



Age Friendly Guide to Right-Sizing

Contents

1	What is Rightsizing?	3
2	Why is Rightsizing Important?	5
3	What Supports are Available?	7
3.1	Help Available in Your Local Authority	7
3.2	Additional supports available	9
4	Right-sizing Options	11
4.1	Adapting your home to suit your needs 'Ageing in Place'	11
4.2	Moving to more suitable accommodation (Private Home-owner)	12
4.3	Moving to more suitable accommodation (Social Tenant)	13
4.4	Home Share - Sharing your home with a companion	13
4.5	Split Capacity - Redesigning your home to let it out rooms - 'Rent a Room Scheme'	14
4.6	Long-term Residential Care	15
5	Tips for Rightsizing	17
6	Preparing for the Move	21
6.1	Who can I turn to for financial support if I decide to rightsize?	21
6.2	Preparing for the move	21
7	Appendix of Supports Available to Older People Who Wish to Rightsize	23
8	Rightsizing Case Studies	31
8.1	Case Study 1 – Rightsizing to be Closer to Family	31
8.2	Case Study 2 – Relocating to a New Area	31
8.3	Case Study 3 – Moving to Housing Association Accommodation	32
8.4	Case Study 4 – Rightsizing to a More Suitable Home	32
8.5	Case Study 5 – Availing of Local Authority Housing Adaption Grants	32
8.6	Case Study 6 - Homesharing in Dublin	33
8.7	Case Study 7 - Moving from a House to an Apartment	34



Preface

This guide to rightsizing was developed based on research carried out on behalf of Age Friendly Ireland in 2020. This booklet is intended for older people and their families who are considering their housing options in later life. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list, rather a guidance document with some useful information and telephone numbers. The content of the guide was drawn from the research process, which included case studies with older people, interviews with agencies and service providers, literature review and a survey. The guide will help to support the work of Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme (Phase 1). We are very keen to hear about how it can be improved. If you have any comments, please let us know. Contact details on the back cover.

1 What is Rightsizing?

Rightsizing generally means moving home in later life into housing that is more suitable. It was more usually known as '**downsizing**'. It can also mean adapting your home to make it more age-appropriate, or considering other housing options.

Rightsizing essentially means reflecting on whether your home suits your current or future needs.

Rightsizing can include a number of options:


- ▶ Moving to an **Age Friendly Home** (for example, independent living developments, Universally Designed housing, or housing with supports)
- ▶ '**Ageing In Place**' - Adapting your home to suit your needs
- ▶ '**Homeshare**' - Sharing your home with a companion
- ▶ '**Split Capacity**' - redesigning your home to rent out spare rooms
- ▶ '**Ancillary Dwellings**' – building an habitable accessory dwelling unit [HABADU] onto an existing property
- ▶ '**Long term residential care**' accommodation

25% 
of older adults
found their homes
difficult to maintain

20% 
had a **housing**
facility problem

 there are up to
234,000 homes
with two bedrooms
not in regular use

10% 
were **unable** to keep their
home **adequately warm**.

 By **2051** there will be
1.6 million
people **over the age**
of **65** in Ireland


older people
often move to
more **energy**
efficient
homes

 Poor housing **contributes**
to falls and **ill**
health including
respiratory
problems. 

Government policy seeks to **support**
older adults to have **choice in**
housing options and support them
to **live with dignity** in their Homes

 BRE Trust indicates
that **falls associated**
with steps and
stairs, electrical hazards,
falls associated with baths,
excess cold and other
hazards represent a
great cost
to older adults
in Ireland. 

2 Why is Rightsizing Important?

Rightsizing is important because many older people are living in housing that does not suit their needs.

The Healthy and Positive Ageing study reported that one quarter of older adults (aged 55+) found their homes difficult to maintain; 20% had a housing facility problem; and 10% were unable to keep their home adequately warm.

Research on **The Cost of Poor Housing in Ireland** by the BRE Trust indicates that falls associated with steps and stairs, electrical hazards, falls associated with baths, excess cold and other hazards represent a great cost to older adults in Ireland.

If older people are living in unsuitable accommodation, they are more likely to have to transfer into long term residential care.

Rightsizing in later life can be a very good way of ensuring that you can stay living at home for longer.

Rightsizing is important in the context of population ageing. Like elsewhere in the world, the population of Ireland is ageing. By 2051 it is expected that there will be 1.6 million people over the age of 65 in Ireland. Supporting these older adults to remain living at home for longer is a stated policy objective of the Programme for Government.

Rightsizing is also a significant climate action measure, as older people often move to more energy efficient homes, or make energy savings through home adaptation.

In Ireland, there is significant underoccupancy of homes, with one recent survey suggesting there are up to 234,000 homes with two bedrooms not in regular use, and up to 99,000 homes with three bedrooms which are not in regular use.¹

Government policy seeks to support older adults to have choice in housing options and support them to live with dignity in their Homes. Policy documents such as **Housing Options for our Ageing Population** and the **Programme for Government** underline the importance of housing for older people.

¹ Government of Ireland, Attitudinal Survey of Mature Homeowners, IGEES Research Paper, October 2020.

Age Friendly Ireland

Age Friendly Ireland is a shared service of local government hosted by Meath County Council. The shared service manages the National Age Friendly Programme which is affiliated to the World Health Organization's global Age Friendly Cities and Communities Programme. In Ireland, there are 31 local Age Friendly Programmes, each led by local government, which work with a range of multisectoral partners.

Older People's Councils are established in every local authority area as a core structure of the programme. These groups represent the diverse voice of older people.

Over the last 10 years, Age Friendly Ireland has consulted with older people on key issues of concern to them. In 2020, Age Friendly Ireland, with the support

of the National Network of Older People's Councils, commissioned a piece of research on 'Older People's Perceptions and Experiences of Rightsizing'. This study found that, while many older people would prefer to remain in their current homes with additional supports if required, there was a significant number who expressed an interest in rightsizing.

Throughout the consultation process, older people indicated that they found it hard to find information on how to go about rightsizing. Many said they didn't know what their options were or where to start or whom to ask for support.

