



LONGFORD

Age Friendly County

COUNTY LONGFORD
AGE FRIENDLY STRATEGY 2015-2020

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Foreword

As Chairman of the Longford Age Friendly Alliance I am delighted to present this 5 year Age Friendly strategy for County Longford.

Longford has a great quality of life and a wonderful community spirit and by signing up to Ireland's National Age Friendly City & County Programme we hope to make Longford a better place to grow old in. It is clear that the percentage of Longford's population age 65 or over will increase over the next five to ten years and it is important that we take steps now to plan for the future. Figures from the Central Statistics Office show that the population of Longford grew by 13.3% between 2006 and 2011 and the number of people aged 65 years and over make up 13% of the County's population compared to 11.6% nationally. The benefits of establishing an Age Friendly strategy for Longford are wide ranging and significant.

An Age Friendly County is a place where more and more older people can stay living in their own homes and communities, lead healthy and active lives, get to where they want to go, when they want to go, and are valued contributors to the lives of their communities.

Longford County Council, together with its partners, is committed to ensuring that the older members of our community are listened to, included in all aspects of the life of the community and are given every opportunity to live full active and healthy lives. This strategy is the culmination of a detailed consultation process that has brought together the key service providers from the statutory, voluntary and community sectors together with our older citizens to identify how we can make Longford a great place to live as we grow older.

I would like to sincerely thank all the members of the Age Friendly Alliance from all sectors for their enthusiasm and commitment to the development of this strategy and for their ongoing support to ensuring that Longford can truly become an Age Friendly Community.

Tim Caffrey
Chairman
Longford Age Friendly Alliance

Introduction

This is the first Age Friendly Strategy for County Longford. 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 Longford.

The strategy has been developed by the Longford Age Friendly Alliance in consultation and co-operation with older people in Longford. The Alliance was formally established in 2015. It is made up of senior personnel in public sector agencies, older people's representatives and other organisations that promote a positive approach to ageing. Each of the Alliance members has given commitments in this strategy that will significantly help to improve the quality of life of older people in Longford in the coming years.

Members of Longford Age Friendly Alliance are:

- Longford County Council (Chief Executive)
- Health Service Executive (Area Manager)
- An Garda Síochána (Superintendent for Longford)
- Longford County Library Service (County Librarian)
- Longford Retired Teachers Association (Representative)
- Longford Older Persons Network (Chairperson)
- Longford Public Participation Network (Resource Worker)
- Longford Community Resource Ltd. (Chief Executive Officer)
- Longford Westmeath Education Training Board (Chief Executive Officer)

Following the consultation, the Alliance formed a small working group of key service providers in the Local Authority and local community to help shape the Strategy.

- Housing Officer – Longford County Council
- Regeneration Officer – Longford County Council
- Senior Executive Planner – Longford County Council
- Community Development Officer – Longford County Council
- Dublin Mid Leinster Manager – Health Service Executive
- Rural Development Plan Project Worker – Longford Community Resources Ltd.
- Longford Community Policing Officer – An Garda Síochána

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 related needs and preferences.

Our ambition to be Age Friendly means that Longford will

- Become one of the greatest 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 be engaged with their County socially, as employees and as volunteers.

This is a far-reaching strategy with 42 actions that will be delivered over the five 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.

Population Profile of Longford

County Longford experienced a large increase in population during the intercensal period of 2006 and 2011, with the Census 2011 data determining an increase of 13.3%, bringing the population to 39,000 people. This increase was greater than the national average. Figures from the Midland Regional Authority (2013) project the population to reach 43,080 by 2016 (+10.4%).

Approximately 4,883 of County Longford's population are aged 65 years and over, comprising 13% of the County's total population, compared to 11.6% nationally.

**Table 1: County Longford
Percentage Change in the
Total Population, 1981-2011**

Year	Population	% Change
1981	31,140	—
1986	31,496	+1%
1991	30,296	-4%
1996	30,166	0%
2002	31,068	+3%
2006	34,391	+11%
2011	39,000	+13%

Table 2 presents the proportion of people in the County that are aged 65 years and over and living alone. The data show that the age group with the highest proportion of older people living alone is within the 80 to 84 age group. Upon more in-depth assessment of persons living alone, CSO data also reveal that approximately 65% of all those living alone and over the age of 80 are female (Source: CSO).

Table 2: Number of Older People over 65 and Living Alone in County Longford

Age Group	Population 2011	Persons living alone	Persons living alone as a % of persons in the age group
65-69	1,633	362	22
70-74	1,127	307	27
75-79	957	320	33
80-84	628	235	37
85+	538	183	34
Total over 65+	4,883	1,407	29

Profile of HSE Older Peoples Services in Longford

There are a number of dedicated services for older persons in County Longford provided by the HSE.

St Joseph's Care Centre, Longford Town

St Joseph's Care Centre, Longford Town is a HSE Residential Care Centre facility that provides long stay, palliative care and day care services for clients from the locality. Clients attending the centre are aged 65 years and over and it facilities approximately 97 clients, who attend on a weekly basis (average daily attendance is 20 people).

