



10 Years Delivering For Ireland | A Decade Of Progress

Listening to the voice of older people - the driving force of change at local level

AGE FRIENDLY IRELAND



WHO Global Network
for Age-friendly Cities
and Communities



Age Friendly
IRELAND



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council

THE AGE FRIENDLY PROGRAMME

The now national Age Friendly Ireland Programme supports cities, counties and towns across Ireland to prepare for the rapid ageing of our population by paying increased attention to the environmental, economic and social factors that influence the health and well-being of older adults.

Age-friendly programmes work to provide walkable streets, housing and transportation options, access to key services and opportunities for older people to participate in community activities. By doing so, these communities are better equipped to become great places, and where appropriate lifelong homes, for people of all ages.

AGE FRIENDLY IRELAND

Ireland's Age Friendly Ireland Programme is coordinated by Age Friendly Ireland, an appointed shared service of local government hosted by Meath County Council. The national Age Friendly Programme office brings together, supports and provides technical guidance to the 31 local authority led, multi-agency Age Friendly City and County Programmes.



JOINT FOREWORD

2019 marks ten years since the launch of the first Age Friendly County Strategy in Ireland.

Today all 31 local authority areas have now formally adopted the age friendly programme thus representing a full national roll out of the model. Indeed, April 2019 saw Ireland become the first country to be fully affiliated with the World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Network of Age Friendly Cities and Communities. Ireland's Age Friendly Programme is now coordinated by Age Friendly Ireland, an appointed shared service of local government hosted by Meath County Council. The national Age Friendly Programme office brings together, supports and provides technical guidance to the 31 local authority led, multi-agency Age Friendly Programmes. At City and County level it is developed through cooperation and partnership of older people with government agencies and service providers working side by side. Under the leadership of the local authority Chief Executive's and senior managers, governance is anchored in the multi-agency age-friendly alliances, supported by diverse and representative older peoples' councils engaged as co-design partners. The Age Friendly Ireland Alliances provide the collaborative framework to involve senior leaders from key stakeholders

such as the Local Authority, HSE, An Garda Síochána, Chambers of Commerce, community sector, third-level institutions, and others, who have sufficient influence and resources to develop and deliver ambitious and collaborative Age Friendly Ireland Programmes.

Looking back 10 years and beyond, we recognised then that more could be done to prepare for the rapid ageing of our population. Most of all we were very aware of the vital importance of issues identified and decisions made at a local level; the quality of the housing stock, how safe communities are, the provision of transport services, health services in both acute and community settings, the extent to which the built environment impacts on how we live and access services, the opportunities to be involved in your local community – all of these we know are influenced by decisions made by agencies at local level.

We know now that an age-friendly approach extends far beyond concerns about health and social care. Instead, an age-friendly community considers its physical, social, and economic environment and makes needed changes that promote independence and a high quality of life for its people as they age.

Over the ten years an extensive track record of age friendly actions has been developed which now includes home support services for older people, enhancement of public spaces, age-friendly transport services, senior enterprise and age-friendly business programmes together with several demonstrator age friendly housing models. These and many other practical changes have had a significant effect on the quality of older people's lives.

The official launch of the shared service office this year provides us with an opportunity to reflect on some of the programmes achievements in advance of us setting our sights on the issues that will make a difference across the next 10 years. And while this booklet cannot capture the scope or impact of the full decade of age friendly programme progress it aims to offer a snapshot of where the journey has taken us.



Jackie Maguire

Chief Executive, Meath County Council

COLLABORATION has been central to the success of Age Friendly Ireland. Collaboration between agencies and organisations, collaboration with older people themselves. Where the programme is working well key agencies - City and County Councils, the Health Service Executive, An Garda Síochána, Chambers of Commerce, transport providers, academic institutions, NGO's and others - have agreed to share resources and plan collaboratively at the local level. Local government is delighted to be leading this programme but is both dependent on and appreciative of the full and active engagement of these key agencies and organisations.

What are we most proud of? The enhanced level of age awareness that now has been built up across many of our key agencies and service providers. So many staff across agencies operating at a local level are much more age aware and age attuned. The network of participating agencies and organisations don't take things for granted. Instead, they ask older people 'what they want' and 'how things work for them.' Having seen how practical so many of the 'asks' have been these agencies and organisations are more open to change as result of the Age Friendly Ireland Programme. Many actions led out across the ten-year term have been united by one principle; the voice of older people as the driving force of age friendly change at local level. Older People's Councils have now been established in each of the 31

programme areas as a means by which older people can raise issues of importance and identify priority areas of need.

Well over 20,000 older people have participated in the many age friendly programme led consultations – town hall meetings, round table discussions, focus groups, workshops, annual general meetings and world café processes across the ten years. In parallel, more than 10, 500 older people have completed household-based interviews as part of a research collaboration involving Age Friendly Ireland and the Healthy and Positive Ageing Initiative (HaPAI). Together, this extensive consultation has shone an important light on the experiences and preferences of older people living in our communities. Significantly, this consultation has allowed us to identify gaps and the supports needed by older people to live healthy and independent lives as they grow older.

The collective experience of the 31 local programmes would also appear to be increasingly well placed at national level. The programme's National Advisory Group now provides a means by which policy issues arising from the extensive local age friendly programme work can be channelled up to national level. The recently published 'Housing Options for Our Ageing Population Policy Statement', prepared jointly by the Departments of Housing, Planning and Local

Government and Health provides one such example of this growing connect between local lived experience and national policy formation. Now that the Age Friendly Programme is about to enter its 'second decade' and with an increasingly well-developed programme infrastructure in place across Ireland we must continue to make a difference. The challenge, now, for the age friendly network is to scale up what can often be local pockets of good practice into the consistent application of proven age friendly initiatives across a broader geographic network.

We recognise that we have still a way to go to delivering a truly Age Friendly Ireland. In many ways, this is just the start of our age friendly journey. Our vision for the future continues to be ambitious – an Ireland that is a great country in which to grow old. As a shared service, Age Friendly Ireland relies on many individuals, networks, groups and organisations to deliver on its overarching mission to improve the quality of life of older people throughout Ireland. We thank you all for your commitment to date and look forward to working with you to make this vision happen.



Catherine McGuigan

Chief Officer, Age Friendly Ireland

An aerial photograph of a rugged coastline. The land is covered in dense, low-lying vegetation and rocky terrain. A small boat is visible in the water near the shore. The overall scene is natural and somewhat desolate.

**For Ireland to become truly Age Friendly
all sectors of society, Government, Service
Providers, Local Authorities, Police and
the General Public must be involved.**

We all have our part to play.

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BACKGROUND

The Age Friendly Ireland Programme dates to an initiative of the World Health Organization (WHO) in the early 2000's. At this time Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) was exploring the use of architectures and technologies that would benefit older people, particularly those that would assist them to remain in their own homes, applying them to a number of housing and care situations. This led the institute to participate in the WHO project for age-friendly cities, piloted in 2007 in 33 locations in 22 countries including Dundalk, using the WHO systems, standards and protocols.

The 2007 research, which was based on focus

groups with older adults and other stakeholders from across the 33 cities, informed a set of age-friendly city checklists which were framed to help cities and communities evaluate their age-friendliness. The result of the research, 'The Global Age-friendly Cities Guide,' also outlined a framework for stimulating local mobilisation efforts for improvement. A fundamental aspect of the approach employed was to include older people as active participants in the process.

The programme was developed at an important juncture in Irish society, with the population beginning to age and the government, at that

The guide identifies eight domains of city and community life that might influence the health and quality of life of older people:

1. OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS;

2. HOUSING;

3. SOCIAL PARTICIPATION;

4. TRANSPORTATION;

5. RESPECT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION;

6. CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT;

7. COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION; AND

8. COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH SERVICES.

time, about to present its most significant policy vision for older people in a quarter of a century.

The study came to the attention of the then Louth County Manager, Conn Murray, who was interested to test its applicability at a county wide level. He was also a member of the Ageing Well Network, a non-governmental network established on the prompting of The Atlantic Philanthropies to contribute to its goal of ‘making Ireland the best place in the world in which to grow old’. Support for the development of an age friendly county was sought from local County Councillors.

