



National Updates

Merry Christmas from Age Friendly Ireland!

A message from Catherine McGuigan, Chief Officer, Age Friendly Ireland

2022 has been another successful year for the Age Friendly Shared Service. After a break of three years, it was fabulous to host our annual Older Peoples Council Convention in County Meath and our annual Awards Ceremony in County Clare. Gradually after the tough years of the pandemic we have returned to meeting each other again physically with the aid of online and hybrid gatherings to support productivity and make efficient use of our time.



This year we had a series of launches including the fabulous World's First Age Friendly Stadium in Croke Park Stadium, our First Age Friendly Airports in Ireland West Airport Knock and Shannon Airport, our First Age Friendly Tourist Destination at 'Beyond the Trees Avondale' in Co. Wicklow, our First Age Friendly Train Station in MacDonagh Station in Kilkenny, and our First Age Friendly Primary Care Centre in Athy in Co. Kildare. We also welcomed 27 Age Friendly Ambassadors to the age friendly family – busy and hardworking people who will use their profiles to support and champion our work across the country. The Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme successfully facilitated older people to remain living independently with access to essential services resulting in a major milestone with its funding approval for national scale up in 2023.

Programme Managers across the 31 local programme areas continue to deliver trojan work in collaboration with their local Older Peoples Councils and Age Friendly Alliances, producing meaningful outcomes for older people across Ireland. The Age Friendly Technical Advisors are actively progressing the Governments *Housing for All's* objective of accelerating of Age Friendly Housing and Public Realm developments across the country.

This year our six Regional Programme Managers became a permanent component of the shared service providing that essential connection between the local programmes and national shared service office

whilst progressing their individual thematic work plans. Thus enabling the delivery of the Age Friendly Library Training Programme, Age Friendly Housing & Public Realm Training, developing methodologies for Age Friendly firsts, assistive technology advances, aligning to the climate action agenda, supporting our international partners and supporting the national Age Friendly Business Programme and many others. These positive steps forward contributing to *Programme for Government's* vision of an Age Friendly Ireland.

Fundamental to this is listening to the diverse voice of older people, and co designing solutions, so my sincere thanks to our Older Peoples Councils who continuously support the programme. It is impossible to capture all the milestones achieved this year however I know that our weekly newsletter has been a rich source of information on all the age friendly activity so I urge you all to reflect on these to review the years work.

Thank you each and every one of you who continue to advance the Age Friendly agenda in Ireland. Wishing you and your families a very Happy Christmas and our best wishes for the New Year

Catherine

A message from Kitty Hughes, Chairperson of National Network of Older People's Councils

Since this time last year, we have slowly emerged back into society, having meetings and gatherings at local and national level. The first Age Friendly gathering was in Trim back in May. The excitement of really seeing and greeting old friends put a new spring in our steps, and gave new hope for the future.



We were comfortable in being together, debating and discussing our concerns and offering solutions. Christmas is a bit like that; it's a time for family gatherings, family traditions and lasting memories. It's so comfortable and familiar, the candle in the window, the crib and the carols.

It's a time, too, to give thanks to all who work to improve the quality of life for older people especially those feeling the weight of their years. In this regard we are blessed with our inspirational staff at Age Friendly Ireland HQ in Navan who have motivated Government Ministers, global corporations, local authorities and national organisations to be Age Friendly in their interaction with older people.

Thank you sincerely to Chief Officer Catherine McGuigan and all the marvellous staff for their innovative leadership as we strive to make this a better place in which to grow old. As we count our blessings as the year draws to a close you are all certainly at the top of the list and on behalf of all OPC members I wish you and all those you hold dear a very Happy Christmas.






Laura Ingalls Wilder once said 'remember we are better throughout the year for having, in spirit, become a child again at Christmas time'. But don't over indulge. Santa is making a list! This letter was delivered recently to his office. Dear Santa, Before I explain -how much do you know already??

Nollaig Shona, Happy Christmas to all and here's to many more Age Friendly plans and innovations coming to fruition in 2023.

Kitty Hughes, Chairperson of the National Network of Older People's Council

Age Friendly Ireland: A Year in Review 2022

Age Friendly Launches (1st's) and International Webinars

-  Age Friendly Stadium
-  Age Friendly Airport
-  Age Friendly Tourist Destination
-  Age Friendly Train Station
-  Age Friendly Primary Care Centre
-  8 International Webinars
-  Health & Wellbeing Resources



This year was another busy year for Age Friendly Ireland, from launches of the first Age Friendly Stadium, Age Friendly Airports, Age Friendly Train Stations, Age Friendly Tourist Destinations and Age Friendly Primary Care Centre, with suits of guidelines to help support these achievements.



