



Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Transportation

Housing

Respect and Social Inclusion

Social Participation

Civic Participation and Employment

Communication & Information

Community Support and Health Services

Donegal Age Friendly Strategy

.....
Straitéis Aoisbhá
Dhún na nGall

Contents

Réamhfocal / Foreword	1
Introduction and Background	3
Theme 1 Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	8
Action 1.1	Develop Letterkenny as a pilot Age Friendly Town
Action 1.2	Age Proofing County Donegal
Theme 2 Transportation	12
Action 2.1	Transport Auditing and Provision
Action 2.2	Establishment of a County Transport Steering Committee
Theme 3 Housing	14
Action 3.1	Supporting Independent Living in the Community
Action 3.2	Implementation of a range of collaborative crime prevention measures
Action 3.3	Assisting Older People in becoming winter ready
Theme 4 Respect and Social Inclusion	20
Action 4.1	Creation of the County Donegal Older People's Forum
Action 4.2	Delivery of Age Friendly Training to Public Service Bodies
Theme 5 Social Participation	23
Action 5.1	Raising Awareness of the range of training and education opportunities which are available to older
Action 5.2	Increased Opportunities for Participation in Social, Cultural and Community Activities
Action 5.3	Increased participation by Older People in Sport
Theme 6 Civic Participation and Employment	30
Action 6.1	Enterprise Mentoring Programme
Action 6.2	Age Friendly Business Programme
Theme 7 Communication & Information	32
Action 7.1	Awareness raising about the Age Friendly approach
Action 7.2	Implementation of the Cúl Taca Programme
Action 7.3	Donegal Age Friendly Directory of Information
Theme 8 Community Support and Health Services	37
Action 8.1	Investigate the possibility of implementing Age Friendly principles within Hospital facilities in the County.
Action 8.2	Promotion of the Fall Prevention Programme
Action 8.3	Promotion of Physical Activity Programmes
Action 8.4	Quality of Life Programme
Action 8.5	Ensure that Connect Donegal - the county wide suicide prevention action plan delivers actions to prevent suicide in older people.
The Way Forward	43

Réamhfhocal

Tá lúchair ar Chomhaontas Aoisbhá Contae Dhún na nGall an Straitéis a thacaíonn le Daoine Breacaosta a láinseáil.

Bunaíodh an straitéis seo tar éis comhairliúchán fhorleathan leis na hearnáil ábhartha ins an chontae. Bhí ionchur shuntasach ó na daoine breacaosta iad féin, ó na gníomhaireachtaí ábhartha agus ón bpobal go ginearálta. Tá an straitéis bunaithe agus beidh sé ag gníomhú ar bhonn compháirtíochta agus comhoibríoch.



Tarraingíonn ár straitéis ón ocht théama den chreat-aontaithe an Eagraíocht Dhomhanda Sláinte. Díríonn sé ar ár bhfís agus ar ár n-aidhmeanna maidir le Dún na nGall a mhargú mar chontae aoisbháúil le scoth na cáilíochta beatha don aosú pobail.

Tá Straitéis Dhún na nGall mar pháirt den chomh-iarracht náisiúnta ins an earnáil seo. Tá an Straitéis an-dhírthe ar riachtanais atá aitheanta in ár gcontae maidir le soláthar seirbhísí, soláthar taistil agus tugann sé aghaidh ar cheisteanna mar aonrú, an tuath agus a mhalairt. Tá súil againn oibriú lenár gcompháirtithe chun na ceisteanna agus na riachtanais atá aithteanta maidir leis an earnáil seo a chur i ngníomh.

Is mian liom buíochas a ghabháil le compháirtithe an Aontais ar shon á gcuid oibre agus á dtiomantas leanúnach. Mo bhuíochas do na daoine breacaosta a ghlac páirt i ngach gné den chomhairliúchán i bhforbairt na straitéise. Tá á gcuid oibre agus tiomantas lárnach den mhéid atá déanta go dtí seo agus tá á dtiomantas agus compháirtíocht tábhachtach do fheabhsúcháin a dhéanamh agus chun fíor-bhuntaistí a bhaint amach.