Longford/Westmeath Home Support Services

The Longford/Westmeath Home Support Services objective is to support older people in remaining independent, in their home or within their community environment, through the provision of home and community based support services including home help services, home care packages, respite care, day care and meals on wheels.

As of April 2015, the HSE has 108 home helps delivering this service within the Longford/Westmeath area. There are currently 645 people

availing of this service daily. This service is allocated on a priority basis, based on assessment by the Public Health Nurse service.

Home Care Packages

In Longford-Westmeath, approximately 235 people are supported through Home Care Packages in addition to home help support. These packages can include: nursing, physiotherapy, dietetics and enhanced home help, etc. Packages of care are designed to reflect the assessed needs of the individual, however there can be waiting lists for both of these services based on resource availability.

Why is Longford adopting an Age Friendly Strategy?

Statistics both nationally and globally tell us that populations are ageing as people are living longer, healthier lives. The Department of Health notes that by the year 2021, the number of older people¹ living in the State is expected to increase to 775,000, representing an increase of 55 per cent in 11 years.

The World Health Organization 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 spaces and Buildings
- Transportation
- Housing
- Social Participation
- Respect and Social Inclusion
- Civic Participation and Employment
- Communication and Information
- Community support and Health Services

In Longford, we recognise that the number of older people is increasing year on year, and that there will be increasing demand on services into the future. We also recognise that older people today have higher expectations and want to be involved, to be heard and included. While it is necessary to plan for services for the future, we are also focusing on the opportunities that an ageing society brings. Older people are a valuable resource, and have an important contribution to make to their local community.

Age Friendly work is taking place in most counties in Ireland. The Age Friendly Counties Programme is being supported at national level by Age Friendly Ireland. Regionally, Longford will link with partner counties of Westmeath, Roscommon, Leitrim, Cavan and Monaghan.

This strategy has been developed following extensive consultation with older people and service providers in County Longford. The voice of older people has been central to the development of the strategy and older people will play a key role in its implementation.

National Policy on Ageing

There are various policy documents of relevance to this area of work. Key among them is the National Positive Ageing Strategy 2013. The strategy provides 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. High level goals for older people focus on community care and income support.

Other pertinent policy documents include the National Carer's Strategy (2012) and the National Dementia Strategy (2014). Numerous 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 the Report, the Nursing Home Support Scheme, Fair Deal introduced into 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 Longford Age Friendly Alliance will seek to ensure that this strategy achieves measurable outcomes for older people that demonstrate improvements in their quality of life. To guide us in this ambition, we will use an outcomes-based planning approach based on the framework developed by Age Friendly Ireland.

This approach begins with the end result in mind. This will determine the actions and activities which will achieve the best results. By beginning the planning process with broad outcomes, it is very clear that no one body or service on its own can achieve these outcomes, but that collaboratively working together, huge strides can be made to improve the lives of older people. This approach will allow the Alliance to demonstrate progress in implementing its action plan – to show that it is ‘making a difference’ – by identifying relevant ways of measuring progress and tracking these indicators over the lifetime of the action plan. This ensures effective use of scarce resources.

Most importantly, this approach brings the needs of older people right to the core of the planning process and ensures that their views, opinions and experiences are fully considered.

‘Outcomes’ for older people in this context means that they:

1. Are truly valued and respected
2. Can get to where they want, when they want
3. Feel and be safe at home and when out and about
4. Are enabled by the built and social environment

5. Can stay living in their own homes and communities
6. Continue to learn, develop and work
7. Participate in social, economic and public life
8. Have the information they need to lead full lives
9. Can lead healthier and active lives for longer

In order for this approach to work it is important that policies, strategies and services are based on a positive ageing approach that is informed by the needs of older adults and evidenced from research.

Each action set out in this strategy will contribute to the achievement of one or more of the above-named outcomes.



BARLEY HARBOUR, NEWTOWNCASHEL

Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

What is working well for Older People

- *Beautiful Mall and great pedestrian crossing at The Mall*
- *Canal walk is very nice. It has a positive impact on mental health*
- *Exercise machines and seating availability is excellent at The Mall*

Issues Raised by Older People

- Some public seating is needed at the Market Square and around other locations in Longford Town and around the County
- Footpaths could be improved so they are more accessible
- There is a need to maintain lights and pedestrian crossings and to keep recreation areas litter free throughout the County
- More signage is required within the town of Longford and other areas
- Road markings could be improved throughout the County

What we want to achieve

Older People will be enabled by the built and social environment.

Actions

- 1.1** Building on the experience of other Age Friendly Cities & Counties and Cities, we will develop Longford Town initially, as an Age Friendly Town incorporating elements of the Age Friendly Towns Programme and working in partnership with the Longford County Council Regeneration Unit. We will ensure a universal, age-friendly approach is embedded within all town and village enhancement programmes. This will include the following:
- Municipal Districts will be mindful of incorporating Age Friendly policy when approving and allocating project funding
 - Improve directional and informational signage around our towns

- Refresh paint on pedestrian crossings and road markings
- The retail sector will become more customer friendly by adopting the Age Friendly Business Recognition Scheme
- Assess the need of and most suitable locations for Age Friendly car parking

Following the national process and guidelines, and learning from, local practice in Longford Town we will replicate this model in towns across the County as prioritised by older people.

