of in my former role as Minister for Older People. Athboy's walkability audit, with its special focus on dementia, provides a model of accessibility and inclusion that other towns can be inspired by and emulate. I salute the Cathaoirleach for his leadership on this as both a public representative and local businessman. I also want to thank Dementia: Understand Together for their input around dementia. The recent lockdowns have shown us the value of exercise both physically and mentally, and safe walking routes are vital to this."

This project was spearheaded by Cathaoirleach of Meath County Council, David Gilroy, who himself is based in Athboy. Cllr Gilroy explained, "The Athboy Walkability audit involved local groups assessing a number of walking routes through the town from the perspective of people of different ages, groups and abilities. What added to the uniqueness of the Athboy project was its particular emphasis on

people affected by dementia. As the number of people with dementia is projected to increase into the future, it is imperative that we make considerations now and by doing so we can ensure that our communities can meet the needs of all our neighbours, friends and family in the years to come.”

Fiona Foley of Dementia: Understand Together further described the innovative nature of the project, “Universal Design aims to provide an inclusive environment for people of all ages, sizes, abilities and disabilities, and we now have the knowledge and expertise to design and improve environments for people with dementia who may experience physical, cognitive or sensory difficulties. With the majority of people with dementia living in the community, and wanting to stay active, engaged and valued members of their communities, it is fantastic to see communities such as Athboy conducting walkability audits and implementing recommendations from the findings to ensure that the public spaces and buildings are accessible for people with dementia and every member of the community. Design for dementia can simply be design for everybody.”

Many community and voluntary groups supported the walkability audit process including Prosper Meath, the Laterlife Network, the Men’s Shed, Active Retirement groups, Irish Countrywomen’s Association, Tidy Towns, Health Service Executive staff, and the Alzheimer’s Society of Ireland. A wide range of age groups and abilities were represented on the day, including children and young people, older people, and people with disabilities.



Since the walkability audit was completed last year, there have been many changes made to the public spaces in Athboy including work in the Fair Green park, footpath re-surfacing, and installation of bollards. Meath County Council was successful this year in securing significant Rural Regeneration and Development Funding for Athboy to undertake re-design of the public realm. The project was shortlisted this year for the Chambers Ireland Excellence in Local Government

Awards and last year for the EU Innovation in Politics Awards.

The publication is now available to all local authorities and Age Friendly Programmes and will be a useful tool to inform the future development of public realm-built environment projects.





Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive



## Public Health Measures

Ireland is currently at [Level 3](#).

You can see the [measures in place from 1st December here](#).

You can see the [measures in place from 18th December here](#).

You can see the [quick guide to the Christmas changes here](#).

## Irish Sign Language (ISL) videos on Self-isolation and Restricted Movements

You can watch the ISL [self-isolation \(stay in your room\) video here](#), the [restricted movements \(stay at home\) video here](#) and [self-isolation, restricted movements and the differences between them video here](#).

These videos, along with other resources, are all available on the [COVID-19 Deaf and Hard of Hearing Communications Resources page](#).

## HSE and Age Action launch older-age friendly guide to COVID Tracker App

On Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020, the HSE and Age Action Ireland launched an older-age friendly guide – [How to Use the COVID Tracker App](#). The How to Use the COVID Tracker App has been designed by Age Action specifically for older people who need some support with online activities so they can use the App which helps to slow the spread of COVID-19. Understanding that a lot of older people are starting their online journey, the HSE worked with Age Action to add the How to Use the COVID Tracker App to the Getting Started KIT which helps older people get online so they can stay connected, informed and access resources.

The COVID Tracker App is a free app for your mobile phone. The How to Guide helps someone to put the app on their mobile phone and use it. The How to Guide is free via post by calling Age Action on 01 873 0372 and leaving their name and address. The How to Guide can be downloaded from [ageaction.ie](#).

Age Action will post the How to Use the COVID Tracker App along with step-by-step information on;

- 1.How to set up an email;
- 2.How to download an application;
- 3.How to download and use the COVID Tracker App;
- 4.How to use the internet.