This guide has been developed as a signpost to the supports that are available for people who wish to rightsize and tips on how to go about it. It is based on interviews with people who have undertaken the process or who are exploring their options and who wish to pass on some advice to others.



3 What Supports are Available?

Each of the rightsizing options involves some level of change to your daily life and therefore requires careful consideration and pre-planning before you make any decisions. If you need help, there are a number of organisations that will help you to explore your options before you make any decisions. The following is a list of just some of the bodies who provide services that may come in useful to you. A full list of supports available is included in the Appendix.

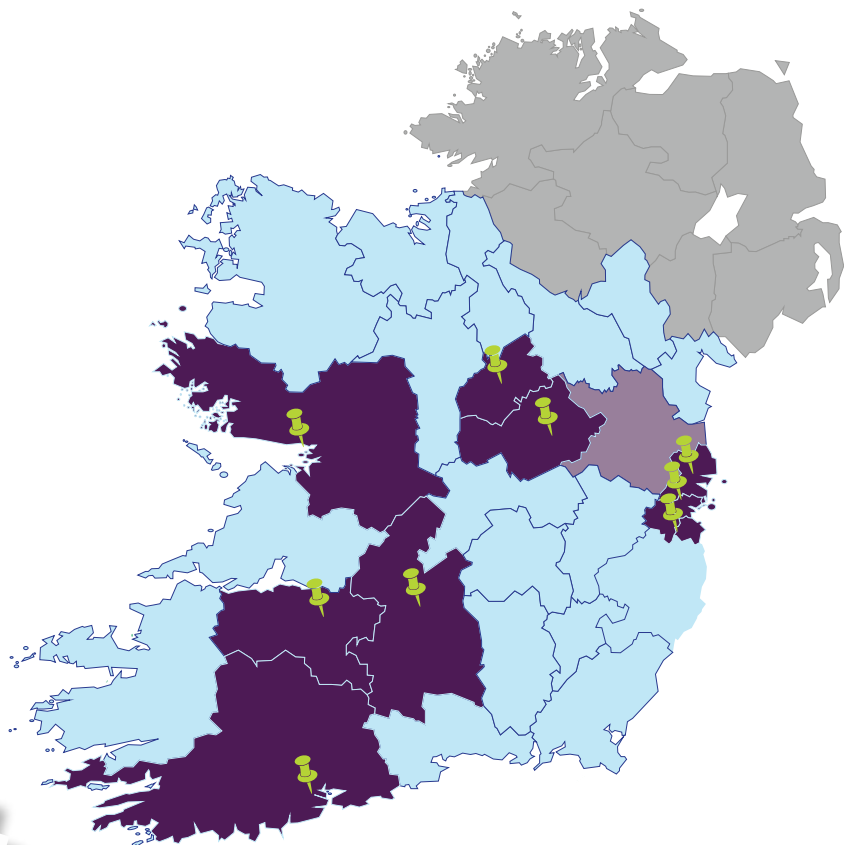
3.1 Help Available in Your Local Authority

Under the Age Friendly Ireland shared service, **Healthy Age Friendly Homes** is a new programme to support people to live in their own home with dignity and independence, for as long as possible, helping to avoid premature transition into long-term residential care. The Programme's ambition is to enable people to live longer healthier lives in their own home, and feel part of their community, by ensuring they are in a suitable living environment, with regard to accessibility, size, safety, and living conditions, including warmth of the home.

Staff are currently available in **nine local authority areas** for Phase 1 (May 2021 to March 2023) of this programme:

1. Cork County
2. Dublin City
3. Fingal
4. Galway City and County
5. Limerick City and County
6. Longford
7. South Dublin
8. Tipperary
9. Westmeath

These Local Co-ordinators will provide direct assistance and advice in terms of assessing your needs and your home and will work with you to devise a plan.



Age Friendly Housing Technical Advisors – Each local authority has assigned a technical advisor who can support Age Friendly developments and advise individual older people on how to make their homes more Age Friendly from a technical perspective. This can include utilising an Age Friendly Rating Tool and the Ten Universal Design Features to make your home more Age Friendly, and others. Contact your Local Authority for more information and ask to speak with the Age Friendly Housing Technical Advisor.

In June 2021, a new website was launched www.agefriendlyhomes.ie which is a one stop shop for all information on Age Friendly Homes, including useful resources for individual older people, models and examples, research, funding and a plethora of other relevant material.

Community Call Helpline - These freephone helplines were set up during Covid-19 and provided a strong support to older people who were being asked to remain at home. As of June 2021, these lines are still active and can provide information on the range of supports available in your area.

Age Friendly Ireland has a number of useful resources that will help you with the process of rightsizing. These include an **Age Friendly Homes Rating Checklist**, and a brochure outlining **Ten Universal Design Features to Include in an Age Friendly Home**.



3.2 Additional supports available

Across Ireland, there are a number of organisations providing support to older people. These can include Citizen's Information Service, social prescribing, decluttering services, Care and Repair (Age Action) and many others.

At the early stages, when you are considering your options, it might be beneficial to consider courses that might help you plan for your retirement.

Age & Opportunity is a national charity that works to improve the quality of life of people aged 50–100+. They promote opportunities for greater participation by older people in society through partnerships and run a number of educational programmes.

Their new retirement programme **Changing Gears** is a course for people in mid-career or anticipating retirement. **Changing Gears** is about building resilience, taking stock, making changes, bouncing back and moving on in life.

Age & Opportunity

St. Patrick's Hall, Marino Institute of Education
Griffith Avenue, Dublin 9, D09 KP46

T (01) 805 7709

E info@ageandopportunity.ie

W www.ageandopportunity.ie

The **Retirement Planning Council** roll out retirement courses across the country for large organisations and private individuals. The course consists of a number of modules covering healthy living, finance, and what you plan to do with your 50 free hours. Participants also discuss rightsizing as part of the course. You can contact the Retirement Planning Council for information on the courses being held near you. (There may be a cost for these courses)

The Retirement Planning Council of Ireland

38-39 Fitzwilliam Square West,
Dublin 2, DO2 NX53

T (01) 478 9471

E coursebookings@rpc.ie

W www.rpc.ie

'**Rewire Don't Retire**', sponsored by Age Action and Irish Life Health, is a useful read before you make any decisions.





