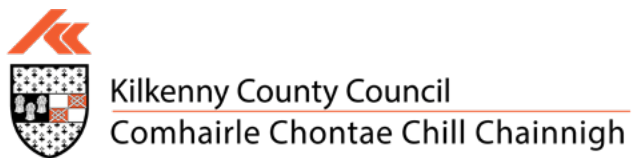




Towards an Age Friendly Train Station

Case Study of MacDonagh Train Station, Kilkenny





Age Friendly Ireland

Age Friendly Ireland is a national shared service hosted by Meath County Council that supports a multi agency Age Friendly Programme in each local authority area. Around the country, the programme supports the development of walkable and accessible public realm projects that support the inclusion and participation of older people. The development of age friendly environments (including outdoor space and buildings) is an essential step in supporting society to prepare for population ageing. The Irish programme is fully affiliated across all administrative areas to the World Health Organization's global programme for age friendly cities and communities.



**WHO Global Network
for Age-friendly Cities
and Communities**

Kilkenny Age Friendly Programme

The Kilkenny Age friendly Programme commenced in 2010 with a series of consultation events with older people. The programme is overseen by a strategic Alliance, a multiagency voluntary partnership that works closely with older people in Kilkenny to ensure that policies and plans reflect their needs. The first Age Friendly County Strategy was launched 2011, making Kilkenny – as an affiliated World Health Organisation member - Ireland's first Age Friendly City. With the commitment of senior decision makers and supported by older people themselves, the Kilkenny Age Friendly Alliance has delivered considerable changes in services and opportunity for older people since 2010, from age friendly seating and open spaces, to memory clinics and more integrated community supports, greater access to information and physical activities. The second age friendly county strategy was published in 2017.



Kilkenny County Council
Comhairle Chontae Chill Chainnigh

Station
Stáisiún

Buses
Busanna



Kilkenny



Ardán
PLATFORM 1

Eolas
INFORMATION

Ticéid
TICKETS

Leithris
TOILETS

FASTRACK

Siopa
SHOP

Ardán
PLATFORM 1 2

! Ní páirteál
neamhdhruaibhe
indéile aghaidh
i bhfeadhán
UNAUTHORISED
PARKING
HEAVY CLIPPING
IN OPERATION



Left to Right: Shane Dowling, Mary Mullally and Michelle Doyle

Contents

Foreword	6
Why Become Age Friendly	8
The Age Friendly Recognition Process	11
Case Study: Development MacDonagh as an Age Friendly Train Station	14
Applying the Four Stage Process	15
Step 1: Engage and Understand	16
Step 2: Plan Strategically	18
Step 3: Act and Implement	20
Step 4: Evaluate and Monitor Progress	24
Acknowledgements	26

Foreword

Iarnród Éireann is delighted to partner with Age Friendly Ireland and Kilkenny County Council to make MacDonagh Station Ireland's First Age Friendly Station. As a transport provider, older people are very important customers to us. They are regular travellers with us and being able to take the train to explore new places and meet family and friends gives older people great independence.

Iarnród Éireann and Kilkenny County Council worked closely to make MacDonagh station Ireland's first Age Friendly Station. A walkability audit of the station took place, and a number of meetings were held to agree an action plan with some improvements to the station agreed to make MacDonagh station more Age Friendly.

There are now two Age Friendly car spaces. There is newly installed tactile paving for customers with a visual impairment from the entrance to the station. There has been two newly installed tactile paving

pedestrian crossing points. Also painting has taken place to highlight steps of entrance to make wayfinding age friendly.

These small changes, I believe will go a great way to make the station more age friendly. I commend all those that have worked to make this happen and look forward to other stations on our network becoming more age friendly



Jim Meade
Chief Executive, Iarnród Éireann



Kilkenny
Rail Station



Station
Buses
Buses

Platform 1

Enter and INFORMATION 2 ↑
Facial TICKETS 3 ↑
Luggage TOILETS 4 ↑
KAYAK 5 ↑
Shop 6 ↑
Arrival PLATFORM 1 2 4

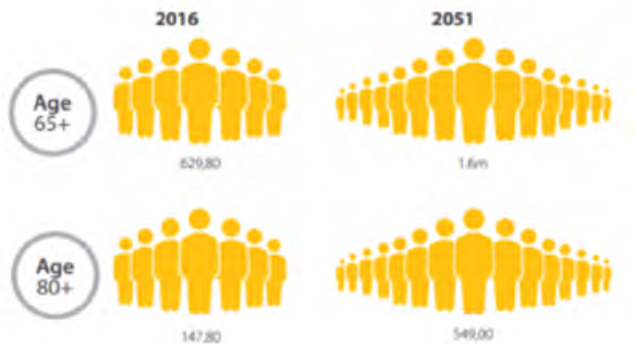
Buses

Station 87



Why become Age Friendly?