If you would like a little more support to use the app or about using the internet Age Action can help you by matching you with a volunteer tutor for up to five hours of remote tutoring.

You can call 01 873 0372 and follow the instructions. Additional information on using the internet and technology can be found on <https://www.ageaction.ie/how-we-can-help/getting-started-kit> .

## Information leaflet for new Traveller mothers

The HSE and Pavee Point have developed a leaflet for new mothers about COVID-19 and how to protect themselves and their babies, and what to do if they have symptoms. The 'Information for Pavee Mothers and Babies' [leaflet is available here](#).

### COVID-19 Guidance for Religious Services

This HPSC [guidance is available here](#).

### Managing a COVID-19 infection at home

This HPSC [guidance is available here](#).

### Information leaflet for visiting nursing homes and residential care facilities

This HPSC [guidance is available here](#).

### Public Health Information

As always, for the most up to date information and advice on Coronavirus, please go to: <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/> and <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/>.



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte  
Health Service Executive



### HSE Staff Health and Wellbeing Christmas Concert 2020 on the 16th December at 4 -5.30 pm



The HSE Staff Health and Wellbeing Christmas Concert 2020 is going to be an uplifting and most enjoyable event with an exciting line up of song and music from health service staff across the country including the National Ambulance Service Band, the Dublin Gospel Choir and more surprise guests. You are very welcome to join and get in the festive mood by registering for your place at this virtual Christmas Concert. Register [here](#). Don't miss it!

They are delighted to have the opportunity in 2020 to celebrate and showcase some of the talent that exists among HSE Staff. Anyone who loves to sing will probably tell you how good it makes them feel. It's no secret that singing reduces stress, improves your mood, and generally brings more fun into your day. Research has shown that there are many different physical, emotional, social, and psychological benefits associated with singing. This virtual webinar concert is part of the ongoing work to promote health and wellbeing in the HSE under the Healthy Ireland Framework.



## Keep Well - Let's Get Ireland Walking into 2021

Sport Ireland, Get Ireland Walking and Healthy Ireland are encouraging people of all ages to walk into 2021 by taking part in the Keep Well Walking Challenge, which got underway yesterday.

Walking is the most accessible form of physical activity with no special equipment or locations required. Sport Ireland, Get Ireland Walking and Healthy Ireland are looking to get as many people as possible out and active for at least 30 minutes a day for the remaining 21 days of December, bringing a healthy habit forward to the New Year.

To support this, Get Ireland Walking has produced a new app that will allow users to keep a record of their walking and help all participants to stay motivated. The handy app will provide useful tips on advice on how to build walking into everyday routines.

As part of the 21-day campaign, well-known people from across Ireland will share their favourite walk of 2020, whether it is a socially distanced walk with a loved-one or simply a lunchtime escape from the bedroom office.

The Keep Well Walking Challenge is part of Keep Well. The Keep Well campaign is aimed at showing people of all ages how we can mind our own physical and mental health and wellbeing by adding healthy and helpful habits to our daily and weekly routines. It provides guidelines, information, and tips on how we can make a plan to do things that will help us keep well through the coming months.

To download the Get Ireland Walking App visit:

<https://www.getirelandwalking.ie/app>



An Roinn Iompair  
Department of Transport



## €50M Walking and Cycling fund announced for towns and villages.

On the 4th of December, Minister for Transport Eamon Ryan T.D. and Minister of State Hildegard Naughton T.D. announced a fund of €50m to be made available to local authorities for investment in walking and cycling projects. The aim of this funding is to support the development of high-quality cycling and walking infrastructure outside of our cities. Local authorities in the Greater Dublin Area along with regional cities are already eligible for Active Travel funding from the NTA, and so this investment is specifically targeted at towns and villages across the country. Local authority applicants should identify convenient and direct routes for active travel modes, including, and where necessary, aim to reallocate space from motor traffic and car parking. Funded projects should be accessible, Age-friendly and maximise comfort to people of all ages and abilities.

The fund will be administered for the Department of Transport by the National Transport Authority.