4 Right-sizing Options

There are four main options for future proofing your living arrangements:

- ▶ Moving to an **Age Friendly Home** (for example, independent living developments, Universally Designed housing, or housing with supports)
- ▶ **'Ageing in Place'** - Adapting your home to suit your needs
- ▶ **'Homeshare'** - Sharing your home with a companion
- ▶ **'Split Capacity'** - redesigning your home to rent out spare rooms
- ▶ **'Ancillary Dwellings'** – building an habitable accessory dwelling unit [HABADU] onto an existing property
- ▶ **'Long term residential care'** accommodation

4.1 Adapting your home to suit your needs 'Ageing in Place'

There are many routes to adapting your home. One of them is to apply for a Housing Adaptation Grant from your local authority, following a stepped approach.

Step 1

A Consultant or General Practitioner will refer you to your local Occupational Therapist, who will assess your needs and will advise you on how to go about making the necessary applications. The Occupational Therapist will not only assess the adaptations that are required to make your home more suitable for your needs, but will also assess if you require a home care package to support you to remain at home. This may include Personal Care Package, Meals on Wheels and/or visits to the local Community Day Care Centre.

Step 2

Local Authorities provide Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability and Mobility Adaptation grants based on the reports they receive from the Occupational Therapist. Contact your local authority Housing Department and they will send you out the forms. If you have any problems filling the forms in, be sure to ask the Council staff for help.

Family members can help with completing forms, or you could also drop into your local Citizens Information Service for help with forms.

Step 3

There is a new streamlined application process for housing adaptation grants, so only one quotation is now required for the work you want to get done. Make sure to choose a recognised trusted tradesperson who is registered for VAT. Quotes have to be submitted as part of your application to the Local Authority.

Step 4

The Local Authority will send out an Inspector to assess the application and approve/reject the proposed adaptations. The Inspector will return to assess the finished works to ensure they adhere to strict regulations.

4.2 Moving to more suitable accommodation (Private Home-owner)

Step 1

Make a list of your priorities for your new home.

- ▶ Where do you want to live? What kind of design features will you need from your new accommodation, both now and into the future?
- ▶ Do you wish to buy and sell privately?
- ▶ Are you thinking of selling your home to the Local Authority and moving into a social housing housing development?
- ▶ Do you want to explore opportunities to move into a housing development run by an Approved Housing Body?

Step 2

1. **If you decide to opt to sell and buy privately:** Make enquiries from friends and family before choosing your Estate Agent and Solicitor for the selling of your home and the buying of the new place. (Make sure their fees quoted are competitive).
2. **If you are considering selling your house to the Local Authority:** Check with your Local Authority if they have any rightsizing schemes available to you. In some Local Authorities, rightsizing schemes are available to older people who own their own home and who find their dwellings too large for their needs. You may request the Local Authority to purchase your home in return for life-long tenancy in social housing, on condition that you make a financial contribution to the Local Authority. The schemes may vary, so you would be advised to check out what's on offer from your Local Authority.

3. If you decide to consider an Approved Housing Body (AHB) Scheme:

Private homeowners can, in very restricted circumstances, consider the option of selling their home and availing of an AHB development. However, it should be noted that AHB Schemes vary so you would be advised to check whether AHBs are providing suitable accommodation in your area or the area you would consider moving to and whether you are eligible.

For more information on accommodation provided by AHB's, and how to apply, contact the Irish Council for Social Housing on 01 661 8334 or check out their website <https://www.icsh.ie/content/article/mapping-housing-projects-older-people>.

Step 3

When making your decision, be satisfied that the new accommodation is as good as, if not better, than the house you are leaving. You don't want to have any regrets. Check the amenities in the new location. Do you need a garden for your dog or a parking space? Check in with your local Community Garda about any safety issues you might have.

Step 4

Case study participants recommended moving in with family for a short while after the sale of your home. This will relieve the financial pressures of buying and selling, giving you the time to choose your new accommodation. If this is not an option, talk to your bank or financial institution to see what is possible.

4.3 Moving to more suitable accommodation (Social Tenant)

Step 1

Make a list of the features you require from new home, based on your current and future needs and identify your desired location. If you have medical needs, ask your GP to write a letter of support for your application.

Step 2

Contact the Housing Department in your local authority and ask about rightsizing. Make enquiries about locations of smaller housing or apartment developments and the design features in same.

Step 3

Complete the application process. If you need help filling in the form, ask for assistance.

Step 4

Check with the Local Authority Housing staff and Community Welfare Officer as to what incentives and supports, if any, are available to you when making the move to smaller accommodation.

4.4 Home Share - Sharing your home with a companion

Step 1

There are a number of organisations/agencies providing Home Share services. Ask family and friends to help you choose the best service for you.

Step 2

Choose a service that guarantees that Home sharers are Garda vetted and where Homeowner and Home sharer are interviewed as part of the process and where a written Homeshare agreement is put in place.

Step 3

Look for a service where there is a monitored living-in trial

period, in order to ensure both participants are getting on well.

Step 4

Look for a service that doesn't request an additional fee if your Home Share doesn't work out and one that will work to find you the perfect match. Useful addresses for Homeshare Agencies are listed in the Appendix

Check out websites www.eldershare.ie telephone 087 138 5628 or www.homeshare.ie telephone 086 412 6381

4.5 Split Capacity - Redesigning your home to let it out rooms - 'Rent a Room Scheme'

Step 1

If you are interested in redesigning your home to share with another under the 'Rent a Room Scheme', you can do it independently.

If you rent out a room (or rooms) in your home to private tenants, the rental income you earn will be exempt from income tax, provided this income does not exceed a certain limit in a tax year. This is called the **rent-a-room relief**. A self-contained unit, such as a basement flat or a converted garage attached to your home, can qualify for this relief.

It would be advisable to engage with your Local Authority to check whether planning permission might be required and also to check what adaptation grants are available to you. You may require an architect or draughtsperson to prepare drawings and will also need to acquire the services of a builder.