All infrastructure, and particularly transport infrastructure, needs to be developed as Age Friendly so that society can cope with the anticipated increase in the number of older people in our population. Ireland is following an international trend of population ageing. People are living longer, the birth rate is declining, and the median age of the population is increasing. The number of older people in the country will in future make up a much greater proportion of the population. By 2051, the number of people aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 1.6 million in Ireland, while the number aged 80 and over will increase to over half a million. This demographic trend presents a challenge for how services are provided. It also presents an opportunity in terms of the potential societal gain from an active older population.



The Central Statistics Office chart (opposite) demonstrates the ageing population, characterised by lower birth rates, fewer children, fewer working age people to support the growing numbers of older people, a higher life expectancy and increased healthy life years. Society of the future needs to be prepared and adapted to ensure that older people can continue to participate in their community, access services and maintain a high quality of life.

Demographic Change – what it means for the transport industry

Every country in the world is experiencing growth in both the size and the proportion of older people in the population. Between 2015 and 2050, the World Health Organisation estimates that the proportion of the world's population over 60 years will nearly double from 12% to 22%.

Many older people experience problems with transport. Data from the Healthy and Positive Ageing [HaPAI] study found that 31% of respondents reported difficulties accessing public transport overall. The impact of transport problems can cause difficulties for older people in terms of socialising, doing essential tasks or getting to health or social care appointments.

In Ireland, national policy documents set out objectives for developing appropriate infrastructure to respond to population ageing. The Programme for Government, agreed in July 2020, outlines out a vision for an Age Friendly Ireland and identifies the various supports that older people will require. It commits to a fundamental change in the nature of transport in Ireland; active travel and use of public transport are priorities in order to address climate action and ensure high quality, accessible

public transport. The programme commits to a 2:1 ratio of expenditure between new public transport infrastructure and new roads over its lifetime. It also commits to an expansion of rail fleet, balanced regional development, safety and capital improvement works, and improved cycling and storage facilities at stations.

Between **2015 and 2050**, the World Health Organisation estimates that the **proportion** of the world's population **over 60 years will nearly double** from **12% to 22%**.