Funding will be available to support projects in:

Leinster: Louth, Westmeath, Longford, Offaly, Laois, Carlow, Kilkenny, Wexford

Munster: Kerry, Tipperary, Clare and rural towns and villages in Cork, Limerick and Waterford  
 Connacht: Mayo, Sligo, Leitrim, Roscommon, and rural towns and villages in Galway  
 Ulster: Donegal, Monaghan, Cavan

Among the kinds of project that will be considered are:

- Development of active travel network strategies
- Provision of new / widened footpaths or segregated cycle tracks;
- Reconstruction / renewal of defective footpaths or cycle tracks;
- Improved crossing facilities for pedestrians/cyclists including raised surfaces, zebra crossings, provision of lighting and signalised crossings;
- Provision of cycle parking
- Dishing of footpaths at junctions, raised pedestrian crossings, and reducing road width at crossing points;
- Closing roads to vehicles, except for access only;
- Permeability measures to support improved access within and between local communities;
- Setting appropriate speed limits in accordance with the Guidelines for setting and managing speed limits in Ireland and/or introducing a “Slow Zone”;
- Pedestrian / cycle bridge rehabilitation works;
- Design work in respect of the provision of a future pedestrian / cycle bridge.



**The RSA Check it Fits Service is offering free virtual child car seat checks**

Since October 2013, the Check it Fits Service has provided free child car seat checks at nationwide face-to-face events. Following the introduction of public health measures in response to Covid-19 this March, they made the decision to suspend the service. Since then they have been working on ways to bring this vital service back in a way that is safe for both the public and their expert checkers. The RSA Check it Fits Service is now offering FREE virtual child car seat checks. The new virtual service means that parents, guardians, grandparents, and childminders, can now have their child car seats checked by one of the expert checkers from the comfort of their own home. It is easy to avail of the new virtual service. Simply visit [www.rsa.ie/checkitfits](http://www.rsa.ie/checkitfits) to book an appointment at a time and date that suits you. They have developed some supporting material that you can be download [here](#). If you have any questions or require any additional information please email [checkitfits@rsa.ie](mailto:checkitfits@rsa.ie). For more information on the service please visit [www.rsa.ie/checkitfits](http://www.rsa.ie/checkitfits).





### Maynooth Green Campus- Green Shoots Newsletter

In May 2020, Maynooth Green Campus – Green Shoots Newsletter was launched. It is produced by an editorial team led by Dr Joe Larragy, comprising staff and students from across faculties and fields of interest. It builds on and gives a wider platform to many of the elements that were previously confined to Faculty reports and covered on social media. The Newsletter brings things together and is an important milestone. It looks terrific and contains photos, information, news and reflections across a range of areas. Maynooth University has been a leader in research and public engagement on climate change. Research in other areas such as biodiversity and their commitment to teacher education add momentum to such work, while joint initiatives with Saint Patrick's College Maynooth and with Trócaire on climate justice work are now widely recognised.



Maynooth Green Campus has been to the fore not only in promoting practical efforts to make their campus more sustainable but in promoting awareness of the need to engage with wider issues of climate justice and a "just transition" to a post-carbon economy. Mainstreaming the themes of sustainability into curriculum and research is a vital part of the work of the University. The arrival of Green Shoots is very timely in profiling and promoting this work.

Read issue [one](#) and [two](#) here



**Join us live on Facebook  
Monday 14th  
Wednesday 16th  
and Friday 18th**

**at 11am for  
Age & Opportunity  
Movement Minutes**



**#AgeandOpportunity**

Sessions can be watched live on their Facebook page [www.facebook.com/ageandopportunity](http://www.facebook.com/ageandopportunity) or afterwards on their YouTube page [www.youtube.com/ageandopportunity](http://www.youtube.com/ageandopportunity) where a playlist of all Movement Minutes sessions to date can be viewed.