Seamus Mac Chongaola

Príomhfheidhmeannach

Comhairle Chontae Dhún na nGall

Foreword

The Donegal Age Friendly Alliance are delighted to launch our Age Friendly County Strategy. This strategy has been produced following widespread consultation with all relevant sectors in the county. There has been significant input from older people themselves, from relevant agencies and from the community in general. The strategy has been produced and will be implemented on a partnership and collaborative basis.



Our Strategy draws on the eight themes of the World Health Organisation agreed framework. It sets out our vision and our aims with regard to the making of Donegal as an age friendly county with a good quality of life for our ageing population.

Our Donegal Strategy forms a part of the overall national collective effort in this field. The Strategy is very much focused on the identified needs in our county in relation to essential services provision, transport provision and addresses issues such as isolation, rural and urban. We look forward to working with all of our partners to identify and carry out actions to address these issues and needs relating to this sector.

I would like to acknowledge the work of all the Alliance partners and thank them for their effort and ongoing commitment. I also wish to thank the older people who took part in all aspects of the consultations that informed the development of the strategy. Their work and commitment has been central to what has been done so far and their commitment and engagement will be vital to ensuring that improvements are made and that real benefits are delivered.

Seamus Neely

Chief Executive

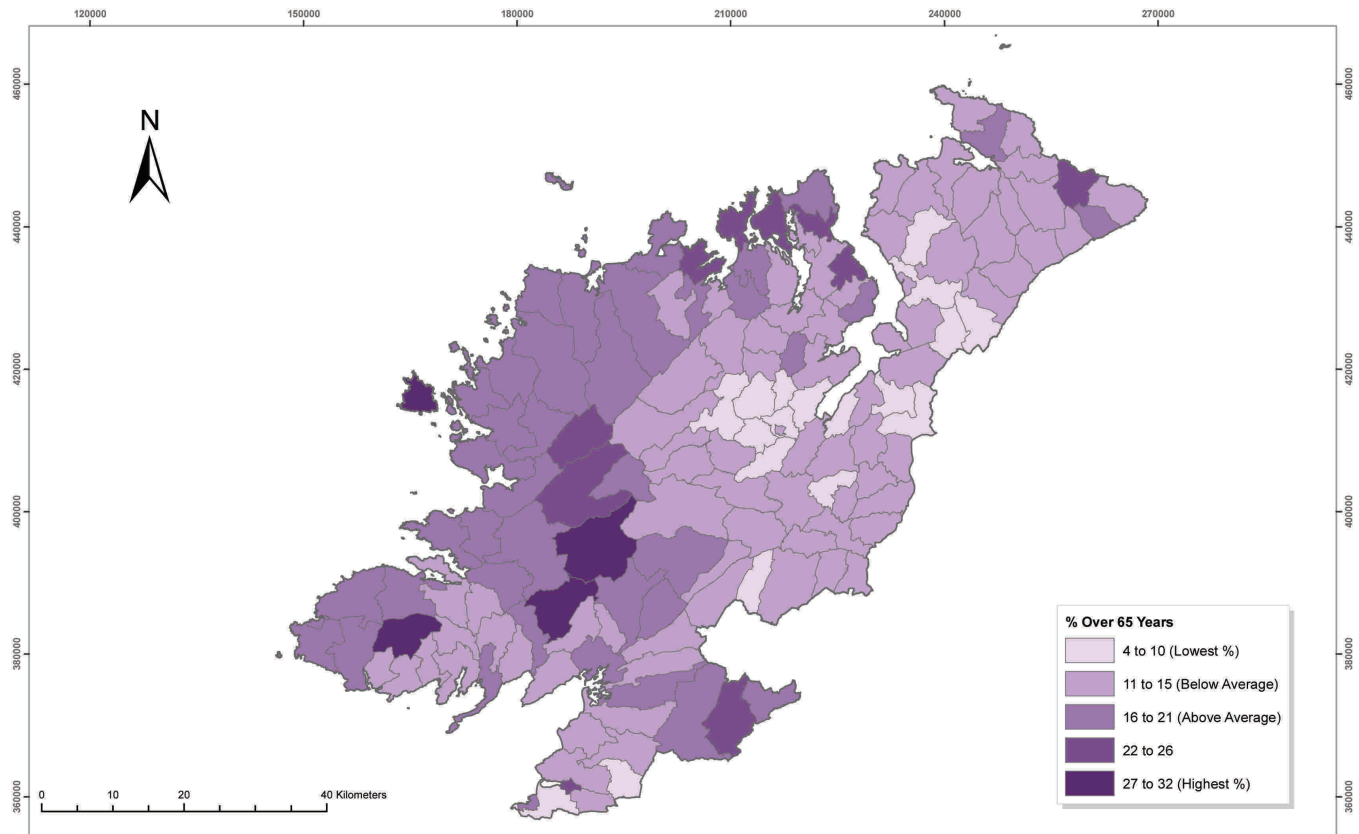
Donegal County Council

Introduction & Background

Context

The world's older population is increasing, with people living longer and healthier lives, and experiencing older age very differently from their grandparents' generation. In Ireland, though the change is happening later than other European countries, the number of people over 65 (for decades around 11% of the population) is rising and may stand at around 20% of the population by 2036, and will include many more people aged over 80.

However, this does not have to represent an increased 'burden' on society, because older people can and do contribute through paid employment, unpaid volunteer work and caring.



County Donegal Local Economic & Community Plan Elderly Population

Source: CSO 2011, Ordnance Survey Ireland, Copyright Ordnance Survey of Ireland License Number 2014/CCMA Donegal County Council
Produced: RIM, Research & Policy Unit
www.spaceialnw.eu @spaceialnw

People in County Donegal are living longer and this is a testimony to the improvements in health care, nutrition and superior quality of life in our County. In Donegal, our population of older people is 21,471 which is 13.3% of people living in the County. There was a 17% increase in the numbers of persons aged over 65 years from 18,411 in 2006 to 21,471 in 2011. This is higher than the change experienced in the State @ 14.4%.

The Donegal Age Friendly Strategy

This Strategy has been developed by the Donegal Age Friendly Alliance in consultation and co-operation with older people in Donegal. The goals and objectives within this strategy, when implemented by the Alliance stakeholders, will promote and maintain the best possible health and well-being of our older people, and make County Donegal a great place to grow old in. The Donegal Age Friendly Alliance was formally established in early 2014 and consists of stakeholders that are relevant to the development of the older persons sector in the county and can promote positive approach to ageing.