Under the leadership of the Local Authority and with funding support provided by Atlantic Philanthropies a pilot age-friendly county programme was developed. A range of public services and voluntary organisations – including leaders in housing, health, policing, transportation, continuing education, social welfare and local government – were brought together as part of the pilot programme.

An official launch and first in a series of consultation sessions was held in Dundalk in November 2008. Participants, as part of the consultation, were encouraged to think of creative ways, across the eight WHO defined age-friendly themes, in which the county could respond to the challenges identified. Informed by consultation the age friendly county strategy, which followed, prioritised

the implementation of actions in Louth to help older people feel safe and stay living for longer in their own homes, have walkable access to public and other essential services and to stay socially connected.

The Ageing Well Network, with support from Atlantic Philanthropies and the endorsement of a number of key local government officials, was tasked with supporting an extension of the programme approach to additional local authority areas.

A common template was agreed which included the establishment of an alliance of relevant stakeholders; facilitation of a county or city wide consultation which was to surface up issues of

“We cannot underestimate what has been achieved over a six or seven year timeline. This is a gold standard programme. There would be few programmes in the world that have enjoyed the same level of success. A phenomenal programme.”

**Jane Barrett,
Secretary General,
International Federation on Ageing**

need and appropriate responses; formation of an older people's council through which local older people can raise issues of importance, identify priority areas of need and inform the decision-making process of the city or county age-friendly initiative; and implementation of a strategy to address the issues identified by older people in the local area.

The eight age friendly domains have been consistently used as a framework and starting point as each city and county develops its age friendly approach. Together they shape what goals local Age Friendly Alliances aim for and what actions they take to enhance the city or county as a place in which to grow old. Each of the eight domains of liveability can influence our quality of life as we age. Walkable streets, for example, encourage a person to stay active and take exercise, which promotes physical activity and health. A good social environment promotes mental health and social participation. Good access to transport makes it easier to participate in community life.

This programme extension—from demonstrator site to a full national rollout – was supported by a small core programme team working initially under the auspices of the Ageing Well Network and subsequently by the Dublin City Council hosted Age Friendly Ireland. More recently, programme oversight has transferred to the formal appointed shared service of local government hosted by Meath County Council.

The programme in Ireland is recognised as being at the forefront of age friendly programme development at a global level with some well-placed commentators recognising it as one of the more strongly positioned programmes.

A number of key figures which have included Brendan Kenny of Dublin City Council, Jackie Maguire of Meath County Council, Conn Murray formerly of Limerick City and County Council and Stephanie O'Keeffe of the HSE, together with others, have continued to provide oversight and direction for the programme as it has evolved from demonstrator site status through to full adoption across the network of 31 city and county councils.

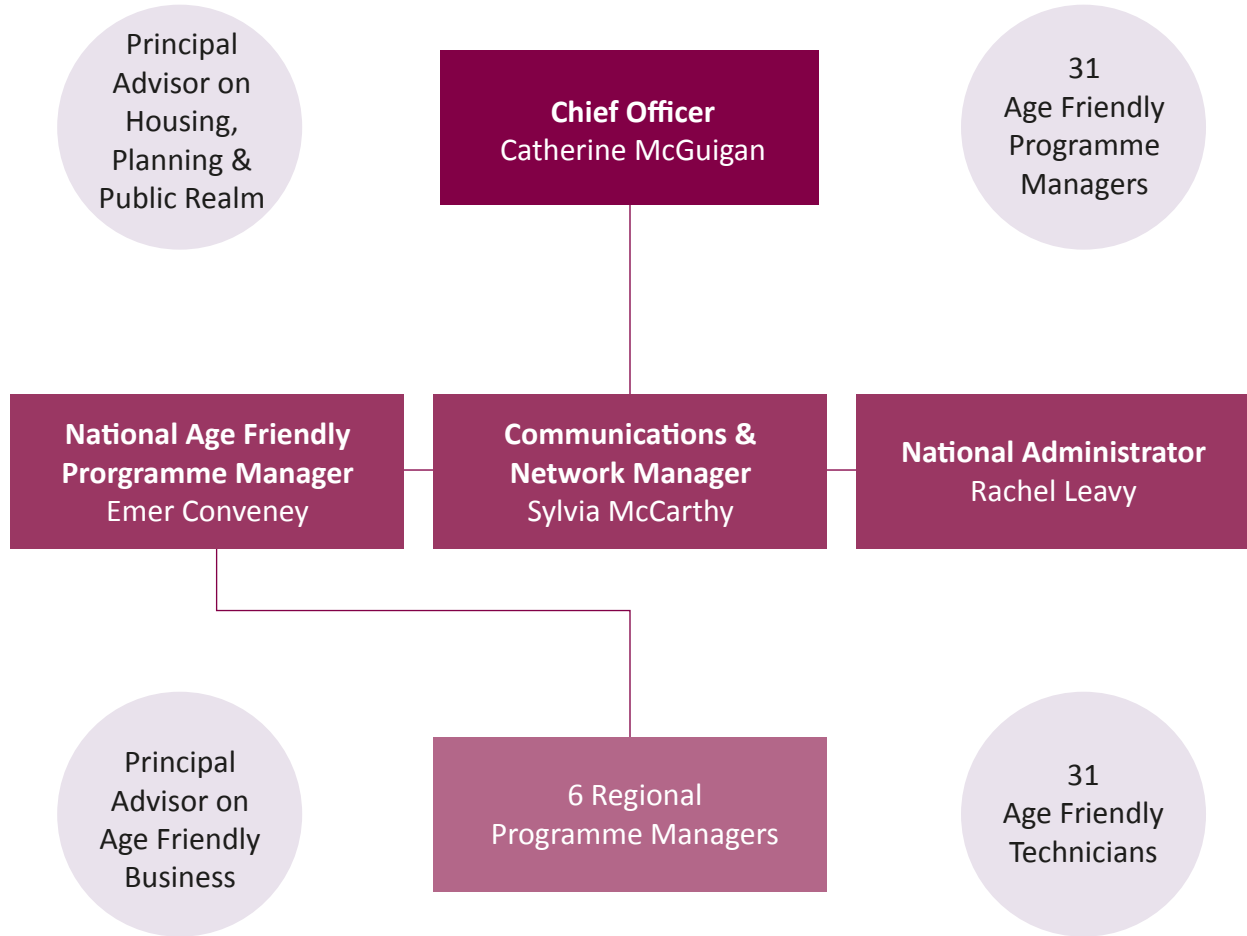
A core programme team, now led by Catherine McGuigan in Meath County Council, continues to provide ongoing leadership and technical support for the now national network of programmes as they work to improve the quality of life of older people throughout Ireland.

“Ireland is seen as one of a small number of star programmes at both local and national level.”