### Galway Social Enterprise Meals4Health Wins Prestigious National Award

Meals4Health, the social enterprise that provides nutritional support to older people and those needing specialised nutritional support, has been announced as the Social Enterprise of the Year at the Charity Impact



Awards. At an awards ceremony held remotely online on Tuesday evening (Dec 8th), it was announced that the Galway based social enterprise won the prestigious national award. The Charity Impact Awards, now in their fourth year, celebrate Irish charities,

community, and voluntary organisations and social enterprises that have changed Ireland and the world for the better. The award ceremony was held virtually this year and hosted by Irish actor and director Tara Flynn with special appearances by Ray D'arcy, Sonia O'Sullivan, Colm O'Regan, Daniel O'Donnell.

Geraldine Ryan, a co-founder of Meals4Health, said this on the announcement of the award: "Winning the Charity Impact Social Enterprise Award is an enormous recognition of the great work our Meals4Health team does every day; recognition that we are on the right path, recognition of the hard work of our staff and our volunteers, and recognition of the importance of supporting the nutritional needs of older people, so that they can live well and age well at home. This award enhances the credibility and awareness of the Meals4Health brand, enabling us to connect with more people, support those who need us and make a bigger contribution to achieving positive social change. We are very grateful to all those who voted for us over the last few weeks."

Meals4Health supports older people to live independently at home within their own communities for as long as possible. The social enterprise prepares and delivers fresh-made meals to older people in their own homes. Established in 2018, the organisation has witnessed a 300% increase in demand during the 2020 pandemic; to date Meals4Health have produced and delivered over 16,500 meals across the West of Ireland this year. Meals can be ordered by phone or via the Meals4Health website ([www.meals4health.ie](http://www.meals4health.ie)), where customers, a family member, or a carer can browse, order, add special requirements and pay for meals easily online. Meals are delivered by local delivery drivers or by courier anywhere in Galway, Roscommon, and Mayo in the West of Ireland. For more information on Meals4Health, visit [www.meals4health.ie](http://www.meals4health.ie) or follow on social media @meals4healthirl

COPE Galway are so delighted to have won and they would like to thank everyone who voted for them.



## Age Friendly Intergenerational Pen pal initiative helping nursing home residents cope with lockdown

Thirty-eight residents from six nursing homes across County Cavan were being kept busy during the Coronavirus lockdown, with one particular Age Friendly initiative that hopes to bring new, intergenerational community connections. They have all signed up to the Age Friendly Intergenerational Pen Pal Initiative which sees them linking in with students from four secondary schools across the county.



*Figure 1 Dorothy Lang resident in Sheelin Nursing Home is participating in the Pen Pal Initiative*

Vanessa Eakins, Activities Co-ordinator in Sheelin Nursing Home said "The residents are delighted, absolutely thrilled. The joy of receiving a letter for an older person always brings good feelings," she said. "They love it, hearing about other people's lives, what they're into, what they might be doing".

Maura Donohoe the Transition Year Co-ordinator with St. Mogue's College said "The Pen Pal Initiative is a great idea to help reduce loneliness and isolation at this time. In fact, after the first letters were sent from the school

it was realised that one of our teacher's grandmother is writing to one of our students and said she was delighted to receive a letter. She also went on to say that it is something that she looks forward to in the week"

It is hoped that when the Coronavirus threat has passed, the students will be able to meet the residents in person and communication will continue on paper or if possible occasional visits. The Nursing Homes involved in the initiative included: Castlemanor Nursing Home, Fairlawns Nursing Home, Sheelin Nursing Home, Sullivan Centre, College View Nursing Home and Esker Lodge Nursing Home. The participating schools included: St. Mogue's College, St. Pat's, Bailieborough Community College and The Royal School.



*Figure 2 St. Mogue's students who have signed up to the Pen Pal Initiative writing their letters*

This is an initiative of the Cavan Age Friendly Programme, Cavan County Council. For further information please contact:

[agefriendly@cavancoco.ie](mailto:agefriendly@cavancoco.ie).

## Your Voice



We've heard about so much good work going on all around the country, please let us know what's happening in your area so we can share those innovative ideas with everyone. Please email us your news to Rachel at [rleavy@meathcoco.ie](mailto:rleavy@meathcoco.ie) Information is one thing we can share right now!