- Hosting our first ever International Webinar Series, 'A Spotlight in Age Friendly Ireland Policy to Practice', you can view our 8 webinars on our YouTube channel in case you missed them click [HERE](#)



- We grew our Age Friendly Business Programme throughout the country, offering local and national training sessions for all businesses.

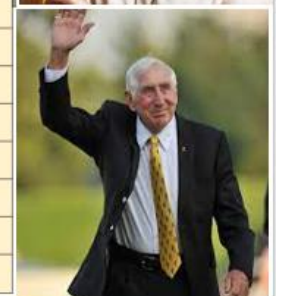


- We launched our Age Friendly Ambassadors back in March, a representative for each county who will help spread the word of all things Age Friendly.



Age Friendly Ambassadors

COUNTY	AMBASSADOR	COUNTY	AMBASSADOR	COUNTY	AMBASSADOR
Carlow	Faith Amond	Kerry	Francis Brennan	Monaghan	Seamus McDermot
Cavan	Bob Gilbert	Kildare	Ted Walsh	Offaly	Michael Dignam
Clare	Mike Hanrahan	Kilkenny	Nickey Brennan	Roscommon	Paddy Joe Burke
Cork	John Mullins	Laois	Anna May McHugh	Sligo	Sandy Kelly
DLR	Ronnie Delaney	Limerick	Celia Holman Lee	South Dublin	Mary Kennedy - TBC
Donegal	Moya Brennan	Longford	Declan Nearney	Waterford	Pat McEvoy
Dublin City	Geraldine Plunkett	Louth	Gavin Duffy	Westmeath	Patricia Gibney - TBC
Fingal	Jim Glennon	Mayo	Sr. Maureen Lally	Wexford	Tony Dempsey
Galway	Keith Finnegan	Meath	Sean Boylan	Wicklow	Senator Pat Casey



- This year saw the return of our National Older People’s Council Convention which was hosted this year by Meath County Council and took place in the beautiful Knightsbrook Hotel, Trim, Co. Meath, back in May. The two-day event showcased wonderful speakers, workshops and presentations.



- In October we also saw the return of our Age Friendly Recognition and Achievement Awards which showcase age friendly initiatives from around the country that are contributing to making Ireland a great place in which to grow old. The event was presented by Age Friendly Ireland, a shared service function of Local Government in Meath County Council and was hosted and sponsored by Clare County Council.



- 18 months into phase one of the Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme, we are seeing many positive outcomes for older people participating in the programme. By the end of December 2022, the programme has seen our local coordinators carry out 2,500 home visits and providing 4,950 support actions in the 4 main domains of Housing, Health, Community and Technology Assistive Devices. The programme is achieving its main ambitions of assisting our population of older people to remain living independently in their own homes or a home more suited to their needs and within their communities for as long as possible.



Thank you to all our collaborators and partners for the continued support for the programme and Merry Christmas to all of our participants of the Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme.

Healthy Age Friendly Homes

This week we would like to introduce you to Ann Moran who is the Healthy Age Friendly Homes Coordinator for County Westmeath.

As a coordinator, I visit older people in their own homes with a friend or relative present if they wish. Following a thorough assessment, a number of actions are identified in order to support the older person in their home, which is communicated to them as they progress. Referrals are received from many sources including the HSE, voluntary and community sectors, etc. I constantly promote awareness of the program to professional and nonprofessional groups, which has received very positive feedback in Westmeath to date. The job is hugely enjoyable particularly when actions are achieved no matter how large or small because the program is about making older people's lives safer and healthier within their home. It's a pleasure to work with the older people and local council in Westmeath.



Anne recently attended the Westmeath Launch of the Sláintecare Healthy Communities in St Kierans Community Centre, Athlone. Healthy Communities is a new cross-government initiative to deliver increased health and wellbeing services to 19 community areas across Ireland. The programme has been delivered in partnership with the HSE, local authorities, local communities, statutory, voluntary and community groups. Athlone has been identified as one of the 19 communities across the country. The Healthy Communities in Athlone will be a partnership to coordinate interventions that address the social determinants of health at a local level with community engagement.

Picture above is Ann Moran Healthy Age Friendly Homes coordinator, and *Frank Feighan* Minister of State with responsibility for Public Health, Well Being and National Drugs Strategy who were present on the day of the launch.

If you know of someone who would benefit from a referral or indeed if you would like to make a self-referral, please do not hesitate to contact me I would love to hear from you. I am also available to facilitate information sessions to groups who would like more information on the programme. I can be contacted on ann.moran@meathcoco.ie and **085-8622845**.