Outputs

- Increase the participation of older people in the local community
- Universal accessibility on the streets of towns and villages for people with a range of complex needs
- Potential Age Friendly Car parking

Lead Partner: Longford County Council

Support Partners: An Garda Síochána, Chambers of Commerce, Gateway Scheme, Health Service Executive (HSE), Local General Practitioners (GP's). Longford County Library Services, Longford Tourism, Longford Westmeath Community Transport Ltd., Longford Westmeath Education Training Board, Municipal Districts, Public Participation Network, Regeneration Unit (Longford County Council), Trade Associations, Older People's Council.

1.2 We will conduct a Seating Audit of towns, villages and County wide amenities and walkways which will include:

- Convenient seating on an interim basis
- Encouraging businesses to include seating in & outside their premises to provide rest areas for older people as they shop
- Creative use of up-cycling and recycling of raw materials to create unique and functional Age Friendly seating County wide

Outputs

- Meaningful rest areas for older people encouraging active participation in local communities

Lead Partners: Longford, Ballymahon & Granard Municipal Districts

Key Partners: Age Friendly Town Committees where applicable, Gateway Co-ordinators, Longford Business Forum & Trade Associations, Longford Community Resources Ltd (LCRL) and Longford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), Longford County Council, Men's Sheds programmes.

- 1.3** We will examine existing models of best practice, such as The Mall in Longford Town, and aim to provide Dog Litter Disposal facilities in other recreation and green spaces, including the Canal Walk. We will continue to monitor by-laws in relation to dogs and other animals.
- 1.4** We will further enhance and replicate the Green Gym scheme which operates very successfully in The Mall in Longford Town, The Green in Edgeworthstown and Leebeen Park in Aughnaccliffe. We will also consider further facility development in various amenity areas throughout the County. We will promote awareness of these activities through increased signage and a range of promotional campaigns.

Outputs

- A greater awareness of our green spaces for social and recreational activities, and age friendly exercise opportunities.

Lead Partner: Longford County Council

Support Partners: Dog Warden, Local Authority Residents Committees, Longford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and Longford Community Resources Ltd (LCRL), Longford Sports Partnership, Longford, Ballymahon & Granard Municipal Districts, Older People's Council, Private Residents Committees, Public Participation Network.

1.5 Looking at the success of programmes such as Tidy Towns, Adopt a Road and Community Cleanup, we will drive community involvement in maintaining road side verges and road visibility. We will develop an awareness campaign and dissemination of information regarding biodiversity, and appropriate hedge cutting times into this programme.

Outputs

- There will be prevention of flooding on smaller country roads, making it safer for walkers and motorists alike to get to where they need to go to.

Lead Partner: Longford County Council

Support Partners: Longford, Ballymahon & Granard Municipal Districts, Irish Farmers Association, Local Schools, Longford Heritage Office, Longford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) and Longford Community Resources Ltd. (LCRL), National Parks & Wildlife, Older People's Council, Public Participation Network, The Probation Services, Tidy Towns groups.



Transportation

What is working well for Older People

- *Train Service is very good and we have good transport links to Dublin*
- *Ample Disabled Parking Bays around the County*
- *Rural Transport services are a lifeline to many older people across Longford*
- *Respect for older people on public transport seating – providing seating when required*

Issues raised by Older People

- Lack of communication between Bus Éireann and private operators in terms of scheduling and route planning
- Taxis are expensive
- Some rural bus services (both public and private) have been cancelled at short notice. Other current services can be irregular
- The rural transport scheme is essential, but there is a lack of awareness among the local community as to how it operates
- Certain bus services do not allow sufficient time between arrival at destination, and departure time

What we want to achieve

Older People will get to where they want to go, when they want.

Actions

2.1 We will form a multi agency Transport Working Group to adopt a more co-ordinated approach to all transport needs across the County. This will include supporting and monitoring the work of the existing Transport Coordination Unit led by Longford Westmeath Community Transport Association Ltd, which has remit for all transport coordination in County Longford. Our Transport Working Group will

help with identifying gaps in services, mapping of all routes and services in Longford, and helping to promote accessibility for all. It will also be cognisant of the following:

- Appropriate route planning
- Investigate opportunities for maximising existing transport resources (e.g. school transport) to ensure a better all around service
- Better communication with healthcare providers and hospitals for appointment scheduling
- Adequate seating & shelter at bus stops
- Maximising opportunities for older people to use free travel
- Link with the local community bus providers (an example being the Garda Bus) to ensure maximised use of these services
- Investigate the viability of expanding the Community car scheme, which operates successfully in Westmeath, and is currently being piloted in Longford

Outputs

- Better collaborative working when planning and developing transport services. This will help to deliver a more cost effective and timely connectivity for all
- Better use of existing transport resources, and increased availability of transport for older people

Lead Partner: Longford County Council & Longford Westmeath Community Transport Association Ltd.