**Alana Officer,
Senior Health Adviser,
World Health Organization**

AGE FRIENDLY IRELAND PROGRAMME

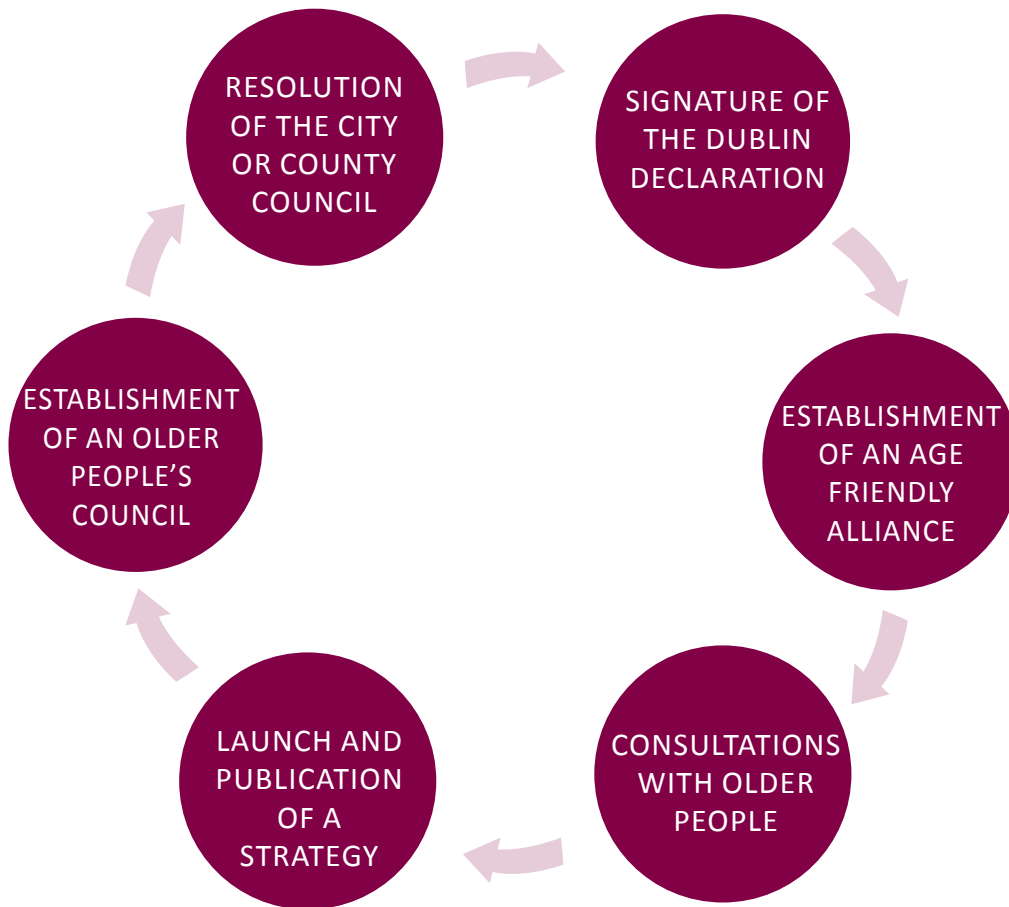
..... SHARED SERVICE TEAM



MEANS OF OPERATION

There is a standard template for the application of the age-friendly concept at city and county level.

The key points in the process are as follows, but many elements often develop in parallel and overlap.



A civic ceremony in Dublin's City Hall in November 2014 marked the full engagement by all of Ireland's 31 authorities with the Declaration. The Taoiseach, on the occasion of the 2014 signing, described the landmark event as "a declaration of Ireland's united commitment to creating an age friendly State."

Various signings of the global Declaration, the official custodian of which is Dublin City Council, have brought the total signatories to more than 120 including a host of international cities such as New York, Mexico, Manchester, Edinburgh and Seoul.

Dublin Declaration on Age Friendly Cities and Communities in Europe (2013)

"The Age Friendly Programme affords older people a unique opportunity to participate in key decision-making processes and have our voices heard – through the establishment, by local authorities of Older Persons Fora or Councils in all areas - in places where they have not been heard before. Most important of all our voices are heard on the Local Authority's Age Friendly Alliance, where we sit not as protagonists, not as lobbyists, but as equal partners with CEO's and decision makers of statutory agencies such as the Local Authority, the HSE, the Education and Training Board, An Garda Síochána and other bodies".

Bob Gilbert, Chairperson of Cavan Older People's Council

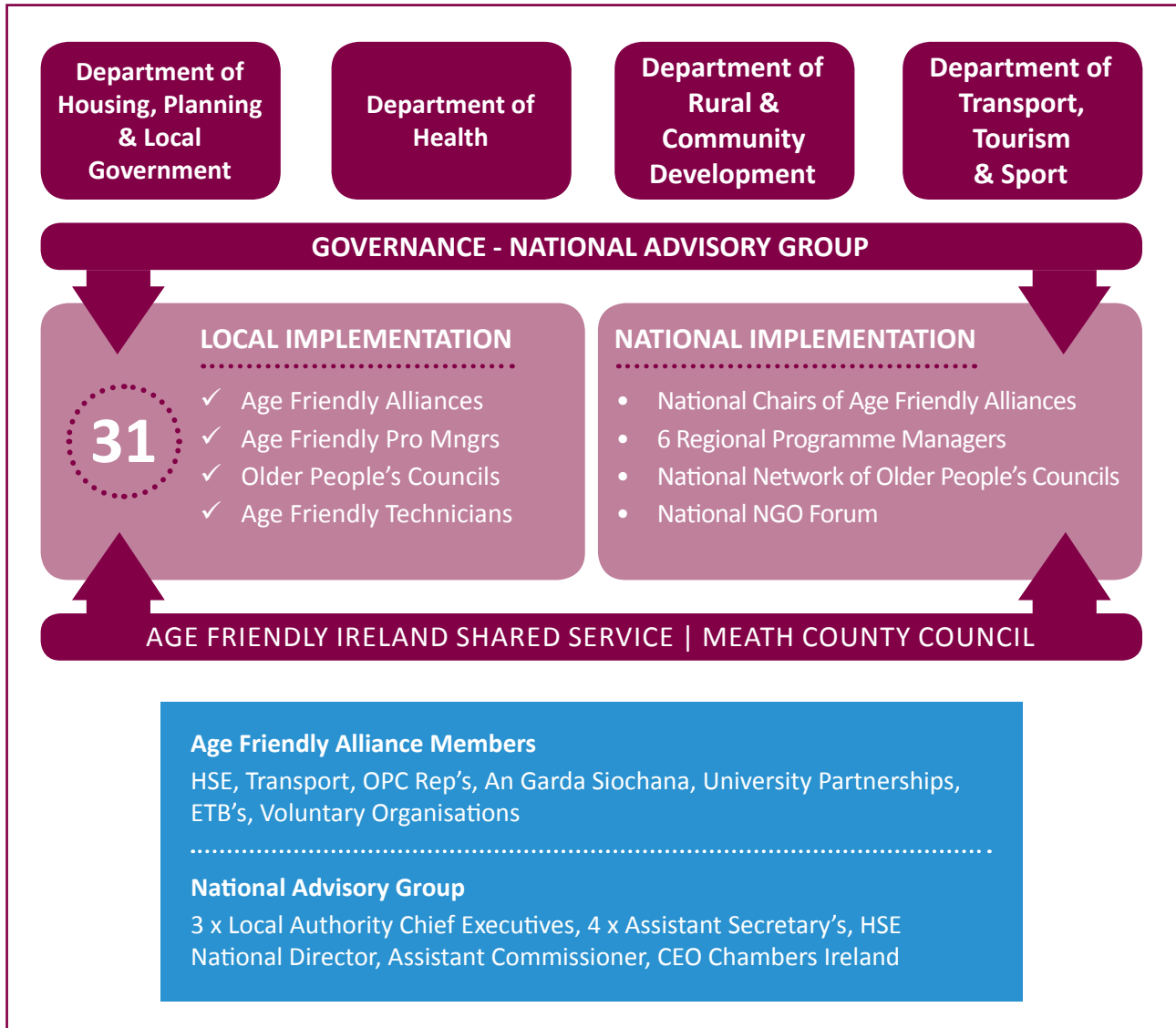
A GLOBAL RESPONSE

THE AGE FRIENDLY PROGRAMME JOURNEY



AGE FRIENDLY IRELAND

..... PROGRAMME STRUCTURE



IRELAND'S AGE FRIENDLY PROGRAMME BY THE NUMBERS

Listening to the voice of older people

25,000+

older participants
in age friendly
programme led
consultations

10,500+

people aged 55+
participated in AFI/
HaPAI structured,
household
-interviews

31

Older Peoples
Councils

31

Age Friendly
City and County
Strategies

1

National network
of Older Peoples
Councils

Many consultative partnerships and collaborations- Chambers Ireland, National Transport Authority, HSE (ICPOP, National Falls and Bone Health, National Ambulance Service, Understand Together) An Garda Síochána, Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, Housing Agency, National Safeguarding Committee, City and County Librarians Association – among others.