Step 2

Alternatively, you could contact AVA Housing. AVA Housing is an innovative scheme for older homeowners to reconfigure their family sized home.

You can log an enquiry on the website www.avahousing.ie or **Tel** 087 206 4284 **Email** info@avahousing.ie

A member of the team will arrange an interview and will visit you to explain the process of redesign.

This is followed by an architect's visit to discuss how your home will be reconfigured. A member of the AVA team

will discuss with you how to finance the redesign. If you are eligible for Local Authority grants they will make the application for you. They will also make applications for SEAI grants too as part of the process.

AVA will make a planning application on your behalf to the local authority. The process takes 6 weeks during which time you need to begin your decluttering process. You also need to arrange alternative accommodation for when the works commence.

AVA housing take the administration out of the hands of the homeowner. They organise the tenant licence agreement and collect the rent on behalf of the homeowner for a 10% commission fee.

It is important to note that it is a homeshare not a tenancy. The owner still owns their home. The home-sharer must get two months' notice to quit in the event of the death of an owner.

Step 3

Check the financial costs of carrying out the work in your home. Contact your financial institution to check out your options.

Step 4

You may want to consider where you will live while the work is being completed. Perhaps staying with family or friends might be an alternative if you want to keep disruption to a minimum.

4.6 Long-term Residential Care

Step 1

Discuss with family and friends all options available to you.

Make a list of the features you would like to see in your new accommodation. What is the accommodation like? Where is it located? What activities, social and cultural, are provided?

Step 2

Consider the costs of long term care and whether you would like to apply for Fair Deal.

<https://www2.hse.ie/services/fair-deal-scheme/financial-assessment-your-payment-towards-care.html>

Fair Deal provides financial support for those in long-term nursing home care. You pay part of the nursing home fees and we pay the balance. This scheme applies to approved public, private and voluntary nursing homes.

Step 3

You can apply for financial support to help pay for the cost of care in a nursing home through the Fair Deal scheme.

You need to be approved for Fair Deal before you can receive funding for a nursing home.

You can choose to pay privately for care while you wait for funding. Fair Deal funding can't be backdated and will only be paid from the date of approval.

Step 4:

Medical Professionals will provide you with a list of long-term residential facilities. Ask family and/or friends to support you to visit a number of Long term residential cares and meet with the care staff and residents before you make your decision.

You can also check the Nursing Homes Ireland website www.nhi.ie for more information on long term residential facilities in your area.



5 Tips for Rightsizing

People rightsize for various reasons; sometimes there has been a change in circumstance such as the death of a loved one or the departure of grown up children, leaving the family home too big for just one or two people. Some may have retired and see it as an opportunity to relocate, or to release equity. Others may need the support of a companion to enable them to stay in their home or the financial benefit of a lodger/tenant to add to their pension income. Whatever the reason, the following is a list of tips and advice that case study participants interviewed wanted to pass on to others who might be considering rightsizing.

Positive Actions	Things to Avoid!
<p>1. Do your research first.</p> <p>Make a checklist of why you want to consider rightsizing. Make sure you and your partner, if applicable feel the same way.</p> <p>Take the time to read 'Rewire Don't Retire; Embrace your Retirement' by Marianne Heron and Paul Britton, sponsored by Age Action and Irish Life Assurance. (Chapter 8 - Move or Stay Put, is a must)</p>	<p>Don't feel pressured into moving because others think it is a good idea. It should be something you want to do yourself.</p>
<p>2. Take your time when you are selling your home.</p> <p>Choose your Estate Agent and Solicitor. A good Estate Agent should be able to provide you with the names of trusted professionals that will help with the move and de-cluttering.</p> <p>There are useful websites where you can source an Estate Agent, such as www.realestatealliance.ie</p>	<p>Don't necessarily choose the first Estate Agent or Solicitor that comes to your attention. It's good to get a recommendation from someone who has already been through the process.</p> <p>Don't feel under pressure to accept an offer until you are ready to move.</p>
<p>3. Make a List</p> <p>When buying or renting a new home, make a list of all the features that you want to have in it. Do you want a bungalow or apartment so that you don't have to climb stairs? How many bedrooms will you need? Check the storage space and car parking facilities.</p> <p>"If I am going to make a move, it needs to be to a place that's as good as what I have now, or better. I won't settle for anything less"</p> <p>Check the broadband coverage in the area.</p>	<p>Don't feel pressurised into taking the first house or apartment that you see. Make sure it has everything you want from a new home.</p>

Positive Actions	Things to Avoid!
<p>4. Adapting or Redesigning</p> <p>If you are adapting or redesigning your home to suit your needs, speak with the Age Friendly Technical Advisor in your local authority.</p> <p>Consider the financial cost and check what adaptation grants are available to you from your Local Authority.</p> <p>If you require additional financing, check with the financial institution you bank with regarding loans and repayments.</p>	<p>If you consider taking out a loan, consider all the financial implications and the importance of having enough disposable income to enjoy your retirement.</p>
<p>5. Check out all the amenities</p> <p>Check out all the amenities in the new location e.g. shops, church, transport, library etc.</p>	<p>Don't choose a location you know nothing about. Make sure you get to know your new area before you make your purchase.</p>
<p>6. Talk to the Gardaí</p> <p>Talk to the Gardaí in advance of moving to find out if it is a safe location.</p>	<p>Don't be afraid to contact your new neighbours, they will probably be delighted to make your acquaintance and can fill you in about the locality.</p>
<p>7. De-clutter.</p> <p>Most people find this the hardest thing to do.</p> <p>"Take one room at a time and make collections of items, e.g. items you want to take with you, items you might gift to family members and items you might donate to the local charity shop"</p> <p>There are many decluttering services available through the community and voluntary sector at local level. You may find out about these through your Community Call helpline, libraries, Family Resource Centres and many others.</p>	<p>Don't think that you can fit a lifetime of treasures into your new smaller space.</p> <p>"Letting go of my belongings was the hardest thing to do"</p> <p>"Be ruthless, getting rid of clutter is a good way of focusing on what's most precious and important"</p>

Positive Actions

Things to Avoid!