Support Partners: An Garda Síochána, Bus Éireann, Health Service Executive Transport rep, Longford Community Resources Ltd (LCRL), Longford Westmeath Transport Co-Ordination Unit, Not for Profit groups such as Irish Wheelchair Association, Older People’s Council, Private operators, Public Participation Network.

2.2 We will aim to get appropriate and meaningful transport representation, to engage with the Alliance and to prioritise transport issues.

Output

- Transport and connectivity issues will be represented and supported in a collaborative way

Lead Partner: Age Friendly Alliance

Support Partners: Bus Éireann, Department of Transport, Longford Westmeath Community Transport Association Ltd, National Transport Authority, Private Operators.

- 2.3** We will investigate the development of an information hub to link in with rural transport services and reflect local knowledge and needs around scheduling and route planning.

Output

- To ensure the capacity of existing rural transport services is being maximised

Lead Partners: Longford Westmeath Community Transport Association Ltd & Older People's Council

Support Partners: Age Friendly Alliance, Longford Community Resources Ltd (LCRL), Longford County Council, Longford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC).

- 2.4** We will continue monitoring of the condition of disabled parking bays and pedestrian crossings, ensuring that they are clearly indicated and marked. We will raise awareness of the locations of these bays County wide, and that they are available for use by appropriate users.

Output

- An increased awareness and appropriate use of Disabled Parking Bays across the County

Lead Partner: Longford County Council

Support Partners: Age Friendly Alliance, An Garda Síochána, Longford Joint Policing Committee (JPC), Older People's Council, Public Participation Network.

Housing

What is working well for Older People

- Adequate housing stock to good standard
- Some well designed housing estates – with lots of amenity space, which older people identified as important
- Living in their own homes independently is important to older people
- Longford has been very proactive in terms of unfinished estates such as ensuring drop kerbs and tactile paving are in place where needed

Issues raised by Older People

- Older people feel that they need more support to continue to live independently
- Policing of privately rented dwellings, particularly with regard to anti-social behaviour is an area of concern for older people.
- Older people would like more information about, and access to grants to improve security, e.g. locks and alarms
- Improved street lighting is needed in existing housing developments and new builds, to make older people feel safer
- Complex application forms and procedures can be a barrier for older people

What we want to achieve

Older People can stay living in their own homes and communities, and feel a sense of safety at home and while out and about.

Actions

- 3.1** Make information and application forms on Housing Aid Grants more easily accessible for all. Ensure the application process is clear, and transparent. Publications, including grant application forms will be written in plain English.

Outputs

- A greater awareness of the availability of, and access to housing grants and supports

Lead Partner: Longford County Council Housing Department

Support Partners: Age Friendly Alliance Partners, County Library Services, Longford Citizens Information, Media partners, Older People's Council, Public Participation Network.

- 3.2** An Garda Síochána will adopt a County version of the National An Garda Síochána Older Person's Strategy and customize the action plan based on the needs their own community.
- 3.3** Following successful pilot of the Crime Prevention Ambassador Programme in Cavan and Meath, Longford will adopt this programme, which will include key component such as
- Regular visits to older people living in isolation and on their own
 - Advice and information on crime preventions and home security systems
 - Providing a strong link between An Garda Síochána and those most isolated and vulnerable in the community
 - Supporting the growth the Older Persons Register
- 3.4** A series of community clinics will be held to support residents in raising awareness of the actions needed in raising issues about anti-social behaviour in privately rented dwellings.

Outputs

- All residents feel supported and confident when needing to raise issues in relation home security
- Effective communication links between An Garda Síochána and older people living throughout County Longford
- Timely and effective proactive responses by An Garda Síochána to older people

Lead Partner: An Garda Síochána

Support Partners: Community text alert and Neighbourhood Watch groups, Longford County Council, Longford Joint Policing Committee

(JPC), Longford Volunteer Centre (Longford Community Resources Ltd), Muintir Na Tire, Older People's Council, Private Rental Tenancies Board (PRTB), Residents' Associations (Private & Local Authority).

3.5 Using the successful model of the 'Cul Taca' (Home Broker) programme running in County Louth, we will seek to adopt and replicate this programme in Longford. This will help to ensure that older people have access to, and avail of the wide range of supports and services that are available in addition to the Clinical Care Package.

Output

- Older people will be enabled to live independently at home for longer, with appropriate and timely access to healthcare supports

Lead Partner: Health Service Executive (HSE)

Support Partners: County Disability Steering Group, Health Service Executive Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Longford Community Resources Ltd (LCRL), Mental Health Services, NFP organisations such as St Vincent De Paul & Meals on Wheels, Older People's Council.



