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Foreword



Leitrim is a county, which can boast world class natural attributes, with its mountains, lakes and waterways offering an outstanding natural environment and quality of life for its population. It has many social attributes to match its natural assets. It has a strong cultural heritage as well as diverse and active communities where, thankfully, significant numbers of local people still give their time voluntarily to improve the quality of life for themselves, their families and their neighbours. This commitment to strive to make things better is a social asset that we have tried to harness in developing this initiative and strategy. Put simply, we are trying to make Leitrim an even better place to live, so that it continues to be a county, which caters for the needs of all of its people, whatever their age. In particular, we are trying to ensure that older people are recognised as the valuable resource that they are. We are trying to support them in a practical way to ensure that their voices matter, that they are heard, particularly in relation to decisions about the services and developments that directly affect them, and that they will have ever greater opportunities to participate fully in the lives of their communities.

That is why I am delighted to present the Leitrim Age Friendly County Strategy to you on behalf of the County Leitrim Age Friendly Alliance. Formally established and launched in 2012, the Alliance is made up of senior people in public sector and other agencies, older people's representatives and other supporting organisations such as the Age Friendly Ireland. In developing an Age Friendly County Strategy for Leitrim it is our hope that the Initiative will increase the participation of older people in the social, economic and cultural life of Leitrim for everyone's benefit, improve the health and well being of older people in the county and show how services and supports for older people can be made more responsive, caring, professional and accessible through imaginative and cost effective multi-agency partnerships. Producing the strategy represents a significant step for everyone involved with the Initiative because it commits all of the partners to delivering on specific actions within a set timeframe.

These actions are additional to existing services and by using existing resources and working collaboratively it is envisaged that significant added value can be achieved, as long as existing levels of funding are maintained. In adapting this approach we are trying to provide a coherent and creative response to some critical demographic challenges facing the county. The 2011 census revealed that 15% of the population were aged over 65 and 33% of people in Leitrim were aged 50 or over. The census also showed that the national combined dependency ratio had increased from 45.8 in 2006 to 49.3 in 2011, and that County Leitrim has the highest dependency in the State at 57.3. Additionally it showed that Leitrim has the highest proportion nationally of persons aged 65 and over living alone.

A more than twofold increase in the number of people aged 65 and over living in Ireland, is projected by 2041. As a county, we want to be prepared for these changes. We see it as an opportunity to build more inclusive communities, where the participation of older people is encouraged and underpinned by responsive and integrated service delivery. Being an Age Friendly County will mean that Leitrim will have accessible buildings and public realm, that its services support the full participation of older people in every aspect of social and communal life, that there is a positive attitude to ageing and that older people are valued for the potential contribution that they can make to their communities.

In producing this strategy, the partners are setting out their clear commitment to enhancing their effectiveness in meeting the needs and demands of older people. However, the strategy needs to be set against a wider context within the county. While aspiring for improvement and greater effectiveness in their service delivery, the partners are also mindful and acknowledge all of the excellent work carried out by a wide range of organisations that have and are continuing to deliver a range of benefits for older people. We look forward to that work continuing.

There are many obvious complementarities between what is already in place and what is planned through the delivery of this strategy. We are hopeful that by covering the eight themes of the World Health Organisation's programme and by having a strong inter-agency focus, that we can raise the bar in our collective efforts to create a county that is fully inclusive and where the participation and contribution of all of its people is recognised and valued. It is envisaged that the delivery of the strategy would create opportunities for further synergies and partnership working. Alliance members firmly hope that further partners would come on board through involvement in the Alliance itself, in its working groups or in support of efforts to achieve the targets that are outlined in the strategy.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the work of all of the Alliance Partners and thank them for their effort and ongoing commitment. In particular, I would like to thank the staff members of the agencies who served on the Executive Committee for their hard work and commitment during the consultation and strategy development processes. I also wish to thank the older people, their advocates and support organisations, who took part in all aspects of the consultations that informed the development of the strategy, particularly the members of the twenty two Active Age groups and the Older People's Council. Their work and commitment has been central to what has been done so far and going forward they will ensure that we deliver on our aspirations to ensure that real improvements are made and that real benefits are delivered.

Frank Curran
County Manager

Introduction and Background



This is the first Age Friendly Strategy for County Leitrim. It is a strategy that gives commitments to improving key areas of infrastructure, services, information, and our overall social response to older people's issues in Leitrim.

The strategy has been developed by the County Leitrim Age Friendly Alliance in consultation and co-operation with older people in County Leitrim. The Alliance was formally established and launched in 2012. It is made up of senior personnel in public sector and other agencies, older people's representatives and other organisations that promote a positive approach to ageing. Its members include:

- Leitrim County Council (County Manager)
- Leitrim County Council, Community, Cultural and Enterprise Development Strategic Policy Committee (Chair)
- Health Service Executive (Sligo Leitrim Area Manager)
- An Garda Síochána (Chief Superintendent for Sligo Leitrim Division)
- Mayo Sligo Leitrim Education Training Board (Chief Executive Officer)
- Leitrim County Enterprise Board (Chief Executive Officer) ¹
- Irish Farmers Association (Regional Representative)
- Leitrim Development Company (Chief Executive Officer)
- National University of Ireland Galway (Professor of Gerontology)
- Leitrim Older People's Council (Chair and Vice Chair)
- Leitrim Citizens Information Service (Development Manager)
- Age Friendly Ireland (Age Friendly Regional Programme Manager)

¹ Negotiations are at an advanced stage to set up Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) in each county. These will be part of the Local Authority and will replace the County Enterprise Boards.