The Donegal Age Friendly Alliance has been chaired by the Chief Executive of Donegal County Council and comprises the following stakeholders:

- Donegal County Council
- Health Service Executive
- An Garda Síochána
- Donegal Education & Training Board
- Letterkenny Institute of Technology
- Voice of Older People Donegal
- Donegal County Community Forum
- Inishowen Development Partnership
- Cooperation and Working Together –
- SITT Rural Transport – Seirbhís Iompair Tuaithe Teoranta
- Older Persons Representatives

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 Donegal and “future proof” Donegal for future generations in the coming years. The identified actions within this strategy have been crafted based on needs identified by older people through an extensive consultation process and input from a wide range of statutory and non statutory stakeholders to ensure that the proposals in this strategy can best delivery on the identified needs and requirements.

An “Age Friendly” Donegal

An Age Friendly County has been described by the organisation 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 related needs and preferences flexibly to ageing.

Our ambition to be Age Friendly means that Donegal will:

- Become one of the greatest Counties in Ireland to grow old in.
- Have easily accessible public buildings, shops and services;
- Incorporate older people’s views into significant decisions being made in the County;



- Promote a positive attitude to ageing and address stereotypes about older people;
- Create opportunities for older people to be engaged in their communities socially, as employees and as volunteers.
- To create an environment where people will continue to live independently in their own homes and communities for as long as possible.

This is a far-reaching strategy with a number of new cross cutting actions that will be delivered by a number of organisations over the three year implementation period. Many of the actions will have a very tangible impact on the County, while others, will be more subtly felt.

Why a new approach?

The Age Friendly County and City Programme has allowed us to create a vision whereby listening directly to the voice of older people across the County, raising issues in a solution focussed way that can provide practical responses to improved service delivery.



The research and consultation process included meeting directly with groups of older people that formed a sample demographic of the older person population of the County, questionnaire based research, targeted focus groups with older people, structured meetings with relevant stakeholders to elicit responses to the findings of an issues raised through the consultation process



As a result of this 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. All the issues that have been highlighted in the consultation process and the suggestions of the older people of how these issues could be addressed were considered by the Alliance and the actions that are contained in this strategy have been developed in response to the issues and suggested solutions of our older population. Because of the robustness of the process and the richness of the data, we are confident that this strategy is firmly evidence based.