Social Participation

What is working well for Older People

- *There is large number of active age clubs, ICA groups and bridge clubs, family resource centres, knit & stitch groups*
- *Days trips to places of interest are run throughout the year*
- *Train station – is great amenity to help older people get around the country*
- *Schools have run a number of intergenerational initiatives – e.g. grandparents are invited into school*
- *The annual Bealtaine Festival is a great event for older people*

Issues Raised by Older People

- Better communication about the range of clubs and events available is needed, with the co-ordination and awareness of events between various groups
- There is a need for varied communication platforms to ensure that information is disseminated to everyone
- Poor internet access, and slow Broadband in many parts of the County
- While there are day trips arranged regularly, costs can be an issue
- Isolation especially for those in rural areas is still a problem, primarily due to lack of transport and poor communication
- There is a need for more drop-in meeting places (focused on older people) – to give opportunities to meet peers and to connect with the wider community

What we want to achieve

Older People can fully engage and participate with the wider community, and isolation is minimised.

Actions

- 4.1** In order to establish a clear communication model, we will work with the Older People's Council to identify the most popular methods accessing information by older people across Longford. We will

devise a communication strategy for maximising the means of sharing information through a variety of media.

- 4.2** In partnership with key organisations, we will seek to broaden the provision of and access to training in the use of technology for social and leisure purposes to include:
- Mobile phones and other technological devices
 - Internet usage including online service provision
 - E-mail
 - Skype and Face time
 - Explore the opportunities for intergenerational learning such as skills transfers with Transition Year students/Youth Clubs. This could link to existing programmes such as the President’s Gaisce Award
 - Expansion of the current ‘Friendly Phone Call Service’, which is a good model for communication and supporting isolated older people
- 4.3** We can also investigate the possibility of schools being used as ‘Community Hubs’ out of school hours, and during the summer holidays and other downtime periods. A school is a focal point of many rural communities and could serve as a key resource in terms of tackling rural isolation.

Outputs

- An increase in the number of older people who are confident using digital technology
- Better communication and opportunities for older people to access information
- Better engagement with older people who are isolated and socially disadvantaged

Lead Partner: Older People’s Council

Support Partners: Age Friendly Alliance Partners, Age Friendly County Office, Community Centres/Day Care Centres, Library Services, Local media outlets, Longford Community Resources Ltd (LCRL), Public Participation Network, and Secondary Schools/Youth Clubs.

- 4.4** Encourage local cafes, resource centres and community halls to host and promote regular Age Friendly Meet-ups.
- 4.5** Set up a meeting hub through the branch library network, which could host regular events such as coffee mornings or book clubs targeting older people specifically. Encourage a ‘Bring a friend/Neighbour’ to these events.

Outputs

- Older People will have a space to meet up with others in a relaxed atmosphere

Lead Partners: Service Providers across Longford and the County Library Services

Support Partners: Chamber of Commerce, Longford Business Forum, Longford Older Persons’ Network, Media Outlets, Older People’s Council, Trade Associations, Public Participation Network.

- 4.6** We will continue to provide, and scale up an accessible sports and activities programme, based on the outcomes of a recently conducted Facilities audit, and needs identified by the Older People’s Council. This will include:
- Continued focus on facility development – Outdoor gyms (Green Gym Programme), multi use games areas, Bocce Courts, walking paths
 - Demand driven, Active Age Programming which is cost effective for participants. This currently consists of 6 week block programming including activities such as Active Age Aqua fit, Walking groups, ‘Chairobics’, Pilates/Flexibility classes. We will ensure that participants are encouraged to continue their participation with new activities

Outputs

- Increased participation of older people in physical activities and sport
- Promotion of active and healthy ageing

Lead Partner: Longford Sports Partnership

Support Partners: Health Service Executive (HSE), Longford County Council, Longford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) &

Longford Community Resources Ltd, Longford Pool and Leisure Centre, Municipal Districts, Older People's Council, Private Operators within the sports/leisure sector.

- 4.7 Ensure that there is appropriate representation from the Older People's Council on Working Groups and Committees. The terms of reference for such Groups will include ensuring participation by older persons.

Outputs

- A more cohesive transport policy, and improved transportation links will help all older people to participate more fully with Active Age Groups and Social events taking place throughout Longford and nationally. This can help to tackle loneliness and isolation, particularly for those in rural Longford.

Lead Partner: Older People's Council

Support Partners: Age Friendly Alliance, Longford County Council, Longford Westmeath Community Transport Association Ltd, Members of the Transport Working Group, Public Participation Network, Strategic Policy Committees, Local Community Associations, Longford Community Resources Ltd. (LCRL), Longford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC).



Respect & Social Inclusion

What is working well for Older People

- *Longford is a good place to live and grow old*
- *The current Older Person Network is great, and Longford Community Resources Ltd is very effective*
- *The volunteering ethos is strong in Longford*

Issues raised by Older People

- Older people have a lack of understanding of process and how to influence policies on both local and national levels.
- The rural voice, particularly of those isolated needs greater representation in all aspects of life in County Longford
- There seems to be a lack of intergenerational engagement, and a disconnect with younger generations
- There is an anxiety that older people's skills and knowledge are not being used, along with the eroding of wisdom and core values
- We need to ensure all voices are heard, not just people in active age groups – the minority groups people with dementia, disabilities, the frail elderly also need representation
- Opportunity to use venues around the County to facilitate older people's gatherings, which is currently not being exploited

What we want to achieve

Older people will be truly valued and their contribution to society respected.