Each of the Alliance members has given commitments in this strategy that will significantly help to improve the quality of life of older people over the coming years. An Age Friendly county has been described by Age Friendly Ireland as a county that recognises the great diversity among older people and promotes their inclusion in all areas of community life. It is a county that respects their decisions and lifestyle choices and anticipates and responds to their needs and preferences.

Our ambition to be Age Friendly means that Leitrim will:

- Become one of the best places to grow old in;
- Have easily accessible public buildings, shops and services;
- Incorporate older people's views into significant decisions being made about the county;
- Promote a positive attitude to ageing and address stereotypes about older people;
- Create opportunities for older people to engage with their county socially, as employees and as volunteers.

This is a far-reaching strategy with 23 new cross-cutting actions that will be delivered by more than 50 organisations over the three year period. Many of the actions will have a very tangible impact on the county, while others, such as those relating to awareness-raising work, will be more subtly felt.

Background and Consultation Process

Prior to the establishment of the Leitrim Age Friendly Alliance, twenty-two Active Age groups operated in the county, organised into two networks in North and South Leitrim. These organisations offer opportunities for older people in the county to organise collectively, to deliver wideranging programmes of activities and to advocate on behalf of their members. Their members have been powerful advocates of the 'Age Friendly' message and the importance of the older person's voice in local developments. Both networks and all of the groups are supported by Leitrim Development Company and the HSE. The Active Age groups have provided valuable guidance, information and resource to the Alliance, particularly in the consultative stage of the strategy preparation process.

The research and consultation process included the following elements:

- Reference to the learning from previous key exercises such as An Saol Maith
- Structured discussions with 180 older people and their advocates
- A baseline questionnaire of 200 older people
- Focus groups with LGBT, Aras Brid, Ballinaglera Social Day Centre, the Christian Minorities Network, Travellers, Intercultural Group and Kinlough Active Age group
- One to one interviews with Alliance members to elicit Agency responses to the findings of and issues raised through the consultation process

As a result of this robust approach, a documented list of the issues faced by older people in the county now exists along with the creative suggestions for resolving these issues, which older people have provided. Interestingly the issues, themes and services that were identified as particular assets and strengths are also the areas in which participants would like to see further investment and enhancement of existing provision. The vibrancy and key role of Active Age groups was highlighted, as were Home Help and Day Centre provision and Rural Transport provision.



All of the issues highlighted in the consultation process and the suggestions of the older people regarding how these issues could be addressed were considered by the appropriate Alliance partner during the one to one interviews and Alliance follow up, and the Actions contained in the following section were developed by the Alliance partners in response to these. Because of the robustness of the process and the richness of the data, we are confident that this strategy is firmly evidence based.

Why are we adopting an Age Friendly Strategy?

Statistics, both nationally and globally, tell us that populations are ageing as people are living longer, healthier lives. Globally, older people represent a rapidly increasing percentage of the population and people are living much longer. For the first time in the world's history there will be more people over the age of 60 than under the age of 5 by 2045. In Ireland the number of people aged 65 and over is projected to rise from approximately 700,000 to 1.89 million by 2041. The Department of Health notes that by the year 2021, the number of older people living in the State is expected to increase by 55 per cent. In Leitrim, the 2011 Census revealed that 15 per cent of the population were aged 65 or over and that 33 per cent were aged 50 or over. In the context of these figures, it is timely to consider a strategy for meeting the changing needs of the population in Leitrim as we grow older and to ensure that a multiagency approach leads to the best use of the available resources in these economically challenging times.

The World Health Organisation has been carrying out important work in this area through its 'Age Friendly Cities' programme. This programme is part of an international effort to address environmental and social factors that contribute to active and healthy ageing. The programme helps cities and communities to become more supportive of older people by addressing their needs across eight themes:

- Outdoor Space and Buildings
- Transport
- Housing
- Social Participation

- Respect and Social Inclusion
- Civic Participation and Employment
- Communication
- Community Support and Health Services.

In Leitrim we recognise the challenges that lie ahead, that the age profile of the population is growing year on year and that this places a greater demand on a range of services. The expectations of the people who are living longer are rising too and rightly so. People want to live independent fulfilling lives. They expect to participate fully in the life of the community. We choose to see the changing social reality as an opportunity to build a more inclusive society. Older people are a resource for their communities and their inclusion will enrich the quality of community life.

Age Friendly work is taking place in many parts of Ireland. Nationally, the Age Friendly Cities and Counties Programme is being supported by the Age Friendly Ireland. Regionally, Leitrim is linking with and learning from the experience of counties like Louth, which has been a pioneer nationally of much innovative and good practice. It has also benefitted from links with Meath, Fingal and with neighbouring counties, Cavan and Monaghan.

National Policy Context

There are various policy documents of relevance to this area of work. Key among them is the National Positive Ageing Strategy which was published by the Department of Health in 2013. The Strategy will provide the blueprint for planning for an ageing population in Ireland into the future.

Another key policy document is the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion (2007-2016) 'Building an Inclusive Society', which is structured around a lifecycle framework with older people as a core category and which contains high level goals regarding community care and income support.



A further pertinent policy document is the National Carers Strategy (2012). Numerous other health related policies are also relevant, among them the National Policy on Elder Abuse arising from the Report of the Working Group on Elder Abuse, Protecting Our Future (2002) and the 2009 review of that report, the Nursing Home Support Scheme and Fair Deal introduced in the Nursing Home Support Scheme Act 2009, and the standards, regulation and inspection of nursing homes introduced in the Health Act 2007.