If you would like more information on the Healthy Age Friendly Programme you can visit <https://agefriendlyireland.ie/category/healthy-age-friendly-homes-programme/introduction/> or phone our national office at **046 909 7417**

Age Friendly Research

AN INVITATION TO TAKE PART IN RESEARCH ON OLDER LGBTQI+ PEOPLE'S INTERGENERATIONAL FRIENDSHIPS

What is the research about

Researchers in UCD and Trinity College Dublin are conducting research with older LGBTQI+ people in Ireland who have, or have had, friendships with LGBTQI+ people who are older or younger than them. This research is about the ways that LGBTQI+ people experience intergenerational friendships with other LGBTQI+ people in Ireland. It explores how and why LGBTQI+ people develop friendships with LGBTQI+ people significantly older or younger than them, and how these friendships impact their sense of belonging and community.

We would like to talk with you face-to-face or online

If you :

- Are 55 years of age or older
- Live in Ireland
- Have/had an intergenerational LGBTQI+ friendship (with someone not related to you who is 12/15 years or older or younger than you) for at least one year.

What taking part means

Taking part involves speaking with a researcher in complete confidence for approximately one hour, in person, online or over the phone - you choose what suits you best. If you are interested in taking part or would like more information, please contact:

Dr. Ernesto Vasquez del Aguila, either by Email: ernesto.vasquezdelaguila@ucd.ie or Phone: 01 716 8255 or WhatsApp 087 1843344 .

Dr. Catherine Elliott O'Dare by email elliott@tcd.ie or phone 01 8962058.

Theresa Schilling by email theresa.schilling@ucdconnect.ie or WhatsApp it's 089 220 8291.



Fuel Poverty in the Midlands Region: Older Person's Perspectives



Are you aged over 55 and live in the Midlands region?
Have your voice heard on fuel poverty and implications for older people here:

<https://maynoothuniversity.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/fuel-poverty-midlands>

Maynooth University and Age Friendly Ireland are undertaking a study on **fuel poverty** in the Midlands to identify the extent of fuel poverty, how many older people are affected and how those most at risk can be better supported.

For further information contact: Adrienne.Mccann@mu.ie



National Age Friendly Ireland Programme
A Shared Service Function of Local
Government





Kildare Older Person’s Council members and Naas Men’s Shed attended the Innovation Value Institute (IVI), at Maynooth University, over the course of 3 weeks in November to pilot test the new software developed in the framework of “Responsible AI for Person Empowerment on Health and Wellbeing – RIPE” project. The RIPE software is designed to help people better understand their symptoms and diseases, by providing them with health information that is relevant, of good quality, and easily understood using Artificial Intelligence. The RIPE software has been developed by Dr Marco Alfano, of IVI, in collaboration with some international universities.

During the three weeks of pilot testing, Dr. Alfano presented the RIPE software and some use cases, and Dr Adrienne McCann, Research Manager with MU and Age Friendly Ireland, facilitated the discussion and interaction with the participants. The pilot was part of a larger body of work, trying to make research opportunities more accessible to older people in the Kildare Region. Special thanks to Louise Edmonds, Age Friendly Ireland Regional Manager and Carmel Cashin, Kildare Age Friendly Programme Manager, who were key in coordinating the pilot and identifying participants to take part. Louise was also on hand to present certificates to participants on completion.



The final day of the pilot consisted of a focus group, ran by Dr. McCann, to gather feedback on the project. Professor Brian Donnellan, Vice President for Research, Maynooth University congratulated all for taking part.