Multi-agency engagement

31

local authorities
- signatories
of the Dublin
Declaration on
Age Friendly
Cities and
Communities in
Europe 2013

31

Age Friendly
City and
County
Alliances

1

National
Advisory Group -
comprising senior
representatives
from Government
Departments and
agencies, and
from the local
authority and
business sectors

12

Integrated
Care
Programmes
for Older
People

31

Memorandums
of Understanding
supporting the
National SS Unit
hosted by Meath
County Council

31

Age Friendly
Programmes
affiliated to the
World Health
Organisation
Global Network
of Age Friendly
Cities and
Communities

Some key age friendly programmes

'000's

of age friendly actions set as part of published age friendly strategies

1,200+

participants in age friendly housing and public realm training (elected members, architects, engineers and planners)

600+

Age Friendly practices recorded across 8 WHO domain searchable database of Age Friendly practices

750+

businesses participating nationwide in the Age Friendly Business Recognition Scheme

37+

Age Friendly car parking spaces

31

Age Friendly Programmes with membership of WHO Global Network of Age Friendly Cities & Communities

46

Age Friendly libraries across 31 LA areas

31

Healthy & Positive Ageing Train the Trainer Workshop sessions

31

Information and Communication Train the Trainer Programmes

25+

Age Friendly Towns

12

Med Ex Health and Wellbeing Programmes

4

Age Friendly Hospital Walkability Audits

5

ICPOP Patient experience workshops

1

Age Friendly Airports

1

Age Friendly Hospital

1

joint housing policy statement; Departments of Housing Planning & Local Government and Health

1

Age Friendly shopping centre

CONSIDERING PROGRAMME IMPACT

..... INSIGHTS FROM INDEPENDENT EVALUATION

The 31 Age Friendly programmes are at different stages of evolution - ranging from a small number who have adopted the initiative in more recent years, through to a majority that are fully operational and a small number again that are at advanced or sophisticated stages of implementation.

Government officials, programme experts and other key informants have emphasised through independent evaluation "that age friendly counties first of all delivered a process, especially in the manner in which state services relevant to older people were organised."

Among the main impacts identified by independent evaluation participants were to:¹

"Get statutory bodies sitting around the table together to cooperate over the needs of older people at city and county level, often for the first time, with structured lines of communication between them - and even within the same statutory body;

Create a climate and culture that promoted more integrated services and looked for solutions for problems, taking the place of earlier more confrontational relationships;

¹ 'Review of Age Friendly Counties Programme', for the Ageing Well Network and The Atlantic Philanthropies; Dr. Kathy Walsh and Brian Harvey (2012)

"There was some fabulous work going on in the field of ageing... and some terrific individuals doing, at times, cutting edge work...but (prior to the development of the age friendly programme) a lot of these people were isolated from each other and so much of the work didn't always lead to significant, sustainable change for older people."

**Maurice O'Connell,
Chair of the Age Friendly Cities and
Counties NGO Forum.**

Bring an empowered NGO community to the table, again for the first time; providing access to senior officials for voluntary and community organisations in a collaborative atmosphere in which older people felt that they were heard.

Get older people involved and engaged in the consultations and where relevant in the Older Peoples Fora.

Provided access for representative organisations for older people to the officials in statutory services.”

“Everyone hopes that as they grow older they will be supported to stay in their own home, be listened to and taken seriously, be able to work or volunteer, enjoy a good social life, and have access to good information and healthcare.”

“Neighbourliness, a sense of belonging, feeling safe, feeling valued...these are things that we all want in our lives.”

Mary Cronin, Chair of the National Network of OPC's



AGE FRIENDLY PROGRAMME IMPACT

•••• HIGH LEVEL SNAPSHOT ••••

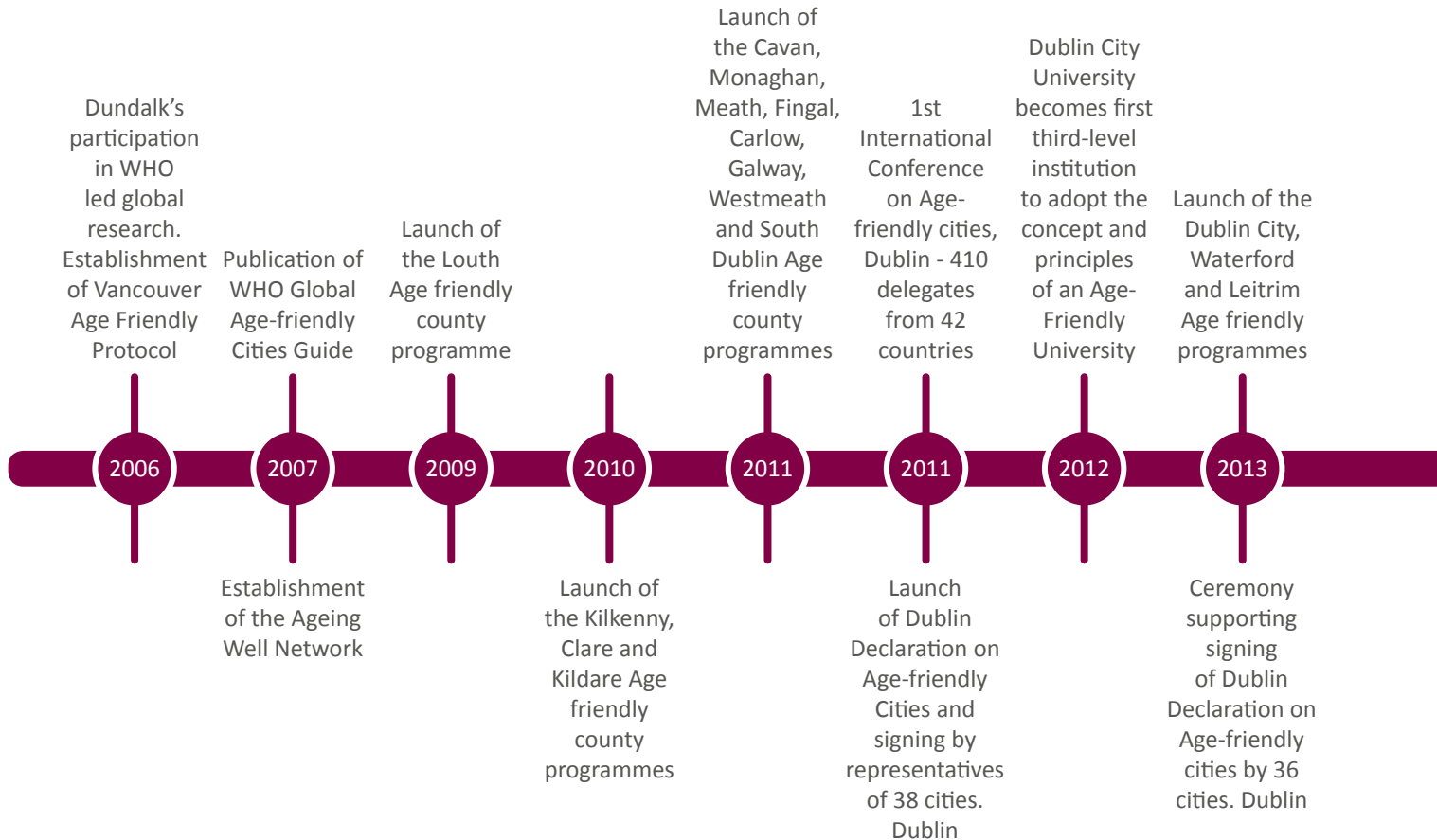
No two age friendly city or county strategies have been exactly the same. Local knowledge, instead, has revealed priorities specific to particular areas. This local voice has supported the development of an extensive range of customised activities and localised solutions. Age Friendly initiatives have included, among many others; the development and provision of;