Outcomes Based Planning

The County Leitrim Age Friendly Alliance's focus is to ensure that this strategy brings tangible and measurable improvements for older people. The targets that have been set and the actions that will be undertaken have been developed by using an outcomes-based planning approach based on the framework developed by the Ageing Well Network, which was the original initiator of the Age Friendly Towns and Counties Programme, which in turn has led to the development of Age Friendly Ireland.

The starting point for this approach is the change that we aim to bring about. This approach focuses on the goal that we are hoping to achieve and then we work back from there to identify the actions, which will best help us to achieve the results that we seek. By beginning the planning process by focusing on broad outcomes, it quickly became clear that no single agency could bring about these outcomes, but that progress would require various agencies to contribute and work collaboratively in a creative way to improve the lives of older people. This approach therefore challenges the 'silo' approach to planning which limits agencies to focusing solely on what they see as their core roles and responsibilities rather than appreciating how they can contribute in a broader holistic way to the achievement of a range of outcomes.

The Alliance has introduced a further refinement to this approach by seeking to identify cross-cutting themes and issues and actions that facilitate an inter-agency approach, which enables the agencies to add value to each other's efforts. Rather than re-state the range of measures that each agency undertakes to meet the needs of older people, the strategy concentrates on identifying innovation and creative and cost effective inter-agency actions and approaches to meeting the needs and facilitating the participation of older people.

The methodology adopted by the Alliance places the needs of older adults right at the core of the planning process and ensures that their views, opinions and experiences have shaped the strategy. This approach will also allow the Alliance to measure its progress by reviewing whether the actions are bringing about the intended outcomes. In this way it will be able to demonstrate progress in implementing its action plan - to show that it is 'making a difference' - by tracking the achievement of these indicators over the lifetime of the strategy. This is an increasingly important consideration as resources have become scarcer and there is a more pressing need to account for their effective use.

Outcomes for older people in this context will mean that they:

1. Are valued as individuals for their unique life experiences and have meaningful opportunities to shape and enhance the communities in which they live;
2. Have opportunities for civic, social and economic participation and life-long learning;
3. Are supported to stay living in their own homes and connected to their communities;
4. Lead healthier and active lives for longer;
5. Are able to get to where they want to go, when they want to go;
6. Live in places where the social and physical environments are conducive to being out and about;
7. Feel and are safe in their own homes and their communities;
8. Have the required information and communications to support them achieve these outcomes.

Implementation and Monitoring

The designated Lead Partners will be responsible for leading the implementation of each of the actions outlined in the strategy. The County Leitrim Age Friendly County Alliance Board will meet regularly to monitor and review progress on all of the actions and to consider amendments and refinements to the strategy in response to changing circumstances and stakeholder feedback. It will review both the outputs and outcomes of the implementation of the strategic actions. The Board is supported by an Executive Group, which has representation from a number of the Alliance Partners. This Group will be tasked with co-ordinating and overseeing the operational roll out of the strategy. Part of its brief will be to liaise closely with the Older People's Council to elicit regular feedback from older people in the county regarding the delivery of the strategy, thus creating an important stakeholder feedback loop that will be crucial to its ongoing implementation and monitoring.

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

“There are a lot of good facilities in the county but pavements need to be level and smooth and signage could be improved.”

Action 1.1 – Age Friendly Towns

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process

People wish to stay in their own homes
Need for opportunities for older people to connect socially
Better Signage
Improved footpaths
More walkways
Need to repair roads and ensure even surfaces on walkways
Provision of public toilets and picnic parks

Proposed Action

Linked to the process of reviewing the County Development Plan, Leitrim County Council will carry out pilot Age Friendly planning exercises in selected towns in the county. The objective of Age Friendly Towns is to significantly improve the quality of life of older adults living in those areas and to engage them in shaping and enhancing their own communities. The smaller scale of the Age Friendly Towns initiative allows real change and impact on the lives of older people and will provide evidence to demonstrate what can be done at a local level. The County Leitrim Age Friendly Alliance will apply to the Age Friendly Ireland hosted National Age Friendly Towns Programme, for an intern planner to help manage and coordinate the process in each of the towns targeted and to take part in a Learning Network. The intention is that the planners will create a final report, collaborating to complete a critique of the planning processes across all key agencies and documenting their experience of achieving improved outcomes through multi-agency cooperation.

These exercises will use information already gathered from Disability Audits and will involve Active Age groups, Disability groups and a range of community players in carrying out "Walkability Audits" and Council Planning and Engineering staff in carrying out public consultation to inform "Accessibility Development Plans" to underpin the Age Friendly Towns initiative.

- A Steering Group, with representation drawn from Alliance members and partners, will be developed to oversee the project.
- The Council will apply learning from the Age Friendly Towns Programme and access training for its planners and engineers on Age Friendly communities prior to the initiative commencing.
- The Council will aim to attain Age Friendly Town Charters (as benchmarked within the Age Friendly Towns and Counties programme) for the selected towns. It will also aim to include a recognition of best age friendly practice through the National Age Friendly Recognition Scheme.
- In the longer term it is envisaged that the process will be rolled out to other selected towns in the county

Output

- Better integration of services including transport, restaurants, hotels, post-offices, banks, hairdressers.
- Shops and supermarkets that are 'age-friendly' – with good signage, suitable noise levels, seating, managed queuing, adequate spaces for trolleys, price tags that can be read.
- Improved accessibility of streets and public realm in selected towns for people with limited mobility.
- Level pavements, free from obstruction to reduce the fear of falling and being tripped.
- Enhancement of parks for greater social and age friendly exercise opportunities.
- Buildings and public spaces are more accessible and age friendly.
- A more accessible environment.