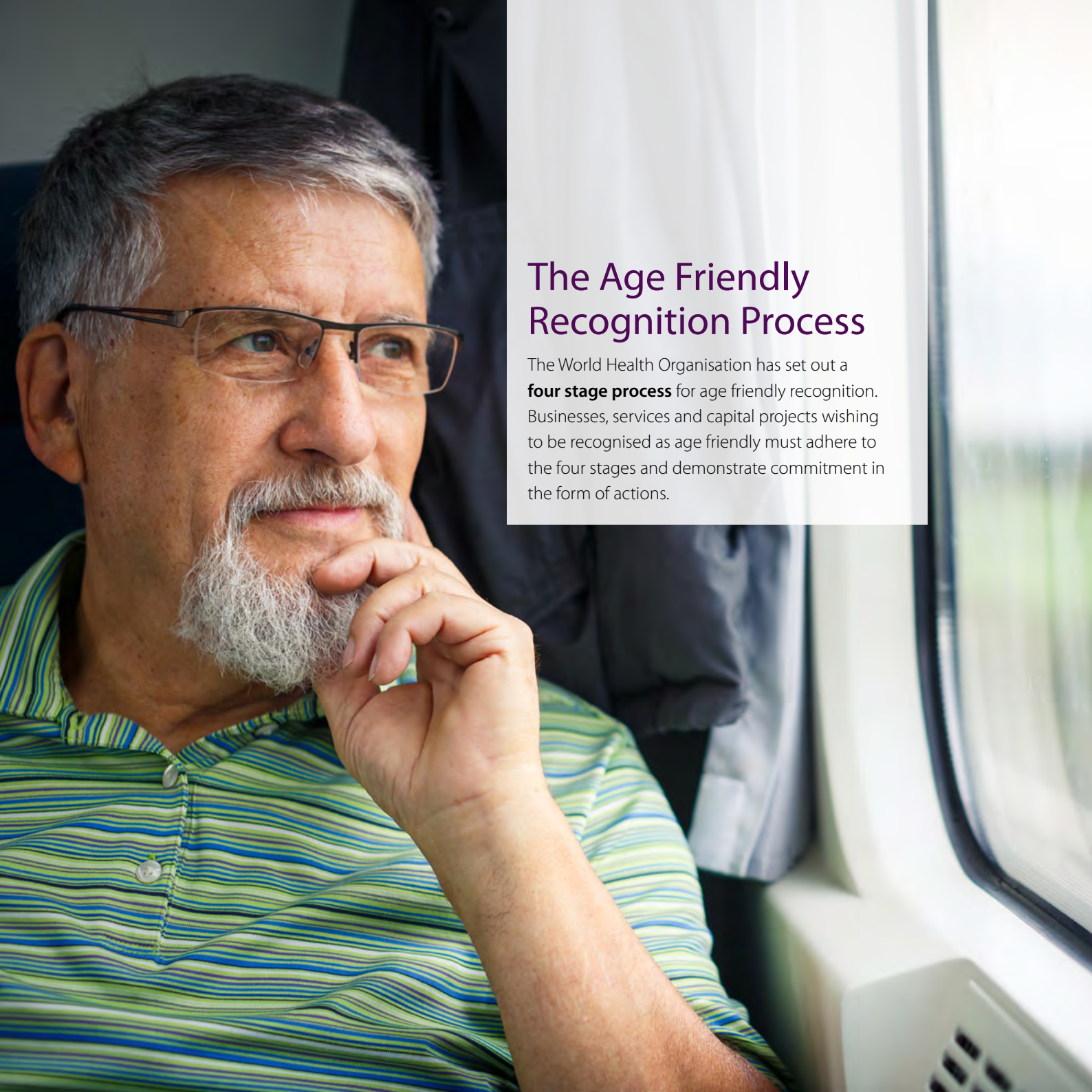
All aspects of transport must be prepared to accommodate an increasing percentage of older customers and as such should include Age friendly considerations to ensure transport is accessible and suitable for use across the lifecourse.

Older customers have diverse needs. Many older people are active and enjoy travel for leisure and social reasons as well as working or volunteering into later life. Other older people have particular conditions that require specific accommodations. Common conditions in older age include hearing loss, vision impairment, osteoarthritis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, back and neck pain, diabetes, depression and dementia. As people age, they are more likely to experience several conditions at the same time. Some medical conditions can result in non-renewal of a driving licence, which makes some older people more reliant on public transport options.

Supportive environments help older people to have a more positive experience of ageing and to continue doing the things they always enjoyed. Older people's confidence in public transport is greatly enhanced by safety features such as good lighting, pedestrian crossings, set down areas, and availability of trained staff to provide assistance.

Buildings that are easy to navigate and walk around provide a more pleasant transit experience for the older person. Public transport facilitates social contact and therefore reduces the risk of loneliness and isolation. Transport facilitates economic and civic participation and supports older people to continue contributing to their communities in later life, reducing the risk of poverty and contributing to social capital.





The Age Friendly Recognition Process

The World Health Organisation has set out a **four stage process** for age friendly recognition. Businesses, services and capital projects wishing to be recognised as age friendly must adhere to the four stages and demonstrate commitment in the form of actions.



Marion Acreman, (left) Centre Manager, MacDonagh Junction Shopping Centre with Alison McGrath (right) Community Section, Kilkenny County Council

STEP ONE Engage and Understand

- ▶ Set up a local steering or working group
- ▶ Perform participatory age-friendly assessments
- ▶ Conduct a baseline assessment with a healthy ageing profile
- ▶ Present and disseminate the assessment
- ▶ Gain political commitment

STEP TWO Plan Strategically

- ▶ Unite partners behind a common vision
- ▶ Analyse strengths and weaknesses and define priorities
- ▶ Develop a comprehensive strategy, defining overall goals and time frame
- ▶ Define objectives and get approval
- ▶ Define responsibilities



STEP THREE

Act and implement

- ▶ Design an operational plan
- ▶ Consult on the action plan and involve older people at all stages
- ▶ Secure support and resources
- ▶ Scale up successful action

STEP 4

Evaluate and monitor progress

- ▶ Create partnerships with universities and research institutions
- ▶ Monitor processes continually
- ▶ Undertake outcome and impact evaluation
- ▶ Sustain and improve action informed by evidence
- ▶ Learn from successful action in national and international networks

Case Study: Developing MacDonagh as an Age Friendly Train Station

In Ireland, the local government shared service Age Friendly Ireland is the custodian of age friendly recognition.