8. Check out the Activities

Check out the activities in the area and join a club if you want to get to know people. Lots of towns, villages and communities have Ladies Clubs, Men's Sheds, Active Retirement Associations and Irish Countrywomen's Association, to name but a few organisations. Check in with your local library to see what's on in your area. A great port of call is your Public Participation Network which is a central resource for all community and voluntary organisations in your area. Check out your local authority for more information.

Don't rely on just family and friends from the old neighbourhood for company.

One suggestion was that having a pet is a great way of getting to know people.

"Everyone stops to talk to me because of my cute boxer dog; he really helped me to settle in"



6 Preparing for the Move

6.1 Who can I turn to for financial support if I decide to rightsize?

Consider all costs associated with rightsizing, whether that is buying and selling your home or redesigning to suit your needs.

There is a number of home improvement grants and loan schemes available, for example:

- ▶ Housing Adaptation Grants and Mobility Adaptation Grants
- ▶ Better Energy Homes Scheme
- ▶ Free Energy Upgrades (for eligible homes)
- ▶ Warmth and Wellbeing Scheme
- ▶ Green Home Improvement Loans (An Post Energy Hub)
- ▶ Home improvement grants through the Credit Union



An Post Green Hub provides loans for home energy improvements.

The full list of supports/grants available is set out in the Appendix - Support Services. Check with the relevant agency regarding availability and eligibility.

If you consider taking out a loan to cover redesign costs, check with your financial institution as to options that are available to you (all financial institutions base eligibility on the client's age and ability to service a loan).

6.2 Preparing for the move

Decluttering: "Be ruthless, only bring your most prized possessions; you will see them in a new light in your new home"

(MAURA).

If you are leaving a large-sized family home after many years, it is likely that you have accumulated a lot of precious memories. Once you have made the decision to move, no matter what option you have chosen, you will have to undertake the onerous task of de-cluttering.

Case study participants said that this was the hardest thing they had to do. They all recommended taking **one room** at a time and dividing your items up into piles, so that you can revisit them before making the final decision. Most offered some of their possessions to family and friends, as mementoes, and donated the rest to the local charity shop. People sometimes find that the furniture in the large family home is either too big, or doesn't suit the new home. One case study participant recommended advertising items for sale in the local newspapers, thereby making some money to put towards the new home. Others said that it's a good idea to ask your Estate Agent, as they will have contact details of professional movers and often know of charity organisations that will collect furniture items that are worth passing on to others.

It's always a good idea to label all the boxes, that way, when you get to your new home, you know where to find everything. All case study participants said they felt they had lightened their load when they had completed the task. None expressed any regrets.

Moving Day:

"Once I packed the dog in the car and pulled the car door shut, I never looked back".

(ELEANOR)

The day of the move is likely to be very stressful, so try to plan for every eventuality. Most people recommended that you pack as if you are going on holidays. That way, you have the clothes you need until you have unpacked all the boxes. Others prepared a picnic lunch and dinner and packed cutlery and dishes required for the day. Most people engaged professional movers to help with the moving of large furniture items.

Tasks to remember:

"Transferring the utilities proved to be a bit of a nightmare - it would be great if someone could do that all for you".

(EVELYN)

You need to remember that you have to notify all of your utility service providers that you have moved. You also have to change the address on your driver's licence and bank details. It's best if you make a list and check with family and friends to make sure you don't leave anything out.

7 Appendix of Supports Available to Older People Who Wish to Rightsize

Local Authority	Telephone Number	Community Call Helplines
Carlow County Council	(059) 9170300	1800 814 300
Cavan County Council	(049) 4378300	1800 300 404
Clare County Council	(065) 6821616	1800 203 600
Cork City Council	(021) 4966222	1800 222 226
Cork County Council	(021) 4276891	1800 805 819
Donegal County Council	(074) 9153900	1800 928 982
Dublin City Council	(01) 2222222	01 222 8555
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown	(01) 2054700	1800 804 535
Fingal County Council	(01) 8905000	1800 459 059
Galway City Council	(091) 536400	1800 400 150
Galway County Council	(091) 509000	1800 928 894
Kerry County Council	(066) 7183500	1800 807 009
Kildare County Council	(045) 980200	1800 300 174
Kilkenny County Council	(056) 7794000	1800 326 522
Laois County Council	(057) 8664000	1800 832 010
Leitrim County Council	(071) 9620005	1800 852 389
Limerick Local Authorities	(061) 556000	1800 832 005
Longford County Council	(043) 3343300	1800 300 122
Louth County Council	(042) 9335457	1800 805 817
Mayo County Council	(094) 9064000	094 906 4660
Meath County Council	(046) 9097000	1800 808 809
Monaghan County Council	(047) 30500	1800 804 158
Offaly County Council	(057) 934 6800	1800 818 181
Roscommon County Council	(090) 663 7100	1800 200 727
Sligo County Council	(071) 9111111	1800 292 765
South Dublin County Council	(01) 4149000	1800 240519
Tipperary County Council	(076) 1065000	076 106 5000
Waterford City and County Council	076 1102020	1800 250 185
Westmeath County Council	(044) 9332000	1800 805 816
Wexford County Council	(053) 9196000	053 919 6000
Wicklow County Council	(0404) 20100	1800 868 399

Information Services

Public Participation Network

Contact your local authority for information on your Public Participation Network and the many community and voluntary groups in your area.

Citizens Information Services

For all your information needs, check out the website www.citizensinformation.ie or visit your local service for any information or help with filling out forms.

Citizens Information Phone Service is a nationwide service that can be reached on **0761 07 4000**, Monday to Friday, 9am to 8pm.

Grant Schemes

Local Authorities

There are three grants available for older people and people with disabilities to help make their home safer and easier to get around.

The grants are:

1. Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability
2. Mobility Aids Grant
3. Housing Aid for Older People Grant

Download the relevant application form from your local Council's website, or collect a copy in person, and send the completed form back to the local authority.