Lead Partner

Leitrim County Council

Support Partners

Older People's Council and Active Age groups
Disability Support Groups
Health Service Executive – Occupational Therapists, Public Health Nurses and Primary Care Teams
Local business community
Local community organisations in selected towns
Other agencies as appropriate

Indicator

Number of changes in the physical environment (seats installed, pavements dished, traffic lights installed etc.)
Training provided to members of the local community, agency staff and staff in the private sector

Action 1.2 – Age Friendly Buildings

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process

Need to plan that services are positioned and designed to ensure easy access

Need to improve access for wheelchairs

Older people specifically highlighted Carrigallen as a model of best practice and would like this model replicated across the County

Proposed Action

The HSE will aim to retrospectively apply good practices to their current Day Care Centres and adopt Universal Design guidelines from the WHO Age Friendly Primary Care Centres Toolkit for proposed new public buildings, such as Primary Care Centres and Day Care Centres. This will provide a process for auditing how accessible buildings are to older people and encourage the use of universal design guidelines for new developments.

- This will encompass creating wider access to buildings and information on their use.
- Best practice can be shared with other agencies in a bid to ensure age friendliness across all buildings for older people.

Output

- HSE in Leitrim will be the first in Ireland to utilise the WHO Framework and apply practices, such as audits, to enable them to make their Centres more accessible and age friendly.
- As learning is shared with other agencies, in the long-term public buildings throughout the county will become more accessible.

Lead Partner

HSE

Support Partners

Age Friendly National Programme
Older People's Council, Active Age Groups
Disability Support Groups
Centre for Excellence in Universal Design

Indicator

HSE buildings become more accessible to older people
Other agencies can access this learning



Theme 2 Transportation

*“I love the social car scheme
but it’s a pity that it’s not across the whole county.”*

Action 2.1 – Rural Transport

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process

Rural transport is prescriptive rather than on demand, does not link with other transport i.e. trains and national buses

Need for integration and mapping of existing transport services e.g. utilise school buses, rural transport etc.

Important for local groups to be empowered to have a say in service provision and to know how to lobby for services

Proposed Action

Linked to the National Transport Authority, a regional joint venture company will be set up by the existing Rural Transportation providers in counties Leitrim, Roscommon and Sligo. This will be the Transportation Co-ordination Unit for these counties. Leitrim Development Company is one of the partners to the new company structure, which will be based in Carrick on Shannon.

- This arrangement means that there is no threat to any existing providers or transport services, encompassing a commitment (funding permitted) to continue to deliver existing rural transport routes and maintain passenger trips per month.
- All of these journeys will continue to be maintained on the National Journey Route Planner and the National Transport Authority website. Efforts will continue to shape the Regional Transport service so that Leitrim residents continue to benefit from this high level of service.



Output

- Increase in frequency and volume of transport options available to older people.
- 53 rural transport routes operating in the county.
- Maintenance of 4,000 passenger trips per month (with a passenger profile of 83% older people) and one off on demand journeys.
- Greater availability of transport in rural parts of County Leitrim.
- Increase in number of older people being able to attend local events.

Lead Partner

Regional Transport Co-ordination Unit/Leitrim Development Company

Support Partners

Older People's Council, Active Age Groups
Wider Community and Voluntary sector

Indicator

Increase in areas of coverage

Increase in transport options for older people

Maintenance/increase in number of transport routes

Maintenance/increase in number of passenger trips and one off on demand journeys

Action 2.2 – Social Car Scheme

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process

Social car scheme needs to be extended countywide
Future funding is uncertain

Proposed Action

Leitrim Development Company will continue to provide a Social Car Scheme with 11 volunteer drivers in North Leitrim.

- It will seek funding to extend the scheme to the entire county.

Output

- Increase in frequency and volume of transport options and areas of coverage available to older people.
- Increase in number of journeys.
- Greater availability of transport in rural parts of County Leitrim.
- Increase in number of older people being able to attend local events.

Lead Partner

Leitrim Development Company

Support Partners

Older People's Council, Active Age Groups
Wider Community and Voluntary sector

Indicator

Increase in areas of coverage

Increase in transport options for older people

Maintenance/increase in number of passenger trips and one off on demand journeys



Theme 3 Housing

*“Support people to live as independently as possible in their own area.
There could be more security for older people in their homes..”*

Action 3.1 – Support Independent Living

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process

People wish to stay in their own homes and live independently with proper access to all services

Ensure good quality community based day care is available

Need for opportunities for older people to connect socially

The various agencies need to work together to help older people to stay in their own homes

Proposed Action

Leitrim County Council will work with a range of partners including voluntary housing associations to enhance the potential of older people to enjoy safe, healthy and independent living. It will continue to provide programmes such as Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability based on assessed need within allocated resources.

- The Council will continue linking with the HSE, particularly regarding enhancing its prioritisation mechanisms, particularly where the condition of a house is delaying possible discharge from hospital.
- HSE will continue to provide Home Help, Home Care Packages and Day Care Places based on assessed need within allocated resources. The aim is to promote optimal independence while supporting Older People to remain in their own home for as long as is practical.