Population ageing has been described as the greatest challenge facing the developed world today. Across the globe we are seeing a shift in the distribution of population towards older ages and this has considerable implications for the way that society works, the services that will need to be provided and the relationship between young and old.

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:

1. Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
2. Transportation
3. Housing
4. Respect and Social Inclusion
5. Social Participation
6. Civic Participation and Employment
7. Communication and Information
8. Community Support and Health Services

The vision of the Donegal Age Friendly Strategy is that County Donegal will be a great place to grow old in, enjoyed and appreciated by everyone for its quality of life.

In particular, the implementation of this strategy will result in the development of a society where:

- People of all ages can benefit through design of communities that are age friendly, and where older people live healthy, active and full lives, in an independent way in their own homes and communities for as long as possible.
- Older people's talents, life experience and wisdom are valued and utilised in the best possible way.



The Donegal Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)

The Donegal LECP identifies objectives and actions to strengthen and develop the economic and community dimensions of the county. It consists of 7 goals as follows:

1. Develop Donegal as a Connected Place.
2. Harness Donegal's Natural and Human Capital.
3. Value and develop our Culture and Creative Resource.
4. Promote Sustainable and Inclusive Communities.
5. Develop Donegal as a lead region for Learning, Research and Innovation.
6. Develop the 'Donegal' brand.
7. Promote Entrepreneurship, Investment and Enterprise.

The Age Friendly Strategy for Donegal is consistent with and supports the Donegal LECP and it represents an important mechanism through which the objectives and actions of the LECP will be implemented. It is particularly aligned to Goal 4, 'Promote Sustainable & Inclusive Communities.'



The outside environment and public buildings have a major impact on the mobility, independence and quality of life of older people and affect their ability to “age in place”. In consultation, older people and others who interact significantly with them describe a broad range of characteristics of the urban and rural landscape and built environment that contribute to age-friendliness. The recurring themes are access, safety and availability of seating areas which are viewed as necessary feature for older people.

Outdoor space and buildings need to be planned and designed so as to be safe and accessible for older people. Older people outlined the importance of local amenities during the consultation phase of the strategy preparation, mentioning that parks, open areas, walking routes, beaches and the coastline are much appreciated by residents. Older people also use facilities such as Leisure Centres, Libraries and Resource Centres regularly.

“ We have lots of green areas but another few benches about the towns would be helpful”

“ What the County lacks in infrastructure, it makes up for in community spirit and a beautiful landscape”





Action 1.1- Develop Letterkenny as a pilot Age Friendly Town

Issues Raised by Older People from Letterkenny in the Consultation Process

- Accessibility of streets and public buildings in Letterkenny is an issue
- The physical environment in Letterkenny needs to be more Age Friendly (Footpaths, parking spaces)
- Age Friendly Bus Facilities and seating in public areas needs to be more readily available
- Access to and ease of use of key services in the community, insufficient car parking spaces for older people close to amenities and facilities would be most welcome
- Many outdoor facilities contain trip hazards
- Garda Presence and a feeling of safety is vital to accessing services
- Additional signage required to cater for needs of older people
- Older people would welcome opportunities to take part in more social activities, including, sport and cultural activities
- Difficult to find out about what activities are happening in the town

Proposed Action

Develop Letterkenny as the first Age Friendly Town in Donegal allowing it to be a model of best practice for adoption Countywide. The objective of Age Friendly Towns is to significantly improve the quality of life of older people living in the area using a community based approach

In practice, this project will see:

- Ongoing developments in improving the age friendliness of public buildings and spaces in Letterkenny
- Improvements in quality and quantity of services being provided to assist independent living
- A multi stakeholder approach to addressing identified transport needs into and around Letterkenny
- The implementation of initiatives such as age friendly training and crime prevention programmes to address safety concerns for older people
- Provide additional social participation opportunities for older people in Letterkenny
- Provide a central availability source for information on services that are essential to older people