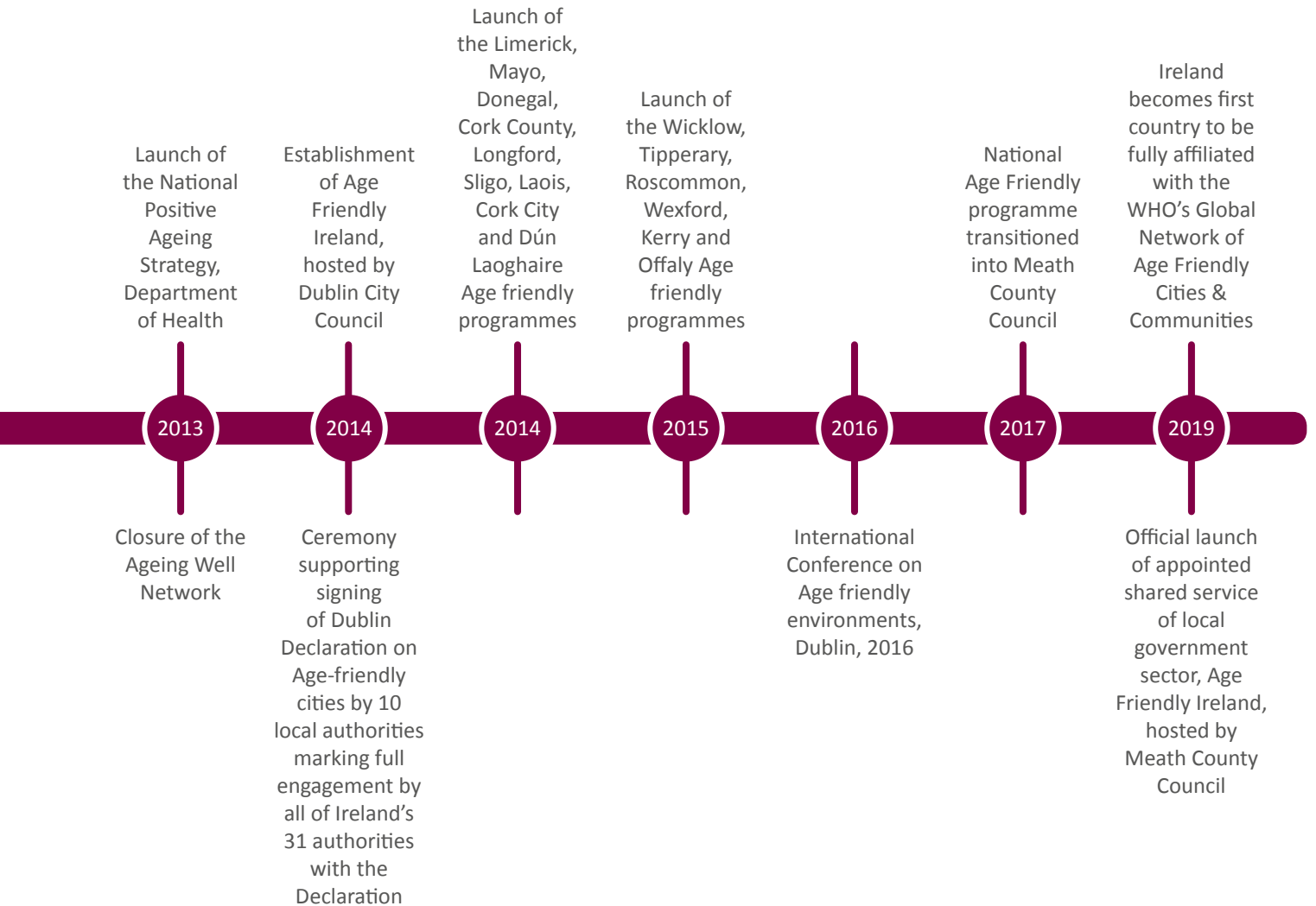
KEY MILESTONES

..... A TIMELINE FOR PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT IN IRELAND



KEY MILESTONES

..... A TIMELINE FOR PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT IN IRELAND



THE 8 WHO AGE FRIENDLY

..... DOMAINS OF LIVEABILITY



The next section of this booklet sets out, on a domain by domain basis, a **selective ‘snapshot’ of key age friendly initiatives** either developed, supported, sustained or scaled up through the Age Friendly Ireland Programme.

Each of the initiatives presented has been implemented in at least one local Age Friendly programme. This snapshot of initiatives is not exhaustive nor have the examples put forward been the sole responsibility of any single member agency - instead, a collaborative, whole of Alliance response has very often been required.

The local strategies produced to date have been structured around the eight thematic areas as identified by the World Health Organization (2007) and subsequently augmented and categorised by the WHO Age Friendly Environments in Europe project (AFEE) 2018.



1



..... OUTDOOR SPACES & BUILDINGS

1. OUTDOOR SPACES AND BUILDINGS

Why it's relevant:

The outside environment and public buildings have a major impact on the independence, mobility and quality of life of older people and affects one's ability to "age in place".

Paying attention to the built environment can make the difference between someone participating in life, and them being isolated at home. Level pavements, places to sit, the removal of trip hazards, good street lighting and public toilets are all vital components to encouraging older people to stay engaged with their local community. Development works must therefore take account of the needs of an ageing population.

"If you design for the young you exclude the old, but if you design for the old you include everyone."

Glenn Millar, Director of Education and Research, Canadian Urban Development Institute.



"The new tone zone has given me a new lease of life...I feel great!"

Older walkability participant

The Age Friendly Programme; surfacing the voice of older people at local level.

Older people have told us, through extensive consultation across Ireland, that they want to:

- Feel safe when out and about and so feel more confident to stay active and to participate in the wider community.
- Enjoy walkable access to public and other essential services, recreation and amenities and so use them more readily.
- Have access to pleasant and clean environments, green spaces, naturally occurring places to rest, age-friendly pavements, safe pedestrian crossing, universal design of buildings and spaces, security, barrier free walkways and paths, and adequate public restrooms.
- Avoid the stress associated with the fear of crime.
- Stay more independent for longer.

“Small scale actions, if sustained, accumulate in impact, effect and reach over time.”

**‘An alternative age-friendly handbook for the social engaged urban practitioner.’
Sophie Handler, 2014.**

“It (The Age Friendly Towns Programme) provides an opportunity for towns to develop a strategy that has actual achievable outputs that don’t always require large financial outlays. It is a chance to make all our lives (for people of all ages) a little bit better.”

**Local Authority Engineer,
Castleblaney, Co. Monaghan.**

What Age Friendly Programmes have done to respond;

Walkability Programmes

Age Friendly Parking Bays

Age Friendly Tone Zones, green-walks, community parks, bowling greens and sensory gardens

Pedestrian Crossing Times

Age friendly guidelines and good practice for the public realm

Planning guidelines and City and County Development Plans

Age Friendly Libraries

Age Friendly Patrols

Age Friendly training on housing and the built environment

“I couldn’t (prior to Age Friendly Town programme development) participate in public life due to poor access...parks, the Gardaí station, many public buildings and the Church.”

Older person consultation





2



..... HOUSING

2. HOUSING

Why it's relevant:

Nearly all of us want to age in place. We want to grow old in a safe, comfortable, secure, affordable, and interesting community. Many of our homes were not, however, built with the needs of older people in mind.

It is possible to age at home even when one's health declines and care needs arise. Doing so is possible if a house is designed or modified for ageing in place and if a community includes housing options for varying life stages and financial circumstances. Age Friendly communities create the opportunities to establish a broad range of housing options which enable older people to stay independent for as long as possible.



Programme; surfacing the voice of older people at local level.

Older people have told us, through extensive consultation across Ireland, that they want to:

- Stay in their homes and communities for as long as possible.
- Grow old in a safe, comfortable, secure, affordable, and interesting community.
- Maintain autonomy, control and independence through living in appropriate housing.
- Maintain and develop their social networks.
- Experience less social isolation.
- Participate in decision-making about their housing environment.



“The ageing of our population represents one of the most significant demographic and societal challenges that Ireland has ever faced. The implications for areas of public policy as diverse as housing, health, urban and rural planning, transport, policing, the workplace and the business environment are considerable. Careful planning is now required to ensure that resources can be used effectively for the whole population in the years ahead. Both my Department and the Department of Health are committed to respond to the preferences of older people by putting in place initiatives, and working with key stakeholders, including Age Friendly Ireland, to provide a systematic response across the continuum of care to enable older people to remain living independently in their homes and communities for longer. We have listened to the voice of older people and heard that this is what they want.”

Damien English, T.D. Minister with special responsibility for Housing and Urban

What Age Friendly Programmes have done to respond;

Alternative age friendly housing models

Care coordination systems

Housing Aids for Older People

Warmer Homes Packages

District registers of isolated older people

Extreme Weather Initiative

Good Morning Call Service

Crime Prevention Ambassadors Programme

Dedicated Garda with Responsibility for Older People

Training & Information Sessions for Gardaí

Age Friendly Housing training programme for architects, planners and engineers

Trusted Tradesmen Schemes

Message in a Bottle Initiative

Showcasing of 'smart house' technologies

Developments such as the Great Northern Haven have demonstrated how we can enhance the quality of life of older people through the provision of an integrated, community-oriented housing model that incorporates innovations in sustainable housing design, smart living technologies and person-centred community and health supports.

**Eugene Cummins Chief Executive,
Roscommon County Council**





3



..... TRANSPORTATION

3. TRANSPORTATION

Why it's relevant:

Good transport links help everyone, whatever their age, to access vital services such as doctors and social and cultural amenities, so that they can be involved in community life, stay independent and keep up social connections. People who depend on others for help with transport tend to prioritise essential outings, such as grocery shopping and medical appointments, and neglect their social and leisure needs.