Output

- Applications for Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability will be assessed in a timely fashion based on need within allocated resources.
- Fewer delays in discharge from hospitals for older people.
- Enhanced access for older people to health and social care services, which support independent living.

Lead Partner

Leitrim County Council

Support Partners

HSE
Irish Council of Social Housing
Older People's Council, Active Age Groups

Indicator

Applications for Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability dealt with in a timely fashion

Greater co-operation between Leitrim County Council and HSE

Timely discharges from hospital for older people

Increased numbers of older people living independently

Greater availability of suitable accommodation for older people

Action 3.2 – Older People Feeling Safe in their Homes

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process

We want to feel safe in our own homes and communities

We have a fear and anxiety of bogus callers and tradesmen - provide list of reputable tradesmen to increase confidence for older people

We like the Care and Repair Service but want to see more of it

Would like more security lighting in our homes and areas

Would like more fire safety information, fire extinguishers, fire escape ladders etc.

Would like more FAS and CE schemes for community work



Proposed Action

Leitrim Development Company will continue to deliver the Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme, providing attic and cavity wall insulation and ventilation for houses built before 2006, to people entitled to claim Fuel Allowance, in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance for 6 months, with children under the age of 7, and Family Income Support.

- While funding is in place, the Development Company will continue to operate the Care and Repair scheme in North Leitrim as part of Age Action franchise, and continue trader referrals for older people.
- Leitrim Development Company in partnership with Leitrim County Council will continue to deliver a Joint Community Employment scheme targeted at Estate Management in Local Authority estates and enhance existing schemes where additional funding is available.
- Leitrim Development Company and Leitrim County Council will continue the joint roll out of installation of smoke alarms.
- The National Fall Prevention Strategy will be rolled out through local Primary Care and Local Community Day Hospitals.
- Raise awareness of existing fire safety information sessions in Day Care Centres.
- Leitrim Development Company and the Council will continue to jointly bid for projects, which target energy efficiency and meet the needs of older people.
- Leitrim Development Company will also continue to operate community programmes benefiting older people including Community Employment, Job Initiative, TUS and the Rural Social Scheme.

Output

- Older people will feel safer in their own homes.
- Older people will have warmer, safer, more energy efficient homes in well cared for estates, where they can live independently.
- Older people will enjoy an enhanced sense of security and well-being.
- Fewer falls and home based injuries.

Lead Partner

Leitrim Development Company

Support Partners

Leitrim County Council
HSE
Older People's Council, Active Age Groups

Indicator

Greater availability of suitable accommodation for older people
Greater numbers of older people living independently
Fewer home based injuries and resultant health gains for older people

Action 3.3 – Operation Doras/ Crime Prevention Ambassador Programme

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process

We need more information on making our homes secure
Older people, particularly those living in rural areas, feel isolated and vulnerable

Proposed Action

An Garda Síochána will continue to roll out its community policing initiative, Operation Doras, which has seen Gardai visiting 1,700 residents in North Leitrim in the past year.

- It will build on and add value to this initiative through the introduction of the Crime Prevention Ambassador Programme, using the learning of the pilot in Cavan, Monaghan and Louth.

Output

- Raise awareness of basic crime prevention and safety measures.
- Greater knowledge among Gardaí of older people living alone in the community.
- Increase confidence and reduce perception of fear among older people.
- Opportunities to raise specific issues at local level with local Gardaí.
- Selection and training of volunteers.

Lead Partner

Garda Síochána

Support Partners

Muintir NaTíre
Leitrim County Council
HSE
Leitrim Development Company
Irish Farmers Association
Leitrim Community Forum
North and South Leitrim Community Networks
Older People's Council, Active Age Groups
Local Residents groups



Indicator

Shared agency and community knowledge regarding the location and needs of vulnerable older people
Crime Prevention Ambassador Programme piloted in the county
Older people feel safer in their homes
More effective community policing
Numbers of volunteers training and participating in the Programme

Action 3.4 – Bogus Callers Scheme

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process

We have a fear and anxiety of bogus callers
We would like telephone and alarm links to Garda barracks

Proposed Action

An Garda Síochána will roll out the Bogus Callers Scheme throughout the county (as piloted in counties Louth and Cork).

Output

- Raise awareness of basic crime prevention and safety measures.
- Greater knowledge among Gardaí of older people living alone in the community.
- Increase confidence and reduce perception of fear among older people.
- Opportunities to raise specific issues at local level with local Gardaí.

Lead Partner

Garda Síochána

Support Partners

Muintir NaTíre
Leitrim County Council
HSE
Leitrim Development Company
Irish Farmers Association
Leitrim Community Forum
North and South Leitrim Community Networks
Older People's Council, Active Age Groups
Local Residents groups

Indicator

Reduce perception of fear and provide practical information and safety advice
Increase confidence and reduce perception of fear among older people
Bogus Callers Scheme piloted in the county
Older people feel safer in their homes
More effective community policing

Theme 4 Social Participation

*‘There could be more links with young and old.
Both could learn from each other.’*

Action 4.1 – Community Text Alert Schemes

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process

Older people are aware of the benefits of the community alert text service and want to see it operating throughout the county

Proposed Action

Roll out Community Text Alert schemes in North and South Leitrim in line with the National Programme. “Text Alert” is designed to facilitate immediate and cost effective communication from An Garda Síochána to the public. This will be achieved in a structured and consistent way in conjunction with existing Community Crime Prevention Programmes (Community Alert, Neighbourhood Watch Group) or Irish Farmers Association Branch etc.