Find out more about these grants on the Citizens Information Service website:

Housing Adaptation Grant for Older People and People with a Disability



Mobility Aids Grant Scheme



Improvement works in lieu of local authority housing



Local authority home improvement loans



Housing for older people



Dept of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

- ▶ Grant scheme to replace lead pipes and fittings.

Grants to help low-income households with the cost of replacing domestic water piping that contains lead.



- ▶ The introduction of a funding scheme for ancillary units (formerly called 'granny flats') is under consideration in the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (May 2021).

Pobal

The Seniors Alert Scheme provides grant support for the supply of alarm equipment to enable older people of limited means to continue to live securely in their homes. The grant assistance is made available through community, voluntary and not-for-profit organisations that are registered with Pobal. Detailed information on the Seniors Alert Scheme is available on Pobal's website.

Contact

T 01 511 7000
W www.pobal.ie

Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland

All SEAI grants can be applied for either online or via a postal application. You can find all the details on how to make the application in the **SEAI homeowner application guide**. For online applications, you can just navigate to the SEAI home energy grants page and click on 'online application'. To send a postal application, simply download the SEAI grants application form from the **Home Energy Grants page** and send it to address below.

Contact

T 1850 376 666
E info@seai.ie

W www.seai.ie

Better Energy Homes Scheme, The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, P.O. Box 119, Cahirciveen, Co. Kerry.

Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme



Grants for solar panels and battery systems



Apart from insulation grants, there is also a wide range of additional home improvement grants available through the SEAI. These include:

- ▶ SEAI boiler grant
- ▶ SEAI grant for windows
- ▶ SEAI deep retrofit grant
- ▶ SEAI heat pump grant
- ▶ SEAI solar grant
- ▶ SEAI heating controls grant

Financial Products and Loans

An Post Green Hub provides loans for home energy improvements

Call into your local Post Office or see www.anpost.com/Green-Hub

Banks and Credit Unions also have financial products for home improvements.

Support Schemes

HSE - The Long term residential care Support Scheme (Fair Deal)

The Long term residential cares Support Scheme is a **scheme of financial support for people who need long-term Long term residential care**. Under the Long term residential cares Support Scheme, you will make a contribution towards the cost of your care and the State will pay the balance. This applies whether the Long term residential care is public, private or voluntary.

Eligibility is based on two assessments.

The first looks at the care needs of the older person, their capacity to live independently and at available supports at home and in the community.

The second assessment looks at the financial resources (income, property some expenses) available to the older person.

Contact

T 1850 241 850



Support Services

Age Action

Age Action is a national charity that advocates on behalf of older people. The organisation provides services and programmes that support older people and their families to live full and independent lives. They work with partners in the business and community sectors to support the development and expansion of these services.

Age Action provides services including its Care and Repair,

Getting Started computer training and an information service. It also campaigns for older people at a national level. Through the University of the Third Age network (U3A), they help to bring lifelong learning to those in the third age.

Care & Repair is a service that helps to keep people living in their own homes in increased safety and comfort. The service uses trustworthy volunteers to carry out small DIY jobs free of charge for older people. Jobs that the volunteers can do include fixing shelves, changing locks, painting/decorating, moving furniture, gardening, etc.

For bigger jobs, they keep a list of local tradespersons whose contact details can be provided for professional quotations.

<https://www.ageaction.ie/how-we-can-help/care-and-repair/locations>

Contact

T 01 4756989

E info@ageaction.ie

W www.ageaction.ie

Third Age Foundation

Third Age Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation that promotes the value of older people's contribution in their local community. They provide services such as:

SeniorLine - a FREEPHONE service where older callers can call free between 10.00 am and 10.00 pm every day of the year on **1800 804591**. It is Ireland's only peer-to-peer confidential telephone service for older people.

AgeWell Companions Project - Companions take the time to get to know the older people they visit at home.

COVID-19: SeniorLine - supporting older callers with concerns

Home safe home – support for home safety and security

Active Retirement Ireland (ARI)

Active Retirement Ireland (ARI) is a voluntary organisation for older people with over 550 local associations. Members range in age from 50 -100+ years. All activities are aimed at keeping older people active and well.

Contact

T 01 873 3836

E info@activeirl.ie

National Office 124 The Capel Building Mary's Abbey,
Dublin 7 D07 PF68

Friends of the Elderly Ireland

Friends of the Elderly Ireland provide a wide range of social programmes for older people who would benefit from a friendly chat or a social outing. With the help of their many dedicated volunteers and donors they provide companionship, support, social engagement, intergenerational activities and community-based services.

What they do:

- ▶ **Visiting Programme**
- ▶ **Friendly Call Service**
- ▶ **Social Clubs**
- ▶ **Outings, Parties and Events**
- ▶ **Information provision and signposting**
- ▶ **School Programmes**
- ▶ **Referrals**

Contact

T 01 873 1855

E info@friendsoftheelderly.ie

Alone

is a national charity that supports and empowers older people. They support individuals and their families, offer training and campaign nationwide for change for older people. The organisation provides services and programmes such as:

- ▶ **Befriending Service** - volunteers provide company and companionship
- ▶ **Co-ordinated Support Service** - provides practical support and coordinates services for and with older people to address challenges and to find solutions.
- ▶ **ALONE Housing** is for people aged 60 and over who are homeless or have housing difficulties. Applicants must be able to live reasonably independently or with the help of a support package provided by the Health Service or another agency.

If you need support, or would like to make a referral, please call the national phone line

Contact

T 0818 222024

E hello@alone.ie

Irish Local Development Network

Many of the Local Development Companies provide supports to older people including:

- ▶ **Care & Repair Programmes/Handy Man Service**
- ▶ **Friendly Call service**
- ▶ **IT Home Supports**
- ▶ **Information workshops on Wills and Inheritance and People Moving Handling courses**

You can find out more about your Local Development Company.

Contact

T 061 404 923

W www.ildn.ie

Retirement Planning Educational Courses

Retirement Planning Council

The Retirement Planning Council provides support, information and guidance to people planning for retirement. They offer practical courses and seminars that talk through the financial and lifestyle changes retirement can bring and help people prepare for the time ahead.