Age Friendly Town - in 4 Steps



Outputs

- A multi stakeholder, collaborative approach to developing age friendly initiatives in Letterkenny
- Better integration of service provision including transport, hospitality, post offices, hospital, pharmacies and financial institutes.
- Shops and supermarkets become 'Age Friendly' with better signage, suitable noise levels, provision of seating, queue management etc.,
- Improved accessibility of the Town
- Improvement of the "age friendliness" of Letterkenny as a residential area and the main essential service provision location in the County

Project Partners

Donegal County Council
Community & Voluntary sector organisation
Disability support groups
Health Service Executive

Local Business Community
An Garda Síochána
Transport providers
Donegal ETB



Action 1.2 - Age Proofing County Donegal

Issues Raised by Older People specifically around the physical environment

- Accessibility of streets and public buildings in towns and villages is an issue for older people
- The physical environment in towns and villages needs to be more Age Friendly
- Transport facilities need to be as age friendly as possible
- Public seating is a vital resource for older people and its provision sometimes gets overlooked
- Access to and ease of use of key services buildings is vital for older people

Proposed Action

Physical design is determined by central Government, which results in its implementation at local level. Age proofing future developments is an example of such an objective and the Donegal Age Friendly Alliance will collaborate with Age Friendly Ireland to influence age friendly policies at national level which will in turn have a positive impact at local level.

From its inception the national Age Friendly programme is committed to helping create age friendly environments and to future proofing Ireland in order to effectively prepare for the rapid increase in our ageing population. The development of relevant guidelines and supports for planners, engineers and architects will play a key role in realising this ambition.

Outputs

To support the realisation of this goal Age Friendly Ireland will engage, initially, in the development of the following relevant strands of work:

- A Resource Guide for Planners and Engineers which will inform Planning and Physical Environment Policy from an Age-Friendly Perspective
- A review of the effectiveness of current assistive living technologies and social interventions employed in a number of relevant case study locations. This is to inform the design and inclusion of relevant technologies and social interventions in Older Adult specific accommodation to support more successful independent living amongst our older population.

The Donegal Age Friendly Programme will support the dissemination and encourage the adoption of the principles and recommendations contained within these tools.

Project Partners

Age Friendly Ireland
Donegal County Council
Donegal Age Friendly Alliance



Transportation, including accessible and affordable public transport, is a key factor influencing active ageing. It is a theme running through many other areas of discussion. In particular, being able to move about the County determines social and civic participation and access to community, health services and economic growth.

It is important to understand the uniqueness of transport issues in County Donegal. The County is the fifth most rurally dispersed county in the state and the fourth largest county in all Ireland.

Along with the fact that Donegal has one of the highest percentages of its population (75%) living in rural areas, it is very important for rural communities to address the weakness in transport infrastructure and services and also prevent the problem of rural isolation.

County Donegal's offshore island populations also face additional challenges for accessing essential services due to their dependence on ferry transport for accessing facilities and services

“Public transport is really important to me as I don't drive. The bus should service areas where community is older but that doesn't happen now”





Action 2.1 - Transport Auditing and Provision

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation

- There is limited access to rural transport in some areas of the county
- Issues with the delivery and further development of the urban bus service
- Concerns about lack of available public transport
- Lack of knowledge of what network of public transport is available.

Proposed Action

Complete an audit of all available transport services in Donegal (private and public buses companies, dedicated rural transport and taxis) and make available through website and print methods.

Outputs

Seirbhís Iompair Tuaithe Teoranta(SITT), trading as Locallink Donegal are the body responsible for the delivery of Rural Transport provision in County Donegal for the National Transport Authority, will research and publish a “County Donegal Transport Audit” which will address a number of the issues raised in particular by Older People and other sources throughout Age Friendly Strategy process.

The “County Donegal Transport Audit” will have a number of suggested outcomes and achievable targets in relation to the availability of transport and suggested initiatives to improve provision. This audit will contain a full overview of the Community Car Scheme and the Rural Hackney Scheme as well as different models of transport provision that are currently in use

The “County Donegal Transport Audit will also act as a resource that outlines the full range of transport services available, identify accessible transport and provide a better understanding of the transport options that are available to older people and result in an increase in number of older people being able to attend local services and activities.