- Mayo Sligo Leitrim Education and Training Board will roll out a number of intergenerational training programmes, involving transition year students and older people in mobile/smart phone training including texting.
- Children First training will be offered to participants.

Output

- Community Text Alert schemes operating effectively in North and South Leitrim.
- Greater sense of security for older people.

Lead Partner

Garda Síochána

‘Togetherness, its good to be part of a group’

Support Partners

Muintir NaTíre
Mayo Sligo Leitrim Education and Training Board
HSE
TUSLA Child and Family Agency
Leitrim County Council
Leitrim Development Company
Irish Farmers Association
Leitrim Community Forum
North and South Leitrim Community Networks
Older People's Council, Active Age Groups

Indicator

Numbers of older people using Text Alert Schemes
Older people feel safer in their homes

Action 4.2 – Garda Community Clinics

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process

Reduced Gardai presence
Avail of free service in place advising of home security

Proposed Action

- An Garda Síochána will hold regular clinics in community centres and other accessible venues in the county in response to demand.

Output

- Clinics delivered on a regular basis.
- Greater sense of security for older people.

Lead Partner

An Garda Síochána

Support Partners

Leitrim County Council
Leitrim Development Company
Irish Farmers Association
Leitrim Community Forum
North and South Leitrim Community Networks
Older People's Council, Active Age Groups

Indicator

Numbers of older people using Text Alert Schemes
Older people feel safer in their homes

Action 4.3 – Establish County Leitrim Older People’s Council

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process

Older People want a forum where everyone is represented and where they can effectively influence and shape the way in which services are created

Older people want to communicate effectively with all the sectors

Older people want better communication from agencies to older people

Proposed Action

- Establish, develop and support the operation of County Leitrim Older People’s Council.

Output

- Set up and develop an Older People’s Council to feed into and guide the work of the County Leitrim Age Friendly Alliance.
- Broaden representation on the Older People’s Council to include individuals, day care centres, nursing homes, advocacy groups, service providers, remote geographic areas.
- Older people feel they have a voice and make a positive contribution to service provision in the county.

Lead Partner

Letirim Development Company

Support Partners

Older People’s Council,
Active Age Groups
Day care centres, nursing homes, advocacy groups, service providers
HSE
Leitrim County Council



Indicator

Establishment of the Council

Increase in number of older people participating in county structure

Theme 5 Respect and Social Inclusion

“Utilise the skills and wisdom of older people, see older people as a resource not a drain. There could be more links with young and old. Both could learn from each other.”

Action 5.1 – Men’s Sheds

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process

Mental health problems are on the increase
Loneliness and isolation are the biggest problems
If the agencies worked better together there would be greater awareness of and access to services
Proportionately Leitrim has the highest population of rural dwellers in Ireland

Proposed Action

As part of its community education provision, the Regional Education Training Board will work with the Older People’s Council to support the development of new Men’s Sheds across Leitrim and in partnership with Leitrim Development Company and the North Leitrim Men’s Group to support the existing Men’s Shed initiatives.

- Both organisations will continue to work with men through IT training and Health Information Days.
- The HSE will link into this initiative through its planned development of bases for Community Mental Health Teams in the new Primary Care Centre in Manorhamilton and Ballinamore. It will also link with HSE’s planned development of a mental health rehabilitation and recovery team for Leitrim.



Output

- Environments created where older men can engage and interact socially.
- Effective links developed with HSE's community mental health provision.
- Men improve their health and well-being.
- Less stigmatising and stereotyping of mental health issues.

Lead Partner

Mayo Sligo Leitrim Education and Training Board

Support Partners

Leitrim Development Company
North Leitrim Men's Group
HSE
Leitrim County Council
Irish Farmers Association
Leitrim Community Forum
North and South Leitrim Community Networks
Older People's Council, Active Age Groups



Indicator

Four Men's Sheds operating effectively with active membership
Effective inter-agency work regarding mental health issues
Men have enhanced health and well-being

Action 5.2 – Enhancing access to Financial Services

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process

Ensure that services such as Banks and Post Offices are maintained in rural areas
Concerns raised about inaccessibility to banks

Proposed Action

Counter the impact of local branch closures by engaging with local Credit Unions and at National level to examine the possibility of them providing enhanced accessibility to banking facilities for older people.

Output

- Older people have enhanced access to banking services.

Lead Partner

County Leitrim Age Friendly Alliance

Support Partners

Local Credit Unions
Leitrim Local Enterprise Office
Leitrim Development Company
Irish Farmers Association
Older People's Council, Active Age Groups

Indicator

Wider access to banking services

Theme 6 Civic Participation and Employment

“More action is needed from relevant agencies, less talk.”

Action 6.1 – Start Your Own Business 50+ Programme

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process

Older people have a lot to contribute

Proposed Action

Research the possibility of rolling out the Start Your Own Business 50+ Enterprise programme in County Leitrim and deliver same if sufficient demand is identified.

Output

- Assessment of demand for Start Your Own Business 50+ Enterprise programme.
- If demand exists, programme delivered.

Lead Partner

Leitrim Local Enterprise Office

Support Partners

Leitrim County Council
Leitrim Development Company
Older People’s Council, Active Age Groups

Indicator

Research into demand for Start Your Own Business 50+ Enterprise programme
Programme delivered if sufficient demand exists
If Programme is delivered, more older people explore the option of starting their own business



“Active Age Groups could be used more to encourage communication and volunteering. Value older people and create social involvement.”