Contact

T 01 4789471
E info@rpc.ie
W www.rpc.ie

Age & Opportunity

Age & Opportunity is the Irish national agency working to challenge negative attitudes to ageing and older people. The agency promotes opportunities for greater participation by older people in society through partnerships. They run a number of social, cultural and educational programmes, for example, Cultural Companions, Go for Life, Bealtaine Programme, Changing Gears.

Their new retirement programme Changing Gears is a course for people in mid-career or anticipating retirement. Changing Gears is about building resilience, taking stock, making changes, bouncing back and moving on in life.

Contact

T 01 805 7709
E info@ageandopportunity.ie
W www.ageandopportunity.ie

Family Support Services

The Alzheimer Society

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland works across the country, in the heart of local communities, providing dementia-specific services and supports and advocating for the rights and needs of all people living with dementia and for their carers.

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland also operates the Alzheimer National Helpline, offering information and support to anyone affected by dementia on 1800 341341

Contact

T 1800 341341
W www.alzheimer.ie

The Irish Hospice Foundation.

Death and dying affects each and every one of us. The Irish Hospice Foundation strives for the best care at end of life for these people and practical support for their loved ones.

Their website provides information on their Think Ahead Programme- Planning for Death and Dying

Contact

T 01 6793188
E info@hospicefoundation.ie
W www.hospicefoundation.ie

Family Carers Ireland

Family Carers Ireland FCI is the national charity representing Ireland's 355,000+ family carers who provide care in the home to loved ones, family members, relatives, friends and neighbours of all ages.

Their focus, as an organisation, is on family carers; "*We are the charity that asks the carer how you are*". Whether you are looking after a young child or adult with an intellectual or physical disability, a spouse with a terminal illness, an ageing parent or a loved one with a mental health illness, Family Carers Ireland is here to help you maintain your caring routine and to help inform policy and public debate surrounding family caring. "*We understand that family caring*

can be rewarding but also a struggle. When you need our help, we are standing by to support you. We believe that no one should have to care alone".

Contact Careline

T 1800 240 724
E info@familycarers.ie
W www.familycarers.ie

Home Share Agencies

Homeshare

Homeshare is a good way to support older people to stay in their own homes and, at the same time, help someone else to have a home. A Householder is someone who has a suitable home that they are willing to share in exchange for some companionship and/or some help with small tasks around the house. A Homesharer is someone who needs accommodation and who is prepared to give some support and companionship to the householder. The following are contact details for some Homeshare agencies:

Contact

Elder Homeshare

T 087 1385628
W www.elderhomeshare.ie

The Homeshare.ie

T 086 4126381
E info@homeshare.ie
W www.homeshare.ie

Homeshare Ireland

T 087 2771103
E info@homeshareireland.ie
W www.homeshareireland.ie

Long term residential care

Nursing Homes Ireland

Nursing Homes Ireland is the national representative body for the private and voluntary nursing homes sector. There

are over 460 such nursing homes in Ireland providing care to over 25,000 people. Their mission is to actively support and represent members, enabling them to provide sustainable, high quality care to their residents.

Contact Careline

T 01 4699800
E info@nhi.ie
W www.nhi.ie

Private Home Care Service Providers

Home Care Service Providers

There are various businesses providing home care services such as Home Instead and Bluebird Care.

Local services are advertised in the telephone directory.

The Health Service has a list of approved home care providers





8 Rightsizing Case Studies

As part of the Age Friendly Ireland's Rightsizing Research project a number of older people who had undertaken to rightsize or were exploring their housing options for the future, agreed to be interviewed and to share their experiences. The following are their stories and the advice they would like to pass on to others:

8.1 Case Study 1 – Rightsizing to be Closer to Family

Eleanor, who is in her 80s now, moved from County Antrim to Swords in 2001 in order to be nearer her daughter. **“My husband and I had discussed moving to Dublin if anything happened to either of us and when he died, I decided that I would do it”.**

Eleanor had help from her daughter and son-in-law with the process of selling and buying. She carefully considered what she wanted from her new home and took her time to find what was just right for her. She knew she needed a house with an enclosed garden as she has a dog. She moved in with her daughter after she sold up and then started her search for her new home. When it came to moving, she organised this on her own. **“I found the actual move on the day very stressful but, once I saw off the removal van, I put the dog in the car and never looked back”.**

Eleanor recommends taking the time to de-clutter. She believes that you have to be ruthless in deciding what to keep, what to sell and what to donate to the charity shop. She used her local newspaper to advertise the sale of some furniture. Before moving, she contacted her new church in Swords and also checked in with the Gardaí about the safety of the new environment. She made sure she was close to public transport and shops. After arriving she joined an Active Retirement Association. **“I'm really happy. My home suits my needs, both now and into the future.”**

8.2 Case Study 2 – Relocating to a New Area

Meet Bridie, who is in her late 70s and a very active volunteer in her community. In 1999, after her family had flown the nest, she sold the family home in Finglas and moved to North County Dublin. **“Moving here was a wonderful experience for me. I think my children found the notion of moving from the family home more difficult than I did but, when they saw how happy I was, they were very proud of me and thought me very brave; to me it was just a new adventure.”**

While she found breaking into her new community a bit difficult in the beginning, she made it her business to get to know the new area and joined local voluntary groups which helped her to get to know everyone. She made several visits to the area before moving in and contacted the local Gardaí to check safety issues. Bridie loved driving but she chose the new location because it has great transport links and is also on the coast, which means she can go for lovely walks on the beach. She now finds that she feels more at home in North County Dublin than she ever did anywhere else.

Bridie loves her home and has a comfortable life, but she worries sometimes about having enough money to cover big maintenance jobs around the house and garden in the future. She would like to explore options of adapting her home in order to share with someone else, but doesn't know how to go about it. **“Splitting the house is a dream that I have, but I don't know where to start. I have questions about borrowing money to have the work done, what would it do to the value of my house after the work is done and what the implications are for my children with regards to their inheritance after I've gone. These are all things that concern me”.**

8.3 Case Study 3 – Moving to Housing Association Accommodation

Until recently, Peter was living in rented accommodation with the support of the Housing Assistance Payment. In 2019, he made an application to Kilkee Housing Association. His application was supported by his General Practitioner, as he had mobility issues and needed to move to ground level accommodation.