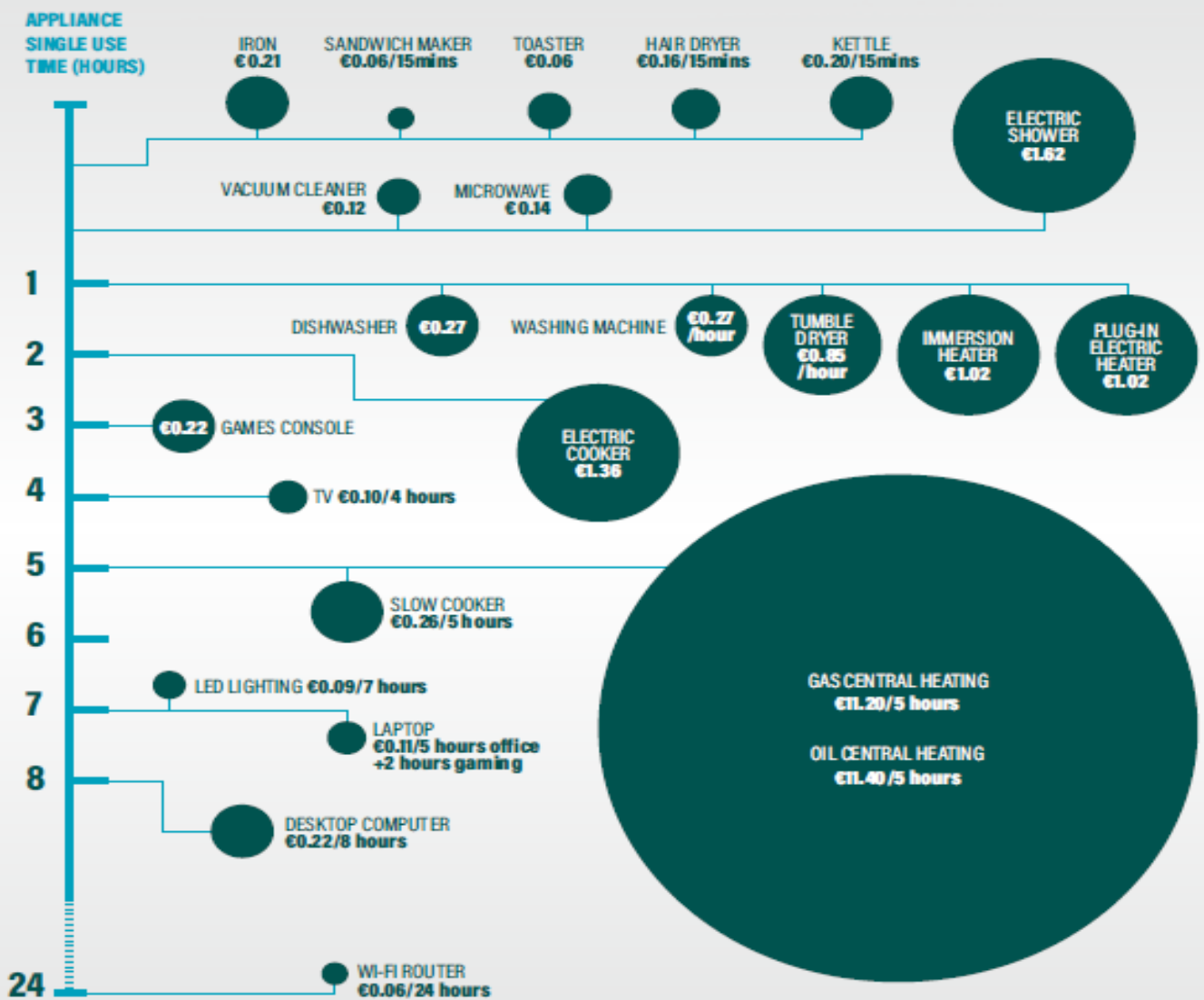


Just in Case you Missed it last Week – Stay Warm and Winter Ready

The government are asking people, where safe and possible to do so, to turn their thermostat down and consider when they use larger appliances.

Know your appliances

This useful graph shows you which appliances use the most energy in your home: the bigger the circle, the more energy the appliance uses. Reducing how long you use them for can help to cut your bills. But be sure to only reduce your use when it's safe to do so, and stay warm and well this winter. More information on the calculations below can be found at gov.ie/ReduceYourUse



The Government of Ireland are aware that there are people we need to ensure stay warm and well this winter. That is why we are partnering with CRU, MABS, ALONE and SEAI, and have published a 'Stay Warm and Well' [Booklet](#) with details and advice for everyone.

Through Budget '23, Government are already introducing a range of supports to lessen the financial impact on families, households and businesses.

There are a range of organisations ready to help you stay warm and well this winter.

[CRU provides protection and supports for energy customers](#)

[MABS provides support and advice to manage money and bills](#)

[ALONE offers supports to enable older people to live at home](#)

[SEAI can help you to be more energy efficient in your home](#)

[The government is helping businesses manage costs](#)

[Government supports to help manage the cost of living](#)

Energy Poverty Action Plan

Announcement of a new plan to help deal with energy poverty, with a new Government fund to be created. The Energy Poverty Action Plan