Older people can experience difficulties in getting around whether it be through availability and frequency of transport, physical barriers or knowing what is available.

"It's all well and good these key services being available in the community but if we (older people) don't know about them or can't get to them they are of little value...Information and transport (therefore) plays a critical role."

Older person consultations



The Age Friendly Programme; surfacing the voice of older people at local level.

Older people have told us, through extensive consultation across Ireland, that they want to:

- Enjoy access to well maintained and accessible public transport that has priority seating for older people which everyone respects.
- Be informed about available transport options, routes, accessibility, prices and schedules in the locality.
- Access specialised transport if and when required.
- Travel as part of a transport system where road users are aware of and respectful of older people.



What Age Friendly Programmes have done to respond;

Health and shop routes together with community car schemes.

Hospital Bus Stops

Door to door volunteer driver programmes

Age Friendly Awareness programmes and age friendly checklists

Community bus schemes

Older people involvement in planning for location of age friendly parking, bus stops, shelters and seating

Age friendly design principles

Easy to access information

Bus Shelter Improvement Schemes

Driver Awareness Campaigns

“Previously (prior to introduction of the Health Route), I would have had to get three buses to the hospital... Now, I can get there (to key hospital appointments) on the one bus...It’s made a big (quality of life related) difference.”

“Often (prior to introduction of the Health Route), I would have had to get a return taxi to and from the hospital...That was the guts of 60 euro. I couldn’t sustain that on a small pension.”

Older person consultations





4



..... SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

4. SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

Why it's relevant:

Social participation is strongly connected to a person's good health and wellbeing throughout life.

Participating in leisure, social, and cultural activities in the community, as well as with the family, allows older people to maintain or establish supportive and caring relationships. It fosters social integration and is the key to staying informed.

Conversely, a lack of such social networks can have very negative impacts in terms of both health and wellbeing. The health risks of poor social integration are understood to be comparable with those of smoking, high blood pressure and obesity. Loneliness and social isolation increase the risk of depression and mental health difficulties, as well as cognitive decline.

In Age Friendly communities older people can participate in the social and cultural life of the communities through a diverse range of affordable, accessible, inclusive events and activities.

"We want to stay active and involved (as we age)...not be side-lined or warehoused. We might just need a little encouragement or the occasional helping hand to be able to do that."

Older person consultations



The Age Friendly Programme; surfacing the voice of older people at local level.

Older people have told us, through extensive consultation across Ireland, that they want to:

- Feel connected to others of all ages.
- Enjoy a culture of multi-generational respect.
- Have the confidence and capacity to maintain social networks and be active in their communities.
- Maintain and improve their physical and mental fitness.
- Enjoy access to a broad range of affordable and inclusive events and activities.



What Age Friendly Programmes have done to respond;

Development of community cafés,
Men's Sheds, older person choirs

Social economy programmes

Age Friendly Library programmes

Outreach and befriending programmes

Cultural Companions

Intergenerational skills
exchange programmes

Social prescribing programmes

Park runs, community walking,
aqua aerobics, swimming and
heathy eating programmes

Coordinated transport services

Drop in Parlors

The 'Move More Stay Active' 12 week physical activity programme for older people ran at the Mansion House, Dublin.

"A great social benefit, meeting people, getting you out and about. It's fantastic! It gives you more energy and you are more flexible. You can go up and down the stairs no problem. You get so much more energy and feel much more positive about yourself."

Participant (84 years of age)

"You forget your aches and pains when you come here. (Just) get out of the house and forget your age!"

Participant (91 years of age)

"It has so many positives and you can see how everyone is benefitting from the exercise...So it's good for the city and (all of us) taking part."

Lord Mayor Nial Ring



5



..... RESPECT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

5. RESPECT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Why it's relevant:

Everyone wants to feel valued. The extent to which older people participate in the social, civic and economic life of the community is also closely linked to their experience of inclusion. Respect and feelings of social inclusion often have an impact on an older person's health and wellbeing and their levels of social, civic and economic participation.

Intergenerational activities are a great way for young and old to learn from one another, recognise what each has to offer and, at the same time, feel good about themselves.

Age Friendly programmes counter ageism and prejudice through promoting age awareness and informing the general public about the rights, needs and potential of the diversity of older people, and highlighting their social, economic and cultural contributions to the community.

"There was a sense that other groups were better connected to the decision makers. While the doors weren't closed at all there was a sense that it was difficult to get access and that older people were less of a priority. The age friendly programme managed to put older people more firmly on the agenda of key decision makers."

Bob Gilbert, chair, Cavan Older Peoples Council



The Age Friendly Programme; surfacing the voice of older people at local level.

Older people have told us, through extensive consultation across Ireland, that they want to:

- Be valued and appreciated.
- Participate in local democracy.
- Experience public, voluntary and private services as respectful and supportive.
- Be depicted positively and without stereotyping.
- Be included in community projects and activities, and recognised for their valuable services and contributions.



What Age Friendly Programmes have done to respond;

Establishing Older People's Council

Consultation with older people

Age friendly business recognition schemes

Ageing with Confidence;

Active Citizenship Courses.

Age friendly awareness training

Age Friendly Ambassadors.

“The city (Kilkenny) has changed (on foot of adoption of the Age Friendly Programme) – particularly the public areas and access to information. I really feel older people have become a real part of the decision and planning process whether it's (something as significant as) the County Development Plan or (something straightforward as) a site for a new seat.”

Nora Webster, former Chair of the Kilkenny Older People's Council





CIVIC PARTICIPATION
AND EMPLOYMENT



6. CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Why it's relevant:

Older people do not stop contributing to their communities on retirement. Many continue in important unpaid and voluntary roles for their families and communities.

Economic circumstances may also require older people to continue in paid work while others would like to continue working and many, in fact, do so. New flexible ways of working will be required to support older people's workforce participation.

An age-friendly community should provide opportunities for people to participate in public life and contribute to their communities, through paid or voluntary work. Evidence shows doing so increases social contact and good health.

The Age Friendly Programme; surfacing the voice of older people at local level.

Older people have told us, through extensive consultation across Ireland, that they want to:

- Continue to contribute their life experience and skills to the positive benefit of their communities.
- Enjoy enhanced access to opportunities for learning, working and social contribution.
- Increase their involvement in the local financial and social economy.



What Age Friendly Programmes have done to respond;

Age friendly senior enterprise programmes and senior mentor panels

Learning Circles;

Career Change and Senior Business Development Programme

The Homeshare

Age Friendly Universities

Age Friendly lifelong learning

Volunteer programmes

Time Banking

“Age Friendly Cities and Counties make economic as well as social sense. The Programmes are playing a pioneering role in supporting the required innovation in key areas such as assisted living, adaptable housing and leisure tourism. At city and county level the Age Friendly Business Recognition Programme is also supporting businesses in their ambitions to provide more age friendly services and products. Practical initiatives such as this can play a key role in reviving our town centres which have suffered greatly in recent years.”

**Ian Talbot, Chief
Executive, Chambers Ireland**





7

COMMUNICATION AND
INFORMATION

7. COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

Why it's relevant:

Staying connected to events and people and having access to timely, practical information is vital for active ageing. Lack of awareness of what is on offer, or how to access it, prevents many older people from accessing useful services or resources. A reliable flow of accessible information about community news, activities and opportunities keeps older people active and involved, and is critical for those who have few formal or informal networks to call on.

Information today is delivered in ways few could have imagined ten and twenty years ago — and many still don't know how to use. As more and more services and information move exclusively online, it is vital to make sure that older people stay connected.

Age-friendly communities recognise that not everyone has a smartphone or Internet access and that information needs to be disseminated through a variety of means.

“It's important that older people don't put their head in the sand through fear (of computers)...Some of us though might just need a little help or encouragement to embrace these technologies...Then a whole new world (of information and possibilities) will be opened up. It's also important that they (service providers) don't put everything in electronic form as that would exclude so many.”

Older person consultations



The Age Friendly Programme; surfacing the voice of older people at local level.

Older people have told us, through extensive consultation across Ireland, that they want to:

- Access information on services, entitlements, opportunities and activities easily, and through a variety of means.
- Make informed decisions and choices about what really matters to them.