Actions

- 5.1** The Longford Older People's Council will be established, to include representation from individuals, older people's groups and associations, day care centres, nursing homes and residential centres, and remote geographical areas to ensure all older persons voices are heard and represented.

Outputs

- A strongly inclusive and representative structure of, and for, older people in County Longford.

Lead Partner: Longford County Council

Support Partners: Age Friendly Alliance, Citizens Information Centres, Department of Social Protection, Longford Community Resources Ltd (LCRL), Minority Groups, Older Persons Network, Public Participation Network, Residential care homes in public and private sector, rural groups.

5.2 Develop intergenerational programmes that build on existing initiatives, including:

- Inviting older people to participate in summer camps for young people
- Intergenerational quizzes and programmes that promote knowledge transfer
- Enabling older people to volunteer in after schools clubs, youth clubs, sports clubs and activities in a mentoring capacity

Outputs

- Increased interaction and engagement between younger people and older people
- Increased mutual understanding between younger people and older people
- A continued fostering of the strong Volunteer Ethos, through all generations

Lead Partner: Longford Westmeath Education & Training Board & Longford Older People's Council

Support Partners: Age Friendly Alliance, Comhairle na nÓg, Community & Voluntary based organisations, County Longford Library Services, County Longford Youth Service (Longford Community Resources Ltd.), Foróige, Longford Volunteer Centre (Longford Community Resources Ltd.), Macra na Feirme, Older People's Council, Public Participation Network, Schools – Primary & Secondary including TY Programmes & Gaisce.

5.3 Working with local Sports clubs (GAA, Rugby, Soccer, Golf) and Longford Sports Partnership we will:

- Promote the need for volunteers in the +50 bracket, to help with coaching, facilitating events and training. Intergenerational days will be organised to help strengthen club ties across generations
- Encourage the use of club premises and halls by older persons groups for meetings and activities

Outputs

- Increased interaction and engagement between younger people and older people
- Increase in the number of older people engaging in physical activity
- Older people engaging with local sports clubs, and better community spirit around sporting events

Lead Partner: Longford Sports Partnership

Support Partners: County Longford Youth Service (Longford Community Resources Ltd.), Foróige, Local Sports Teams and Clubs, Longford County Council, Longford Volunteer Centre (Longford Community Resources Ltd.), Older People's Council, Public Participation Network.



Civic Participation & Employment

What is working well for Older People

- *Post retirement, people enjoy using their skills to help others*
- *Longford Volunteer Centre is a good resource*
- *The Local Enterprise Office provides course for start your own business*

Issues raised by Older People

- There is a lack of information readily available regarding grants, rights and entitlements and application processes, affecting older people's ability to engage with these opportunities
- Attitudes to hiring older people are poor – wealth of knowledge and experience not being tapped into
- Retirees are a resource, and could be approached for mentoring advice
- Older people are interested in, but reluctant to start their own businesses due to perceived high start up costs
- Understanding the Local Authority planning process is difficult
- Increasing car and travel insurance costs for retired people is a barrier

What we want to Achieve

Older people can participate fully in social, economic and public life.

Actions

- 6.1** In partnership with the Local Enterprise Office and the Business Community, we will promote economic opportunities for older people by developing and rolling out 'Age Friendly' Start Your Own Business and Social & Senior Enterprise programmes.
- 6.2** We will consider the adaptation of a "Skills Co-operative" which would consist of a database of retired workers detailing their skills and their availability.
- 6.3** We will encourage the potential for job-sharing or casual work, older people to provide grinds for students, retired business people to help start up business and as mentoring roles.

Outputs

- Job creation for older and younger people
- Economic growth particularly around senior enterprise and senior entrepreneurship.
- Opportunities for older people to be involved in social enterprise and identify models of good practice
- Encourage a positive culture around aging and participation
- Create opportunities for retired people to engage with the workplace, leading to skills transfer and creation of positive role models
- Encourage transfer of wisdom and knowledge

Lead Partner: Longford Local Enterprise Office

Support Partners: Age Friendly Alliance Partners, Chamber of Commerce, Citizens Information Centre, Local SMEs, Longford Business Forum, Longford County Council, Longford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) & Longford Community Resources Ltd. (LCRL), Older People's Council, Retail sector.

6.4 We will ensure that the Longford Older People's Council (as referenced in Theme No. 5—Respect and Social Participation) enables older people to have a voice at the decision making table. It will give them new means to be solution-focused in ways that will respond to and improve service delivery for older people and future generations.

Outputs

- Creates opportunities for older people to influence issues that affect them
- Provides older people with a strong voice
- Demonstrates to older people that they are valued members of society

Lead Partner: Longford County Council

Support Partners: Age Friendly Alliance, Longford Community Resources Ltd (LCRL), Longford Older People's Council, Public Participation Network, Longford Women's Manifesto, Public Participation Network.

6.5 Longford County Council will ensure, and actively promote Age Friendly principles which will be embedded within its existing

structures by examining in-house practices such as communication methods, forms, booklets and feedback mechanisms and make recommendations for age proofing.