Project Partners

Seirbhís Iompar Tuaithe Teo - Locallink Donegal
Donegal County Council
Other local development organisations



2.2 - Establishment of a County Transport Steering Committee where Social Inclusion, Accessibility and Local Connectivity are a priority in all future planning.

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process:

- Limited access to rural transport in some areas of the county
- No operational services in urban centre - Letterkenny
- Issues with the delivery and further development of the urban bus service
- Concerns about lack of available public transport
- Lack of knowledge of what network of public transport is available.
- Lack of transport available to attend activities and events

Proposed Action

Establishment of a County Transport Steering Committee where Social Inclusion, Accessibility and Local Connectivity are a priority in all future planning.

Project Partners

Seirbhís Iompair Tuaithe Teo – Locallink Donegal.

Donegal County Council

Other local development organisations



Currently in County Donegal over 21,000 people are over the age of 65. Due to the fact that in modern society families are smaller and levels of emigration are higher, it is more common to see older people living on their own. It is not surprising to discover that one of the biggest issues that older people are facing is safety in their own homes and loneliness. Taking into consideration that 29% of population in Donegal who live in private households and are aged 65 and over, are living alone, this makes this group particularly vulnerable.

County Donegal has suffered over the past number of years from effect of crime, in particular burglaries, in many instances targeted at older people. This is the context in which people were consulted on what was important to them and it is no surprise that the ability to live safely, securely and without fear in their homes is of major importance to older people in County Donegal.

“I want to stay in my own home for as long as possible. There is a great sense of community where I live but people are older and unable to help each other”





Action 3.1 – Supporting Independent Living in the Community

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
- Personal safety & security concerns are issues of particular importance to older people
- Cost of heating home in winter and maintenance.
- Ability to carry out essential home improvements and maintenance
- Rural isolation and loneliness
- It's a necessity that good quality day care and other support services are available locally

Proposed Action

Donegal County Council will work with a range of support service providers and community organisations to enhance and sustain the option of older people enjoying a healthy, safe and independent lives at home for as long as possible.

Use will be made of successful pilot models in the area of community support such as the Meitheal support scheme currently being implemented by Ionad Naomh Pádraig, Dobhar and roll the programme out in other areas

Output

An increased sense of safety and wellbeing among older people in their own homes as well as a more inclusive role for the community sector resulting in a more complete independent living support service

Project Partners

Donegal County Council
Community & voluntary sector organisations
Local Development sector
Dept. of Social Protection
Older Peoples Forum



Action 3.2 - Implementation of a range of collaborative crime prevention measures

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process

- Personal safety & security concerns
- Feeling unsafe at home, in particular those living alone
- Rural isolation and loneliness
- Its important for older people that they feel safe in their own homes and communities
- People are fearful of bogus callers

Proposed Action

The provision of a range of crime prevention measures in conjunction with community & voluntary bodies and other relevant stakeholders. Among the potential programmes that may be piloted or are currently available and may be more widely made available to communities include:

Neighbourhood Watch

Neighbourhood Watch is a joint Garda-Community crime prevention programme operating in Ireland since 1985. Each Neighbourhood Watch Scheme has a Liaison Garda to support its activities and the programme has grown to include in excess of 2,000 Neighbourhood Watch Schemes nationally.

Community Alert

The Community Alert programme is a joint Garda and Muintir na Tíre programme. It evolved in response to a rise of crime in rural Ireland, particularly attacks on vulnerable people (including older people) living alone. It is a voluntary crime prevention programme for rural communities and it encourages the community to pro-actively participate with Muintir na Tíre and An Garda Síochana in improving the quality of life and safety of the community in general.

Theft Stop

Theft Stop is a farm theft prevention initiative. This service provides the property owner with a unique Security ID, linked to their IFA membership number, to mark machines and equipment. This initiative has been developed by the IFA and An Garda Síochana and allows Theft Stop to communicate with members in the event of farm machinery theft.



Supporting Safer Communities

Promotion of the 'Supporting Safer Communities' initiative that will see the delivery of Garda information clinics at facilities that are in use by older people and will primarily focus on:

- Crime Prevention/Reduction of Burglary
- Security of the Older Person
- Supporting Victims of Crime
- Bogus Traders / Callers

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design

In building and environmental design, a lack of understanding of how and why criminals commit crime can unwittingly lead to the creation of opportunities, which the criminal readily exploits. Through designing out crime, modern preventative policing seeks to deter the opportunist criminal.