Action 6.2 – Opportunities for Individuals aged 50 or over to Act as Business Mentors

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process

Build volunteer ethos through marketing and information events

Proposed Action

Create opportunities to recruit Business Mentors aged 50 or over to offer support to fledgling businesses.

Output

- Older people have enhanced access to business start up opportunities.
- Older people recruited as Business Mentors

Lead Partner

Leitrim Local Enterprise Office

Support Partners

Leitrim County Council
Leitrim Development Company
Older People's Council, Active Age Groups

Indicator

Older people recruited as Business Mentors
More older people explore the option of starting their own business



Action 6.3 – Encouraging Entrepreneurship Among People Aged 50 and over

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process

Older people are concerned about their finances

Proposed Action

Promote the Hive Business Drop In Centre, Carrick on Shannon, to older people on a pilot basis and encourage them to take advantage of its available open space, business support services and peer mentoring support including holding Open Days targeted at Active Age Groups and roll out existing programmes such as One Call to Success.

Output

- Older people have enhanced access to business start up opportunities.
- Two open days held annually.
- If successful, examine potential to replicate in suitable venues across the county

Lead Partner

Leitrim Local Enterprise Office

Support Partners

Leitrim County Council
Leitrim Development Company
Older People's Council, Active Age Groups

Indicator

More older people explore the option of starting their own business

Action 6.4– Access to Community Education and Capacity Building

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process

Need to learn IT skills and access the internet
Need to develop the skills of older people
Need to raise awareness of access to training courses
Older people highlighted a desire to work intergenerationally to build respect and break stereotypes

Proposed Action

The Regional Education Training Board will continue the roll out of community education provision to meet the needs of older people's groups and older people generally in the county. There is currently a direct link to Active Age groups and a varied menu of provision has been developed to meet their needs.

- Evening classes are currently offered in all 2nd level schools in the county including IT, Digital Photography, Using Email and Skype, Using Mobile Phones, Line Dancing, Flower Arranging, Art and Local History projects and many others.
- Older people can influence community education provision on demand.
- Linking with the Older People's Council, Active Age Groups and the newly established website more learners and mentors will be involved in the basic education programme.

Output

- Continued delivery of comprehensive demand led community education provision targeted to meet the needs of older people.
- Increased learners and mentors involved in the basic education programme.
- Increased intergenerational contact and respect.

Lead Partner

Mayo Sligo Leitrim Education and Training Board

Support Partners

Leitrim Development Company
Leitrim County Council
Irish Farmers Association
Leitrim Community Forum
North and South Leitrim Community Networks
Older People's Council, Active Age Groups

Indicator

Comprehensive demand led community education programme delivered in the county
Older people enjoy varied activities and pastimes

Action 6.5 – Facilitation and Support for Active Age Groups

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process

Active Age groups could be used more to encourage more communication and volunteering

Proposed Action

Leitrim Development Company, in partnership with the Rossinver Integrated Social Enterprise (RISE), will continue to work with twenty two Active Age groups in the county, co-ordinating events and activity days and will assist these groups to access funding and ETB provision.

- Support for older people's groups and facilitation of the Older People's Council.
- Holding Information days.
- Delivery of the LCDP, Rural Lift, TUS and the Rural Social Scheme.
- HSE will continue to support Active Age Groups in the County

Output

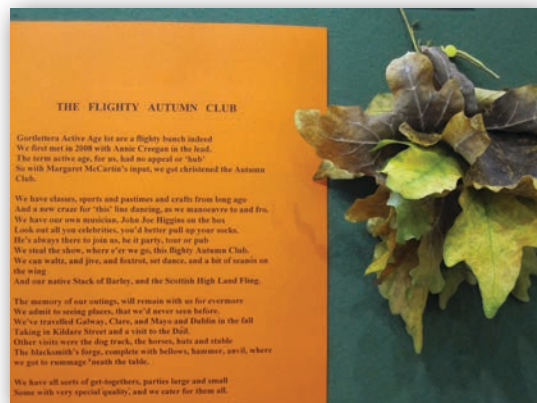
- Continued delivery of comprehensive supports and services to meet the needs of older people.

Lead Partner

Leitrim Development Company

Support Partners

Rossinver Integrated Social Enterprise (RISE)
Mayo Sligo Leitrim Education and Training Board
HSE
Leitrim County Council
Irish Farmers Association
Leitrim Community Forum
Older People's Council, Active Age Groups



Indicator

Facilitation and supports for twenty two Active Age Groups
Information Days held
Comprehensive range of supports and services delivered to older people

Action 6.6 – Volunteering Website

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process

Older people would like opportunity to volunteer and act as Befriender
The need for a Befriending service was identified

Proposed Action

Leitrim Development Company will create a co-ordinated focus on volunteer development of its new website. This will create opportunities for older people and to benefit from volunteering efforts in the county.

- HSE will continue to fund Leitrim Development Company's Advise and Support Worker.

Output

- Establishment of interactive Volunteering Website.
- Build volunteer ethos through marketing and information events
- Encourage older people to volunteer.
- Share best practice with other agencies and areas.

Lead Partner

Leitrim Development Company

Support Partners

HSE
Leitrim County Council
Mayo Sligo Leitrim Education and Training Board
Irish Farmers Association
Leitrim Community Forum
North and South Leitrim Community Networks
Older People's Council, Active Age Groups

Indicator

Interactive volunteering website in place and regularly accessed by older people
Enhanced opportunities for older people to volunteer
Increase in the numbers of older people volunteering

Theme 7 Communication and Information

“The local radio and newspaper provide good sources of information but sometimes leaflets can be too wordy and complicated.”