- 6.6 In partnership with Age Friendly Ireland, it will consider the roll out of Age Friendly training for library staff, motor taxation, customer service and other relevant front line services in particular.
- 6.7 Local Authority Planners will improve public consultation process by purposely targeting the Older People's Council.

Outputs

- Older People have an input and voice when it comes to building developments which may positively, or negatively impact upon them
- Longford County Council will operate in accordance with Age Friendly principles in all its dealings with older people
- Older people will have more positive experiences and outcomes in their use of services provided by Longford County Council, and will be able to provide feedback on these services in a positive and useful way

Lead Partner: Longford County Council

Support Partners: Age Friendly Ireland, Department of Environment, Community & Local Government, Older People's Council, Public Participation Network.



Communication and Information

What is working well for Older People

- *There is good information available from Citizen's Information Centre, and local media (Longford Leader/Shannonside)*
- *There is good broadband across some parts of the County*
- *Day Care Centres, Post Offices, Churches and Libraries are great source of information*

Issues Raised by Older People

- No integrated or consistent means of communication, and lack of access to information through various media platforms
- There can be a 'fear of technology' and their ability to adapt to it among some older people
- There can be excessive jargon on forms, leading to anxiety when making applications for various services
- Fear about the closures of post offices, which are a huge resource to older people
- Broadband and internet access is still poor in other rural areas of the County
- Some older people may have literacy issues, and are not aware of the Longford Westmeath Education Training Board Adult Literacy Service

What we want to achieve

Older People will have the essential information they need to make informed decisions.

Actions

- 7.1** Complementing and enhancing action 4.1 (Social Participation), and adopting a multi-agency approach, we will develop an Age Friendly Communication Strategy. It will include the following:
- The establishment a Longford specific Age Friendly Website, based on the national Age Friendly portal, as well as Longford Age Friendly County Facebook page

- Dissemination of user friendly, reliable and up to date information which meets the needs of older people in Longford
- Ensure that Age Friendly principles are embedded within existing structures in organisations providing services to older people
- Use plain English when producing information and ensure it is available in an appropriate range of formats
- Explore how information on services may be circulated to meet the diverse requirements of older people
- Ensure automated telephone call routing systems are easy to use and navigate
- Publish a comprehensive Longford Directory of Services for older people, similar to the one produce by Longford Citizens Information Service
- Led by the Longford Older People's Council, and supported by Longford Public Participation Network and Longford Citizens Information Service- produce a quarterly information newsletter for circulation to all older people across Longford
- Host an annual information session as part of the Longford Older People's Council AGM, to share information and encourage participation and to influence the priorities of the Longford Age Friendly programme
- Develop a calendar of events and incorporate into the Age Friendly website
- Work with media partners to secure a regular Age Friendly Community Bulletins on Shannonside FM, and a regular section in the local press dedicated to Age Friendly matters
- Establish a volunteer Community Information Ambassador programme to meet with groups around Longford

Outputs

- Greater awareness and understanding of the Age Friendly concept and in particular the diverse range of needs of older people
- Improved service delivery to older people
- Greater promotion of National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) guidelines and the use of plain language
- Better use of existing resources and services
- Older people will be supported to stay living in their own homes and connected to their own communities

Lead Partner: Age Friendly County Office & Longford County Council

Support Partners: Age Friendly Alliance, An Garda Síochána, Citizens Information Services, Health Service Executive, Longford Business Forum, Longford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) & Longford Community Resources Ltd. (LCRL), Longford Local Enterprise Office, Media Partners, Muintir na Tíre, Older People's Council, Public Participation Network.

- 7.2** Create an information hub in local Post Offices and Libraries with increased access to information on grants, services, application forms, local events and other critical services.

Outputs

- Ensure older people have easy access to important and relevant information to them, in places they use regularly such as Post Offices and Libraries
- May increase foot fall in local Post Offices, and alleviate fears of closure of this service in isolated communities

Lead Partner: Longford County Library

Support Partners: Age Friendly Alliance, An Post, Citizens Information Centre, Local Services, Longford County Council, Longford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) & Longford Community Resources Ltd. (LCRL), Older People's Council, Public Participation Network.



Community Support & Health Services

What is working well for Older People

- *Primary Care Centre is very good at Ballyminion, Longford*
- *Services such as St. Joseph's day care are a great resource*
- *Health Service Executive (HSE) Home Help Services good – but could be extended and longer visits provided*
- *Canal walk is lovely – promotes peace of mind. Great physical activities in the Mall for the active aged. Both help promote positive mental health*
- *The Meals on Wheels is a fantastic service*

Issues raised by Older People

- The long waiting lists at the Health Services. There can be delays of up to 14 months on the Fair Deal Scheme leading to huge financial cost on the family
- There can be duplication of effort between Community Services and Health Services
- Local Health Care Centres are too small. There is a need to centralise services in Primary Care Centres
- Application forms for Health Service Executive (HSE) Services can be daunting to complete due to technical language and small print
- Primary focus on health issues seems to be reactive; there should be more emphasis on prevention
- There is a need for a wide range of home support and care services – from helping with shopping and/ or providing meals to home visits from doctors and other service providers
- GP services are good but stretched. 3 GP's moved out of Longford Town and there no shuttle bus to the new Health Centre

What we want to achieve

Older People will lead healthier, active and more independent lives for longer.