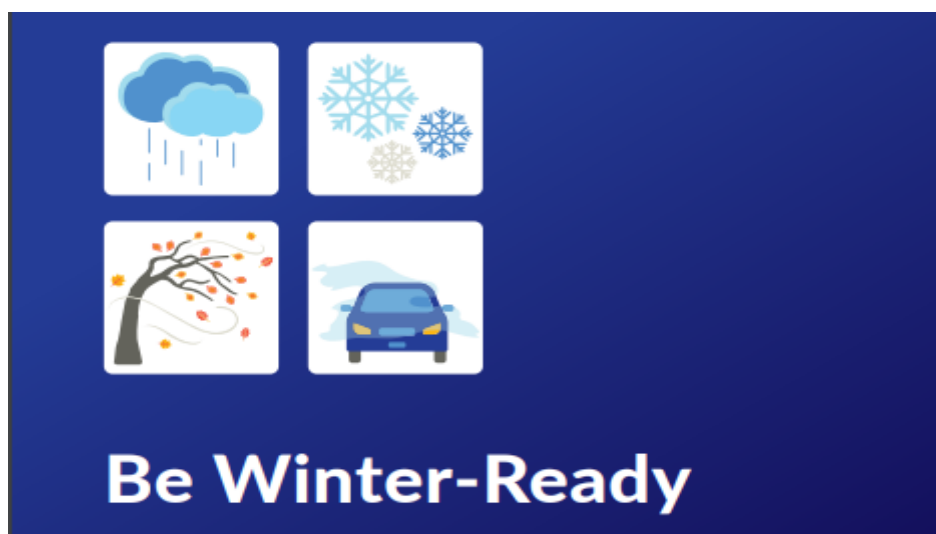
- the plan is the creation of a €10 million hardship fund
- the fund will be made available over the winter months and into early next year
- aimed to bolster existing hardship funds which are run by individual electricity and gas companies
- the fund is mainly used to support people who use pay-as-you-go (PAYG) gas and electricity meters
- people who receive the Fuel Allowance, Working Family Payment, One-Parent Family Payment, Domiciliary Care Allowance, Carers Allowance or are on Job Seekers Allowance for more than six months will be included.

For more details please click on the articles below:

<https://www.thejournal.ie/energy-poverty-plan-cabinet-5944479-Dec2022/#:~:text=The%20plan%20includes%20a%20%E2%82%AC,fund%20for%20vulnerable%20energy%20customers.&text=ENVIRONMENT%20MINISTER%20EAMON%20Ryan%20has,over%20the%20next%20two%20years.>

<https://www.bordgaisenergy.ie/home/help/what-is-the-energy-support-fund>

<https://www.electricireland.ie/news/article/customer-hardship-fund-support>



The 'Be Winter-Ready' campaign informs the public of what is being done in relation to winter preparations and where they can source valuable information that can assist them through a difficult

period. The main message is simple: Be Prepared, Stay Safe and know where to find help should you need it

<https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/aa78b9-be-winter-ready/?referrer=>

<https://www.garda.ie/en/about-us/our-departments/office-of-corporate-communications/news-media/be-winter-ready-2022.html>

You can download these booklets from the websites above, or you can contact your local library, Garda Station or Local Authority office to send you out a hard copy.

Keep Well and Warm HSE Booklet



Cold weather can be a problem for anyone, especially older people, children, people with a disability and those with long-term illness. This booklet brings together all the information and support available to householders who may experience difficulties keeping well and warm during winter.

Download the booklet here:

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/olderpeople/wellandwarm.pdf>

Age Action Keeping Warm this Winter



With many of us worrying about rising fuel costs and cold winters, OFTEC, the organisation that supports and upholds standards in the oil heating and cooking industry, has teamed up with Age Action Ireland to bring you all the information and advice you'll need to keep warm this winter – and get the most for your money on oil.

To download a copy of this booklet, click here:

https://www.ageaction.ie/sites/default/files/attachments/keeping_warm_this_winter_leaflet_2.pdf

Your Voice



We've heard about so much good work going on all around the country, please let us know what's happening in your area so we can share those innovative ideas with everyone.

Please **email us** your news to us at agefriendlyireland@meathcoco.ie before 1pm Thursday for inclusion in our weekly newsletter.

Don't forget we are on **social media** so why not follow us for all the up to date information and live updates on all things Age Friendly happening around the country 😊

Twitter: [@agefriendlyirl](https://twitter.com/agefriendlyirl)

Facebook: [Age Friendly Ireland](https://www.facebook.com/agefriendlyireland)

Useful Contacts and Info

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

Or Email: agefriendlyireland@meathcoco.ie

Twitter: [@agefriendlyirl](https://twitter.com/agefriendlyirl)

Facebook: [Age Friendly Ireland](https://www.facebook.com/agefriendlyireland)

Website: www.agefriendlyireland.ie / www.agefriendlyhomes.ie

HSE Advice Line: Call save 1850 24 1850

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