What Age Friendly Programmes have done to respond;

Area based Directories of key services

Guide to Age Friendly Communications

Accessible information systems

Age Friendly Offices and Parlors

Database of Age Friendly Services

ACORN Age Friendly Tablet

'Digital Divide' Programme;

W@ve Project;

Age Friendly newspapers columns and radio slots

Age Friendly Consumer Fairs

"I didn't realise half the stuff that was available (community based services and resources) until I saw them in the booklet (Directory of Services). It's also very reassuring to have it (the Directory) there by the phone in case you need it (access to key contacts)."

Ian Talbot, Chief Executive, Chambers Ireland





8



COMMUNITY SUPPORT
AND HEALTH SERVICES



8. COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH SERVICES

Why it's relevant:

Older people want to stay healthy and independent. Quality community-based health services - including preventative screening, mental health services and advice on healthy eating - can keep older people healthy and reduce their use of in-patient and out-patient hospital services. Home support services and, at the end of life, compassionate outreach services, make it possible for older people to stay in their own homes. This domain also addresses issues of residential facilities for people unable to live at home, intergenerational volunteer opportunities, and older adult sensitivity training for emergency service providers.

In Age Friendly Cities and Counties older people can exercise real choice and control, and can access a comprehensive and integrated range of affordable, easily accessible, high quality, age friendly community supports and health services.

“The Age Friendly Programme provides both an opportunity and an infrastructure to bring key actors - City and County Councils, An Garda Síochána, NGO’s and ourselves in the Health Service - together at local level to plan collaboratively, to share resources and to develop more nuanced responses to meet the needs of our older adults. This collective network is set to play an increasingly important role in realising the visions that we have set for ourselves as part of key national policy documents such as Healthy Ireland and the National Positive Ageing Strategy.

Dr. Stephanie O’Keeffe, National Director, Strategic Transformation and Planning, HSE

The Age Friendly Programme; surfacing the voice of older people at local level.

Older people have told us, through extensive consultation across Ireland, that they want:

- Community support and health services that are conveniently located and easily accessible.
- Better preventative services which increase wellbeing and reduce demand for acute care services.
- A more comprehensive range of affordable, age friendly community supports and health services.



“The principle of co-design is very much at the heart of the (age friendly hospital) approach...We wanted to hear directly from older people about their experience of the hospital...what they liked, what they didn't, what changes we could usefully make. We have prioritised changes across the physical environment...and particularly those actions that will make a real difference for the older people who visit the hospital. Many of the changes made have been simple and low cost but most importantly older people asked for them ...These were the things they prioritised.”

Deirdre Dunne, General Manager's Office, St Luke's General Hospital Carlow-Kilkenny

What Age Friendly Programmes have done to respond;

Age friendly hospital and primary care centre programmes

Health routes

Physical activity, healthy eating, training and education programmes

Message in a bottle schemes

End PJ Paralysis' campaign

Geriatric Emergency Medicine Service (GEMS)

Patient passport

Hospital discharge protocols

Hello Neighbour

Fit farmers

Mature Movers Activity Programme

Outdoor Activity Park

GP Referral Scheme

Rapid Access Clinics for Older People



FROM LOCAL PROGRAMME EXPERIENCE TO NATIONAL POLICY INFLUENCE

A number of reports and publications - either developed wholly or supported by Age Friendly Ireland, together with programme associates, through chapter contributions - have provided a unique level of insight across a number of domain areas to better inform policy responses to population ageing at a national level.



POSITIONING OF AGE FRIENDLY PRINCIPLES WITHIN KEY POLICY DOCUMENTS BOTH NATIONALLY AND LOCALLY

Informed by programme experience, and in particular the lived experience of older people as surfaced through the ongoing city and county-based consultation processes, the age friendly programme office has been invited to develop a range of submissions for key policy documents both at national and local levels. Such submissions have reflected on a range of important issues which affect the lives of older people while also proposing solutions to respond to their articulated needs. Policy documents which have formally adopted recognised age friendly principles and commitments include:



LOOKING FORWARD TO THE NEXT 10 YEARS

By 2041, there will be 1.4 million people in Ireland aged 65 and over - three times more than the older population now. This older group will make up 22% of the total population, compared with just 11.6% of the population as recently as 2011 (CSO, 2013). The total population aged 70 and over is set to treble from approximately 359,000 to just over 1 million in 2046. It's a reality that poses challenges to society but also unique opportunities for us all.

Ageing is of course changing. In "The 100-year Life: Living and working in an age of longevity", London Business School professors Lynda Gratton and Andrew Scott emphasise that the education-work-retirement model most consumers have been raised on is changing rapidly. Multiple careers and new education, living and financial planning strategies are needed to create a fulfilling longer life in which intangible assets like family, friends and community will be key. It calls on governments, businesses, consumers and others to help make a longer life more inspiring.

As more of us age further there are a new set of challenges relating to how we age; How can we support people to live well in the community as they age? How can we best expand home

care support arrangements? What are the best ways to care for vulnerable older people?

In Ireland, we want to be prepared for this future. Within this scenario, Age Friendly Ireland's role is more critical than most. As a multi-agency programme, we share the view that continued investment in age-friendly planning and service provision across the range of domain areas will serve us well.

As an appointed shared service, we will continue to support the scale up of effective age friendly approaches, to inform and influence policy and service development at local and national levels and to measure progress against what really matters. Key initiatives that will be scaled up across the country include the Age Friendly Libraries and Age Friendly Business Programmes together with other schemes such as age friendly hospitals and primary care centres, parks, public spaces, airports, sports stadiums, and housing models.

We will, however, need to challenge ourselves in new and different ways.

Although we are proud of the extensive range of programme initiatives now in place

‘age friendly’ does not have to mean lots of projects. Instead, we want to see the successful embedding of age friendly principles into the ways of workings of all our leading service providers. By ‘age-proofing’ planning activities and ensuring that all works and service delivery take account of the ageing population programme partners will help to ensure our policies, infrastructure and key services do not become outdated in the near future and that they are friendly and accessible on many different levels, to all ages and groups.

Data is also set to play an increasingly important role in helping programme partners to improve the quality of our environments, to make them healthier and more sustainable and to help in determining priorities for the future. We want to deepen programme impact and are aware that some age friendly initiatives are representing a real breakthrough for older people. Good data will support us in potentially reducing but, most importantly, prioritising the number and nature of actions for subsequent three- and five-year strategies.



The active involvement of older people in shaping the age friendly agenda will continue to be a pre-condition for age friendly success and not an outcome of it. Whole of government, whole of society working is of course challenging, but the last ten years has shown that it can be done. We want to continue to make a positive difference for the older people of Ireland.

As we prepare our strategy for the coming five years, we want to thank the Age Friendly programme partners for their support and commitment to date. We look forward to working with you into the future.

Age Friendly Ireland



AGE: THE FACTS

<p>BY 2031 there will be 1,146,900 people aged 65+ living in Ireland PEOPLE ARE LIVING LONGER & HEALTHIER LIVES</p>	<p>18% OF THE POPULATION was aged 60 years or older in 2016.</p>	<p>LIFE EXPECTANCY FOR WOMEN AND MEN 83  78 </p>
<p>28% WOMEN AGED 70-74 YEARS have a disability and 73% of females over 84 years have a disability (Census 2016).</p>	<p>156,799 PEOPLE LIVE ALONE that represents 27% of the total population aged 65 years and over (Census 2016)</p>	<p>95% OF MEN & WOMEN AGED 70 rate their health as either very good (19%), good (50%) or fair (26%) (Census 2016)</p>
<p>ESTIMATED 55,000 people live with dementia in Ireland and most people with dementia live at home (63%).</p>	<p>76% AGED 55+ participated in community activities at least once a month</p>	<p>76% aged 65+ are happy to have retired</p>
	<p>46% AGED 70+ participated in community activities at least once a month</p>	<p>15% preferred to remain working part time</p>
	<p>31% OF PEOPLE AGED 55+ reported difficulties accessing public transport</p>	<p>10% preferred to remain working full time</p>
<p>70% AGED 55+ rated their health as 'good' or 'very good'</p>		<p>25% OF PEOPLE AGED 55+ provided care to a child or grandchild on a weekly basis.</p>
<p>16% OF PEOPLE AGED 55-69 volunteer weekly 12% OF PEOPLE AGED 70+ volunteer weekly</p>	<p>30% AGED 55+ rated their health as 'fair', 'bad' or 'very bad'</p>	<p>92% OF PEOPLE AGED 55+ socialised at least once a month. Both men and women socialised regularly in almost equal measure.</p>

AGE FRIENDLY IRELAND'S NATIONAL ADVISORY GROUP



Local government in Ireland has a very clear purpose and a definite direction. Empowering the citizen to participate in the development of their community, both urban and rural, is central to this model. The Age Friendly Ireland programme is proving to be a very effective model for bringing together diverse organisations, service providers and businesses to streamline their work with the interests and needs of older people at their core. Considerable effort and resources have been invested by many of the Age Friendly Programme partners across the last ten years. Ensuring this investment is sustained across the long term will require further engagement on the part of key programme stakeholders across the coming years. As we prepare our strategy for the next five years, we will look forward to working with you to make Ireland a great country in which to grow older.