In November 2019, he was told his application had been successful. He moved into a two bedroom bungalow, which he furnished with the help of grants available from the Department of Social Protection. He is delighted with his new home, especially as the maintenance of the building and the garden is all looked after by the Association. **“I couldn't be happier with my move, I love it here. There's a mixture of ages here, which I think works really well.”**

All the amenities are close by and public transport is very good, so Peter can get to visit his children and grandchildren easily when he wishes. **“If you're eligible for social housing, I would recommend that you make an application. If you need help making your application, talk to your local Citizen's Information office, they'll help you write it. Talk to everyone who can help you.”**

8.4 Case Study 4 – Rightsizing to a More Suitable Home

Maura and her husband made the decision to sell the family home in Rathfarnham, County Dublin, in 2003, when they had both retired. They chose South Kerry because it was an area they were familiar with, having had many family summer holidays there over the years. They also chose it because it was 20-25 minutes from the airport, the hospital, the train station and the nearest large town. They had looked at other places but felt these were too remote. They chose a dormer cottage as their forever home. They have a bedroom with an en-suite downstairs, which means they won't have to climb any stairs in the future if they ever have any mobility issues. **“Don't leave it too late to make the move.”**

Like Eleanor, Maura was ruthless about de-cluttering, recommending that you bring only the precious things with you. She says that you see them in a new light when you do. Neither Maura nor her husband have any regrets and are firmly established in their new community. Maura took up a very active role in the area, which helped her to fit in with the locals. She reckons you have to be brave to do it.

8.5 Case Study 5 – Availing of Local Authority Housing Adaption Grants

Jim and Mary were in their 80s when Jim was diagnosed with Parkinson's. Because of this condition, they availed of the Local Authority Housing Adaptation Grant to have a stair lift installed and the bathroom adapted. As Mary also suffered from health difficulties which curtailed her ability to fully care for her husband, they were invited by the Public Health Nurse to participate in a new pilot project called OPRAH (Older People Remaining At Home). This proved very beneficial for them as it fast-tracked

their availing of further assistance, such as a mobility scooter for Jim and a ramp to front of house. In addition, and crucially, Jim was provided with a home care package, which entailed a number of visits by care workers each day. Mary was also put in touch with a local befriending volunteer, who visited regularly, both at home and subsequently when in residential care. Mary felt that this contact not only helped her forge a new friendship but also helped her to maintain a link with her local community which was hugely important to her.

The outcome of this was that, because of this comprehensive care package, Jim was able to remain at home for six years, deferring the need to have him admitted to Long term residential care care. When his condition eventually deteriorated to the point where home care was no longer an option, and Mary's own health issues had intensified, both partners applied, and were accepted, for the Fair Deal Scheme and spent their remaining days in a Long term residential care.

“My parents were delighted they were able to spend most of their declining years in their own home and manage to delay the Long term residential care option until there was no realistic alternative. They were very appreciative of the quality of life they were able to enjoy through participating in the OPRAH scheme”. (Son)

8.6 Case Study 6 - Homesharing in Dublin

Irene is 94 and lives on her own in north county Dublin. She has been very active all of her life, playing a key role in her local Active Retirement Association. In 2019, she started to think that she might have to consider selling her home and moving into a Long term residential care, as she was finding it difficult to live alone. A friend of hers introduced her to the idea of Homesharing and she decided to give it a go. Irene's friend made contact with a Homeshare agency, and so began the application process.

Irene's friend told me that a good agency will try to match the Homeowner with the Home-sharer. She stressed that **“they need to be similar in personality for the relationship to work”**. The agency interviews both parties and, when a match is found, they help make the introductions and draw up a Homeshare agreement. All Home-sharers are Garda vetted and have to provide references as part of the application process. In most cases there is a fee for the service. In some cases, the Home-sharer sometimes pays a minimal rent, especially if it is in Dublin, but in general they don't. They must be prepared to give about 10 hours companionship and do basic tasks around the house. The Home-sharer is not, however, a personal carer and this must be clearly understood from the outset.

Irene was successful with her first Home-sharer and the match seemed to be perfect. After 6 weeks, however, the Home-sharer decided to return home. The second Homeshare wasn't as successful, so Irene has decided to opt out. Her friend still thinks that the Homeshare concept is a good one, it certainly seems to work for some people but she says **“it's really important to get the relationship right and that there is continuity.”**

8.7 Case Study 7 - Moving from a House to an Apartment

“We are really happy with our move, but I think you have to want to do it. You shouldn’t let anyone talk you into doing it, otherwise you might be very unhappy”

Meet Evelyn and John, both in their 80s and in very good health. In 2001, when John had retired and Evelyn was coming up for retirement, they decided to sell the family home and do what they’d always dreamed about – move to the countryside and have a big garden. They left their Dublin home and moved to County Kildare. They chose an area where family members were living.

“We found a bungalow with the most beautiful big garden. We loved living there and had the most fantastic neighbours”

In 2019, their circumstances changed and, with both of them now in their 80s, they decided it was time to consider finding a place that suited their changing needs. Their beautiful garden had become too much for them and the distance from family was also becoming an issue.

“We wanted to be closer to family and amenities, now that we are that bit older. We were going to look for a bungalow, but after much talking we decided that we didn’t want any garden maintenance so we opted for an apartment”

They found selling the house a bit stressful and would have loved it, if someone had given them a list of all of the utilities that had to be transferred over to the new house. They also found it hard to get a new doctor which they hadn’t anticipated when they initially decided to move.

“It was hard going, but my son helped us. I wouldn’t like to be doing it on my own. We don’t feel like we have downsized because we have as much room as we need, but I did find it hard letting go of my belongings.”

Notes

Notes

Contact

Age Friendly Ireland, Shared Service Centre
Meath County Council, Buvinda House
Navan, Co.Meath

T 046 9097000

E agefriendlyireland@meathcoco.ie

www.agefriendlyireland.ie