As part of its strategic work in developing the city as Age Friendly, Kilkenny County Council identified that its busiest rail station, MacDonagh, should pursue age friendly recognition.

MacDonagh train station serves the city of Kilkenny in County Kilkenny, along the Dublin to Waterford Route. The station is a major transport hub, connecting visitors with Kilkenny City, a renowned tourist destination with a Norman heritage. Kilkenny Castle and Gardens is one of its flagship features,

and the city also boasts the annual Kilkenny Arts Festival and Cat Laughs comedy festival among many other attractions.

The station was given the name MacDonagh train station in 1966 in commemoration of Thomas MacDonagh, one of the leaders of the 1916 rising who taught in St Kieran's College in Kilkenny City in his early career. The adjacent MacDonagh Junction shopping centre – the largest in the south east region - is also named after the revolutionary hero.

This case study on MacDonagh is also carried out in the context of the National Sustainable Mobility policy which sets out to progressively make public transport systems more accessible for people with disabilities, people with reduced mobility and older people, using an integrated universal design approach. The policy applies an equality focus to the planning, design and operation of sustainable mobility projects to address issues such as safety, access, reliability and comfort.



Applying the four stage process



Step1 Engage and Understand

Stage one is the 'Engage and Understand' phase which involved establishing a strategic working group with relevant senior management commitment. The first meeting of the Age Friendly Train Station working group took place on 10 November 2021.

A walkability audit survey and checklist was developed with reference to the World Health Organisation's Guidelines for Age Friendly Environments and the National Transport Authority's Universal Design Walkability Audit Tool.

A walkability audit was carried out at MacDonagh train station in February 2022, to assess accessibility and user experience. The route started at the new bus shelter outside the station, crossing the road, following the footpath up the hill and on to the train station carpark and station house. There were 11 participants in all, aged between 26-64 years. Participants included two people who used wheelchairs, a person with visual impairment and two carers. Due to Covid 19, numbers were limited to allow social distancing.





Figure 1 Participants on the Age Friendly Walkability Audit in MacDonagh Junction Train Station

The walkability audit identified that the train station already had many age Friendly features such as:

- ▶ An efficient layout that minimises travel distances
- ▶ A bus stop near the station
- ▶ Drop off/pick up points close to the entrance
- ▶ Toilet facilities that are easily located
- ▶ Age Friendly seating along platforms and at ticket/waiting area
- ▶ Adequate space for mobility devices
- ▶ No issues identified with driver behaviour in the area
- ▶ Accessible toilet on site Tactile warning strips on platforms
- ▶ Positive comments on lighting and safety in the area
- ▶ Audio announcements of train arrivals and departures
- ▶ Pricing and payment information is available in all formats
- ▶ Changes or delays in services are communicated in a timely manner
- ▶ Safety instructions are easy to locate
- ▶ The station desk is staffed to provide support to passengers
- ▶ Shop available in the station for refreshments



Step 2 Plan Strategically

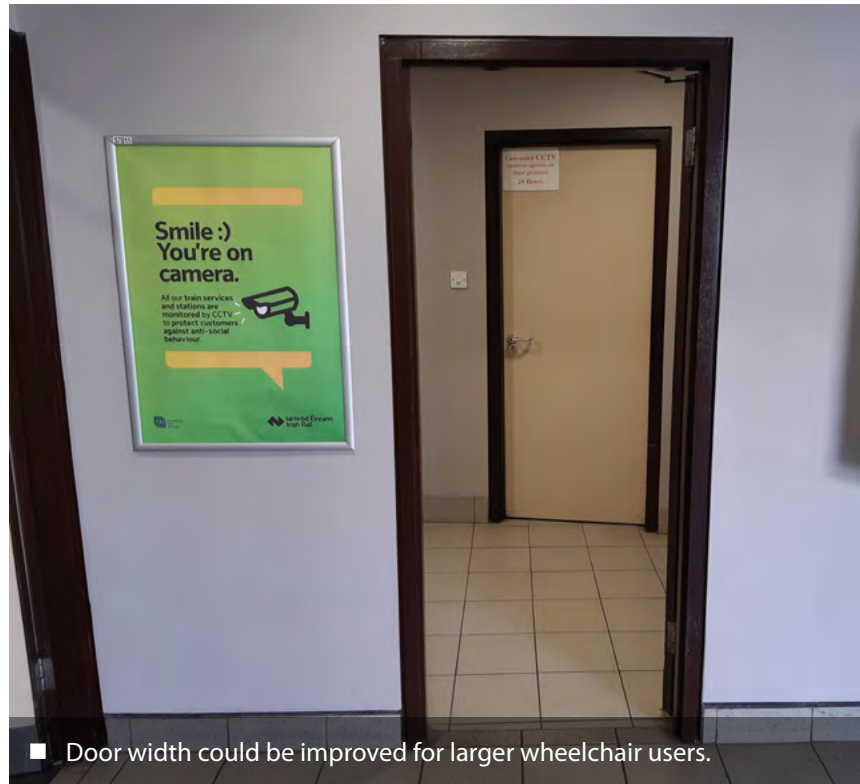
The walkability audit identified some areas for improvement. An action plan was developed outlining the following steps to be undertaken:

Footpaths and External Areas

- ▶ Address issues with footpaths to ensure continuous access route
- ▶ Footpath audit to be carried out to assess level access
- ▶ Dropped kerbs to be installed
- ▶ Salting of footpaths in winter as part of station maintenance programme
- ▶ Provision of pedestrian crossing and yellow box beside car space
- ▶ Maintenance of overgrown hedges along footpath
- ▶ Inspection by a traffic signal contractor to review audibility of cues
- ▶ Signage to be updated in 2023 – involvement from Disability Access group in the design.
- ▶ Installation of two age friendly car parking spaces

Within the building

- ▶ Wayfinding signage required at platforms, in the station, shopping centre, in the car park and general directions to the city centre
- ▶ Signage for accessibility aid to be provided
- ▶ Pictorial signage for toilets
- ▶ Consideration of widening door to accessible toilet
- ▶ Maintenance to check on alarm cord in accessible toilet
- ▶ Safety decals to be installed on glass doors
- ▶ Re-organisation of information boards and removal of clutter
- ▶ Accessible ramp to be put in place from Goods shed side to the train station.
- ▶ Signage to be provided by Irish Rail at the station.
- ▶ McDonagh to update signage once ramp is in place.
- ▶ Colour contrast / painting
- ▶ Training in 'Just a Minute' JAM cards for staff
- ▶ New internal seating



Step 3

Act and Implement

Step 3 in the process was to implement the action plan. The following actions have been implemented in MacDonagh train station as part of the commitment to make the train station more Age Friendly:

- ▶ Yellow box provided at the car park space
- ▶ Pedestrian crossing and alterations to the kerb provided and completed
- ▶ Installed tactile paving for customers with visual impairment from the entrance to the station
- ▶ Two newly installed tactile paving pedestrian crossing points
- ▶ Painting to highlight steps to entrance to make wayfinding age friendly
- ▶ Overgrown hedges along the footpath were cut back and will be maintained
- ▶ Safety decals on glass doors
- ▶ Accessible ramp from shopping centre to the train station
- ▶ Disability spaces upgraded
- ▶ Installation of two Age Friendly Car Parking Spaces
- ▶ JAM (Just a Minute) cards to be used in the station and training to be given to staff
- ▶ Walls painted in calming tones (not white). The colour from the floor coming up the walls.





► Accessible parking booths



► Tactile Pavement for customers to identify steps.



► Two newly installed tactile paving pedestrian crossing points



► Installation of two Age Friendly Car Parking Spaces



■ Safety decals on glass doors



■ Disability spaces upgraded

Step 4 Evaluate and Monitor Progress

The final stage in the WHO four step process is to evaluate and monitor the work. Through the Age Friendly Alliance, Kilkenny County Council and partners will review the age friendly train station initiative periodically and promote it widely to a national audience.



Protruding hedging on the footpath at the bottom of the hill an issue for wheelchair users, baby's in buggies and young children

Hedging pruned back and tidy to not obstruct the footpath at the bottom of the hill.



Considerations for Age Friendly Train Stations

Other transport hubs such as bus stations, train stations, tram lines, airports and ports may wish to replicate the process used in MacDonagh Junction to consider how their facility and service can be made more Age Friendly.