Actions

8.1 Working with the planned ‘Cul Taca’ home brokerage programme (Action 3.3 – under Theme 3: Housing), we will seek to continue to improve both the quality and availability of services across a range of providers. This will ensure we are assisting people with complex needs to continue living in their own homes and communities with the appropriate interventions.

Outputs

- Fewer admissions to residential care
- Greater uptake of relevant services
- Improved health and well being

Lead Partner: Health Service Executive

Support Partners: Age Friendly Alliance, Community Day Care Centres, Health Service Executive Support Partners, Local Community and Development Associations, Older People’s Council.

8.2 Actively promote Longford’s broad range of Health, Community and Mental Health services with an Age Friendly Awareness Campaign as part of an overall policy to improve communication and information.

Outputs

- Improved health and well being of older people
- Improved communication and better access to information
- Increased use of the many services targeted at older people in Longford

Lead Partner: Older People’s Council

Support Partners: GP services, Health Service Executive (HSE) Services, Longford Business Forum, Longford County Council, Longford Sports Partnership, Meals on Wheels, Men’s Sheds programmes, Mental Health Services, Not for profit organisations providing services to older people, Public Participation Network, St Christopher Centre, St Vincent de Paul.

8.3 Building on existing good practice models in the County such as Green Gyms and Communities on the Move, and successful Men’s Shed’s programmes, we will focus on specific programmes targeted at improving mental health.

- 8.4** We will continue to develop walk ways and cycle trails such as the very popular Canal Walk.
- 8.5** Based on best practice guidelines from Healthy Ireland, we will adopt the Healthy Towns Programme to further enhance the promotion of health and well being throughout Longford.

Outputs

- Enhanced mental health and wellbeing for older people and greater awareness raised of wider health and wellbeing issues for older people
- Fewer admissions to residential care
- Greater uptake on relevant services

Lead Partner: Longford Sports Partnership

Support Partners: Age Friendly Alliance, Fáilte Ireland, Health Service Executive (HSE), Longford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) & Longford Community Resources Ltd. (LCRL), Longford Tourism, Mental Health Services, Older People's Council, Private Leisure sector operators, Public Participation Network.

- 8.6** We will assist the HSE in rolling out a series of targeted community based health promotion programmes particularly in rural areas.
- 8.7** The HSE will continue to provide Clinical Home Support and intervention based on needs assessments, with a view to maintaining people in their own homes.
- 8.8** The HSE will continue to provide multi disciplinary services at Primary Care Centres as they are developed.
- 8.9** The HSE will consider including the Older People's Council in the consultation process when developing new Primary Care Centres.

Outputs

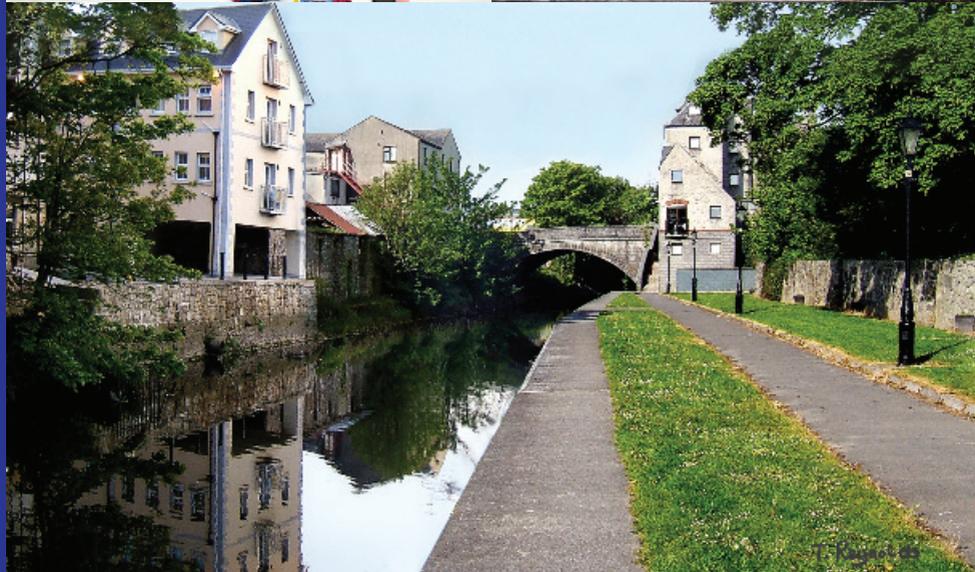
- Isolated members of the community are targeted for prevention programmes

- Older People are enabled to stay living in their own homes
- Essential services are conveniently located in a central accessible location
- Older peoples voices are heard and they contribute to development of health services in Longford

Lead Partner: Health Service Executive (HSE)

Support Partners: General Practitioners, Longford County Council (Community & Enterprise Section), Longford Sports Partnership, Mental Health Services, Older People's Council, Primary Care Centres.







LONGFORD
Age Friendly County