Action 7.1 – Improving Access to IT

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process

Need for more IT projects for older people
Older people have concern around lack of knowledge about new technologies
Access to Broadband is poor

Proposed Action

Through its Library Service, Leitrim County Council will enhance access to IT for older people, including review and development of the county library laptop lending scheme.

- Leitrim Local Enterprise Office will also provide an IT access point in its new Hive Facility.
- The Education Training Board will consider developing a similar access point after the refurbishment of its offices in Carrick on Shannon, as well as providing support through the delivery of capacity building IT training for older people.

Output

- Older people gain access to IT equipment and training in its use.
- Increased IT literacy amongst older people.



Lead Partner

Leitrim County Council

Support Partners

Leitrim Local Enterprise Office
Leitrim Development Company
Older People's Council, Active Age Groups

Indicator

IT access points created for older people
Increased IT literacy levels amongst older people

Action 7.2 – Provision of Age Friendly Information

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process

Leaflets can be too 'wordy' and complicated
Find ways to include new people to the area and improve their access to information
Form filling is not accessible and very lengthy
Ensure information regarding support and services is readily available for older people, family and friends
Better communication from agencies to older people

Proposed Action

All of the Agencies will continue to provide age friendly communications to older people in the county through their relationships and collaborative efforts, co-ordinating the content on websites and creating links between them and through relationships with key organisations such as the Citizens Information Service, through the ongoing age proofing of publicity and information materials and media, through their direct mail contact and through the resource of their staff teams.

Output

- Age friendly information on a range of pertinent issues available to older people.
- Agencies create more age friendly formats for their information giving.
- Older people have an enhanced sense of well being through being able to make use of information in understandable formats.

Lead Partner

County Leitrim Citizens Information Service

Support Partners

Leitrim County Council
Mayo Sligo Leitrim Education and Training Board
HSE
Leitrim Development Company
An Garda Síochána
Irish Farmers Association
Leitrim Local Enterprise Office
NUIG
Older People's Council, Active Age Groups

Indicator

Agencies use age friendly formats to give out information
Older people know where to access information in understandable formats

Theme 8 Community Support and Health Services

Action 8.1 – Advocacy, Befriending and Support

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process

Loneliness and isolation are the biggest problems
Provide home support that recognises a social aspect i.e. Befriending service/ Phone service

Proposed Action

Leitrim Development Company will develop the existing HSE funded Active Age Support Worker role to incorporate advocacy and information dissemination. This worker will also establish and develop a Befriending Service for isolated older people, using volunteers across the county.

- Develop links with the GAA Social Initiative to assist GAA clubs to actively engage with and reach out to all those experiencing isolation in their communities, especially the hard to reach cohort of isolated men living alone.

Output

- Improved Health and Well Being for older people.
- Improved knowledge of relevant services.
- Combating rural isolation and supporting older people to remain at home.
- Promoting independent living and peer support.

Lead Partner

Leitrim Development Company

“The day centre in Carrigallen is very good. Transport is provided. We can see the G.P., do our shopping and go to the Post Office.”

Support Partners

HSE
Rossinver Calling (RISE)
Leitrim Calling
GAA
Leitrim County Council
An Garda Síochána
Irish Farmers Association
Older People's Council, Active Age Groups

Indicator

Reduced levels of health service usage
Greater uptake of relevant services
Less admission to residential care
Increase in volunteering



Action 8.2 – Community Mental Health

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process

There is a high suicide rate in the county
There are a high number of older people living alone, who are socially isolated
There are high incidences of depression amongst older people

Proposed Action

Sligo Leitrim Mental Health Service is placing great emphasis on providing care pathways which are underpinned by a Recovery Philosophy of Care and are provided to individuals experiencing acute mental health difficulties in the least restrictive environment, with the minimum disruption to their lives. It is the Service's ambition that the majority of mental health service provision will be provided away from acute mental health centres and in service users' communities and localities, through Integrated Social Day Care Centres, home based treatment and assertive outreach models of care. This model of community-based care is supported by international literature and as a model is more accessible and facilitates full participation and integration of service users within the community (World Health Organisation; WHO, 2007). This integrated care will be provided to service users in their local community via the delivery of effective Multi Disciplinary Teams working within two Sector teams. These teams will be co-located within Primary care settings in Carrick on Shannon and Manorhamilton, which will provide even greater mental health care accessibility for members of the public.

A Vision for Change, recommends that integrated care is provided to service users in the context of their local community and that this is delivered primarily through Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs), each of which typically caters for a population of 50,000. For CMHTs to be effective, it is vital that the vision and goals of community-based treatment are shared by the team and reflected in its development. Teams need clearly defined goals and robust governance structures as well as agreement regarding their model of clinical responsibility to be effective. The sector team should also agree flexible protocols for its clinical and operational practice, adapted to the needs of the populations it serves. Standards for service provision will be set by the Area Mental Health Management Team in conjunction with service users to ensure consistency and equity between both sector teams. In achieving this level of equity some fundamental principles and functions need to be accepted by all team members.

Output

- Community Mental Health Teams located in Primary Care Centres.
- Mental Health Rehabilitation and Recovery Teams in place.

Lead Partner

HSE

Support Partners

Leitrim Development Company
Leitrim County Council
Irish Farmers Association
Older People's Council, Active Age Groups

Indicator

Awareness raised of wider health and well-being issues for older people and in particular mental health
Older people enjoy enhanced health and well being