**Jackie Maguire, Chief Executive,
Meath County Council and Chair, Age Friendly Ireland National Advisory Group.**



The Age Friendly Programme is underpinned by an approach where the plans are developed and agreed locally and where the agencies involved agree to be accountable to each other and to older people at local level. As such it has proved to be successful in achieving its aim of improving the lives of older people. This approach represents local government at its best and is a prime example of how we give effect to the need for integrated services, 'joined up' thinking and planning at local level. The leadership provided by the local authority Chief Executives, independent Chairs and the appointment of experienced Administrative Officers has ensured that Age Friendly Programmes are driven and championed effectively. The national network now provides a means of learning from each other, strengthening what can be done to improve the quality of life for all of us as we age. Through the Age Friendly Programme, we will work together to ensure we meet the challenges that lie ahead in a positive way that will improve the lives of our older citizens in the future.

Pat Dowling, Chief Executive, Clare County Council and Chair of the National Age Friendly Chairs of Alliances.



“Ageing societies present one of the greatest challenges and opportunities facing governments around the world today. The number of people aged 65 and over is now higher than at any time before in history. This remarkable demographic shift is, of course, to be welcomed. The ageing of our population in Ireland offers great opportunities to develop and benefit our society from the experiences and knowledge of older persons. However, ageing can also negatively affect people’s health and wellbeing and present new challenges for society, health services and families.

In response to the changing profile of Irish society, there have been a number of policy and programme related initiatives both nationally and locally. The Age Friendly Ireland programme has a long-standing track record in developing practical and pragmatic solutions – and in bringing to the fore initiatives that make a real difference to the quality of life experienced by older people. The Age Friendly Ireland Strategy continues to be ambitious. We, in the HSE, are fully committed to the kind of collaborative working that is required to improve the health and wellbeing of older people and make Ireland a great place to grow old.”

Dr. Stephanie O’Keeffe, National Director, Strategic Planning & Transformation, Health Service Executive.



The Action Plan for Jobs identified Smart Ageing as a significant sectoral opportunity for economic growth and jobs for Ireland. Ireland is well placed to take advantage of the fast-growing global market for products and services for older people, creating jobs and economic opportunities for Ireland as well as helping to improve the lives and living conditions of older people. We know that older people want to stay in their own homes and communities for as long as possible. Technologies can play a key role in enabling this to happen. The potential role for technologies that remotely monitor and deliver care to older people allowing them to live with greater comfort and safety is considerable. It is important that this potential be explored not just for economic reasons but because of the benefits that they can bring to people as they get older. Age Friendly Ireland is very well placed to support this important work.

Ian Talbot, Chief Executive Chambers Ireland.



Over the last few decades Ireland has changed significantly. We now have a multi-national, cosmopolitan and globalised society with an increasing population. Our population aged 65 years and over is growing by approximately 20,000 each year while our population aged 85 years and over is growing by 4% each year. How we respond to these changes will determine the health and wellbeing outcomes and quality of life of people as they age in Ireland. In Dublin, we are continuing to work hard to make the city a better place in which to grow old. For the city and other communities across Ireland to become truly age-friendly a range of stakeholders must be involved. The Age Friendly Ireland Programme provides a means to bring those partners together to make Ireland a great country in which to grow older.

Brendan Kenny, Deputy Chief Executive, Dublin City Council.



“The National Positive Ageing Strategy (2013) sets out a vision for an age-friendly society and includes four National Goals around participation, health, security, and research to promote positive ageing. The Strategy is a key element of the broader Healthy Ireland framework, which aims to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone living in Ireland.

The Department of Health in partnership with key sectors leads and shapes Ireland’s health and social care system. The successful implementation of our National Strategy must be the responsibility of all sectors of society including government, health service providers, local authorities, businesses, voluntary groups, families and individuals.

Many of the factors that contribute to a good quality of life for older people and to the creation of communities in which ageing can be a positive experience are influenced at local level. The multi-agency Age Friendly programme provides a very supportive infrastructure for positive ageing by bringing together all the key players in local service provision to improve the lives of older people. The establishment of Older People’s Councils in each participating local authority area also gives older people a strong voice to influence local development. Together, the programme provides a valuable and effective opportunity for older people, local agencies and civic society to engage with and shape policy and programme implementation for older people so we can improve the health and wellbeing of all people into the future.”

Dr. Kathleen Mac Lellan, Assistant Secretary, Department of Health.



People are at the heart of vibrant and sustainable communities, whether in rural or urban areas. We are investing in local and community development across the country to empower communities to become more resilient and to meet emerging challenges. The Age Friendly Programme has long demonstrated its capacity to contribute to communities and foster innovation, creativity and wellbeing. Very practical initiatives such as the Age Friendly Towns and Age Friendly Business Recognition Programmes together with the myriad of community bus and car schemes supported by the Age Friendly Ireland programme are contributing significantly to the vibrancy and wellbeing of so many of our local communities – and, importantly, making a big difference to the lives of older people in these communities.”

Bairbre Nic Aongusa, Assistant Secretary, Department of Rural and Community Development.



“Many of us, as we age, want to stay in our own homes and neighbourhoods and to have independence, choice and the ability to maintain friendships and family contacts. But, for some, our general housing stock is not always suitable, due to its layout, size, location or physical condition.

Consultation with older people, facilitated through the Age Friendly Ireland programme, has identified a gap in the provision of housing for older people that allows older people to live independently, but possibly with some level of additional support. The Age Friendly Ireland programme has, over the years, developed an impressive network of demonstrator age friendly housing programmes with varying scales of support services – ranging from homes that have been designed or modified to enable people to live fully independent lives, to various forms of sheltered supported housing with varying scales of support care - all though designed so that older people can age comfortably in their communities they belong to. The challenge, now, is to scale up these proven initiatives in a sustainable way across a broader geographic network.”

Paul Lemass, Assistant Secretary, Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.



A strong transport system sustains economic progress, promotes balanced regional development and contributes to social cohesion. We know that good access to transport makes it easier to participate in community life. Social inclusion is a key element of our approach to transport policy and appropriate provision for older people will be a key component of our transport programmes for the foreseeable future. The Age Friendly Ireland programme has helped to not only create but sustain a number of innovative, older person friendly transport services which have resulted in cost-effective and timely connectivity for everyone. Those age friendly transport services which support older people to undertake essential outings such as grocery shopping and medical appointments are continuing to play a key role in supporting older people to live independently for as long as they wish to.

Kevin Doyle, Principal Officer, Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport.



While An Garda Síochána works to meet the policing needs of all citizens, we also recognise the need to develop targeted strategies to address the particular policing needs of different demographic groups. Although older people are less likely to become victims of crime than younger people, their fear of crime can be higher. The perception of poor personal safety has as much effect on the wellbeing of older people as the experience of crime itself - at times resulting in older people restricting their activities or withdrawing from social life altogether. The Age Friendly Ireland programme ensures that older persons remain high on the agenda of An Garda Síochána. The fact that Chief Superintendents sit on the Age Friendly Alliances ensures that concerns and problems facing the older person are fully considered. An Garda Síochána acknowledges and appreciates the very significant contribution given by older people to their communities through voluntary and other activity. By supporting and sustaining an extensive range of collaborative age friendly programmes across our cities and counties we want to ensure that older members of society feel both safe and valued.

Orla McPartlin, Assistant Commissioner, An Garda Síochána.





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