Key considerations for age friendly transport infrastructure include:

- ▶ Accessible route into and out of the building
- ▶ Accessible facilities including ticketing, information points, toilets, seating areas and luggage store
- ▶ Information provision in a variety of accessible formats
- ▶ Regular consultation with older people and people with disabilities
- ▶ Age Friendly training for staff
- ▶ Timetables, websites and safety/emergency information should be accessible to all
- ▶ Specific information available on how to get assistance for people with disabilities
- ▶ Easy to move around in - movement within buildings including changing levels and interface with trains
- ▶ Clear signage and information
- ▶ Car parking facilities, including a drop off zone
- ▶ Lighting and security
- ▶ Accessible fleet
- ▶ Communication of Age Friendly improvements
- ▶ Specific response planned for passengers with disabilities in the event of disruptions and emergencies

Acknowledgements

Age Friendly Ireland wishes to acknowledge the many stakeholders who collaborated to develop MacDonagh Station as the first Age Friendly Train Station in Ireland which has informed this guidance document for other train stations throughout the country.

Particular thanks to Acting Chief Executive of Kilkenny County Council Sean McKeown and former Chief Executive Colette Byrne for leading the process to develop this critical piece of the county's infrastructure as Age Friendly.

Irish Rail supported the vision and delivered on the physical upgrade works that were needed to achieve Age Friendly Status for the station.

The Kilkenny Age Friendly Alliance members had identified transportation as a key domain of focus in their 2017-2021 Age Friendly Strategy, with commitments to develop a comprehensive city transport system with connectivity of services for older people. Kilkenny Older People's Council is a partner in delivering the county strategy and its members provide support for many of the actions.

The process of developing the guidelines was facilitated by Kilkenny Age Friendly Programme Manager Annette Fitzpatrick and the South East Regional Age Friendly Programme Manager Alice Corbett.

We are grateful to the walkability audit participants including An Garda Síochána and other participants who provided a service-user perspective to the process. This work helped to identify the access features and safety enhancements needed.

Special thanks to members of the Strategic Oversight group which included Irish Rail, Kilkenny County Council, the National Transport Authority, Kilkenny Chamber of Commerce (represented by MacDonagh Junction Shopping Centre), the Department of Transport and Age Friendly Ireland.

Members of the Strategic Oversight Group

Name		Organisation
Colette Byrne	Former Chief Executive	Kilkenny County Council
Catherine McGuigan	Chief Officer	Age Friendly Ireland
John Reville	Passenger Services Manager North & East	Iarnród Éireann
Emmet Cotter	District Manager	Iarnród Éireann
Marion Acreman	Centre Manager	MacDonagh Junction Shopping Centre
Ian Gardner	Area Engineer	Kilkenny County Council
Tim Gaston	Director of Public Transport services	National Transport Authority
Naomi Rooney	Transport Accessibility Manager	National Transport Authority
Faye Carroll	Public Transport Corporate and Services Division	Department of Transport
Kevin Doyle	Public Transport Corporate and Services Division	Department of Transport
Emer Coveney	National Age Friendly Programme Manager	Age Friendly Ireland
Akriti Brady	Public Transport Corporate and Services Division	Department of Transport
Annette Fitzpatrick	Age Friendly Programme Manager	Kilkenny County Council
Alice Corbett	South East Regional Programme Manager	Age Friendly Ireland

Planning Team

Emer Coveney, National Programme Manager, *Age Friendly Ireland*

Adrienne McCann, Research Manager, Maynooth University, *Age Friendly Ireland*

Alice Corbett, South East Regional Programme Manager, *Age Friendly Ireland*

Annette Fitzpatrick, Age Friendly Programme Manager, *Kilkenny County Council*

Participants in the Walkability Audit Attendance list

Name	Representation
Tom Kennedy	Participant
Ethna Mullen	Participant
Debbie Burke	Participant
Eve Sinnott	Participant
Aidan Brennan	Participant
Andrew Wall	Kilkenny County Council
John Furlong,	Iarnród Éireann
T J Renihan	Iarnród Éireann
Gerard Lynch	Iarnród Éireann
Marion Acreman	MacDonagh Junction Shopping Centre
Garda Shane Creed	An Garda Síochána
Alice Corbett	South East Regional Programme Manager, Age Friendly Ireland
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Age Friendly Ireland

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**WHO Global Network
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comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council



Cumann Lucht Bainistíochta Contae agus Cathrach
County and City Management Association