## International Updates



**Paving the Way to OEWSGA11 in Conversation with Experts featuring H.E. Ms. María del Carmen Squeff Ambassador of Argentina to the UN and H.E. Mr. Francisco Duarte Lopes Ambassador of Portugal to the UN**



This fireside conversation took place earlier today. A recording will be available on the IFA Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/intfedageing/>

**The IFA 15th Global Conference on Ageing will be convened virtually and in person**

The IFA is thrilled to announce that the 15th Global Conference on Ageing "Rights Matter" will be convened, for the first time, both virtually and in person in Niagara Falls, Canada from 9-12 November 2021. Pre-conference master classes and summits will be held on 9 November 2021. [Register now](#) to join – in person or virtually – with delegates from government, NGOs, industry, academia and the global community of older people in Niagara Falls, Canada or from the comfort of your home / office.

## Important Tips

Always have your **Eircode** close by in case of emergency. You can find your Eircode [here](#)

Perhaps keep a **daily diary** to record the people you are in contact with every day, so if you develop symptoms it will be easier to trace them



**Coronavirus COVID-19** Public Health Advice

**If you have fever and/or cough you should stay at home regardless of your travel or contact history.**

If you have returned from an area that is subject to travel restrictions due to COVID-19 you should restrict your movement for 14 days. Check the list of affected areas on [www.hse.ie](#)

**All people are advised to:**

- > **Reduce** social interactions
- > **Keep a distance** of 2m between you and other people
- > **Do not** shake hands or make close contact where possible

If you have symptoms visit [hse.ie](#) OR phone HSE Live **1850 24 1850**

**How to Prevent**

- Wash** your hands well and often to avoid contamination
- Cover** your mouth and nose with a tissue or elbow when coughing or sneezing and discard used tissue
- Avoid** touching eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands
- Clean** and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Stop** shaking hands, coughing, sneezing, kissing, hugging or greeting other people
- Distance** yourself at least 2 metres from any other people, especially those who might be unwell

**Symptoms**  
 > Fever (High Temperature) > A Cough > Shortness of Breath > Breathing Difficulties

**For daily updates visit**  
[www.gov.ie/health/covid-19](#)  
[www.hse.ie](#)

WASH HANDS TO STOP VIRUS SPREAD  
[www.nhs.uk/coronavirus](#)

HSE  
 Rialtas na hÉireann  
 Government of Ireland

## Useful Contacts

**Age Friendly Ireland Shared Service Office** Telephone: 046 9097413

Or Email: [leavy@meathcoco.ie](mailto:leavy@meathcoco.ie)

**HSE Advice Line:** Callsave 1850 24 1850

Call from 8am – 8pm Monday to Friday and 10am to 5pm Saturday and Sunday

The following is the list of each **Local Authority's Helpline phone numbers**

### Local Authority

Carlow County Council  
 Cavan County Council  
 Clare County Council  
 Cork City Council  
 Cork County Council  
 Donegal County Council  
 Dublin City Council  
 DLR County Council  
 Fingal County Council  
 Galway City Council  
 Galway County Council  
 Kerry County Council  
 Kildare County Council  
 Kilkenny County Council  
 Laois County Council  
 Leitrim County Council  
 Limerick City and County Council  
 Longford County Council  
 Louth County Council  
 Mayo County Council  
 Meath County Council

### Community Response Number

1800 814 300  
 1800 300 404  
 1800 203 600  
 1800 222 226  
 1800 805 819  
 1800 928 982  
 01 222 8555  
 1800 804 535  
 1800 459 059  
 1800 400 150  
 1800 928 894  
 1800 807 009  
 1800 300 174  
 1800 500 000  
 1800 832 010  
 1800 852 389  
 1800 832 005  
 1800 300 122  
 1800 805 817  
 094 906 4660  
 1800 808 809

Monaghan County Council	1800 804 158
Offaly County Council	1800 818 181
Roscommon County Council	1800 200 727
Sligo County Council	1800 292 765
South Dublin County Council	1800 240519
Tipperary County Council	076 106 5000
Waterford City and County Council	1800 250 185
Westmeath County Council	1800 805 816
Wexford County Council	053 919 6000
Wicklow County Council	1800 868 399