Outputs

Greater partnership approaches to crime prevention
Allaying of community safety & security concerns

Project Partners

An Garda Síochána
Donegal County Council
Donegal Age Friendly Alliance
Donegal Older Persons Forum
Community and voluntary sector



Action 3.3 - Assisting Older People in becoming winter ready

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process:

- Cost of heating home in winter and maintenance is a worry
- Ability to carry out essential home improvements and maintenance
- Rural isolation is a factor if people need help
- Schemes that provide equipment such as fire extinguishers, security lighting or essential repairs would be useful
- Lack of knowledge of what type of support is available and how to avail of it
- Worry around additional household charges such as local property tax, septic tank fees and water charges

Proposed Action

Assist older people to reduce cost of home heating in winter by creating awareness of available schemes and facilitating their availing of them.

Among the initiatives that it is proposed to increase their uptake among older people are:

The **Better Energy Homes** scheme provides grants to homeowners who invest in energy efficiency improvements in one or more of the following areas: Roof Insulation, Wall Insulation, Installation of a High Efficiency Gas or Oil fired Boiler, Heating Control Upgrades and Solar Panels.

The **Warmer Homes Scheme (WHS)** aims to improve the energy efficiency and comfort conditions of homes occupied by vulnerable households in receipt of the National Fuel Allowance Scheme through the installation of draught proofing, attic insulation, lagging jackets, low energy light bulbs and cavity wall insulation where appropriate.

Older adults turning 65 are entitled to their Personal Alarms (panic buttons). In order to promote this scheme and make sure that every older person turning 65 years of age knows about this. Donegal Age Friendly Alliance, along with relevant stakeholders, will work towards informing older people of this, and other, entitlements that can assist in promoting independent living.

The Department of Environment, Community & Local Government make available an annual scheme to Local Authorities where pairs of ionisation and optical **Smoke Alarms** are made available to vulnerable households. Donegal County Council's Social Inclusion Unit, will continue to administer this scheme and liaise with older persons organisations to ensure the most vulnerable households, especially those led by older people are availing of this scheme.

Wide dissemination of the **Be Winter Ready** booklet that has been produced by the office of Emergency Planning, Department of Defence to older people through the networks available to the Donegal Age Friendly Alliance.



Outputs

Increased uptake of available schemes which will contribute to older people being winter ready and contribute to their ability to live independently in their own communities

Project Partners

Donegal County Council

Donegal Age Friendly Alliance

Donegal Older Persons Forum

Local Development Sector

Community & Voluntary Sector



An underlying theme of the Alliance's engagement with older people through this strategy process was that traditionally older people were considered feeble and infirm and required looking after. This strategy will endeavour to acknowledge that older people can make significant contributions to society and attempt to create the platforms where their potential can be realised.

Social contact and relationships enhances individual's health and well being. However there seems to be fewer opportunities for older and younger people to meet and interact. It is important for the local communities to apply an intergenerational approach that brings people together and promotes greater understanding and respect between generations. This inclusive approach helps to build more cohesive communities.

" People don't seem to have the time to communicate as often as years ago. Loneliness is a huge problem"

" Loneliness is a major issue for the aged especially for those living alone. I am not sure what can be done in remote areas. I believe there is a daily phone call service and maybe this could be expanded on"





Action 4.1 - Creation of the County Donegal Older People's Forum

Issues raised by older people in the Consultation Process

- Older People want a forum where everyone is represented and where they can influence and shape the way in which services are provided to them
- Older People want to communicate effectively with all sectors of relevance to them and seek better communication from agencies to older people

Proposed Action

The establishment of, an Older People's Forum as part of the County Donegal Public Participation Network that will allow older people to have a voice on decision making structures.

Output

The Donegal Older Person's Forum will have broad representation from older people and, as part of the Donegal Public Participation Network (PPN) will form part of the County's Local and Community Development Committee structures which will allow the voice of older people to be heard on decision making structures and also for dissemination of information back to local area groups.

Project Partners

Donegal County Council
Donegal LCDC
Donegal PPN



Action 4.2 - Delivery of Age Friendly Training to Public Service Bodies

Issues identified by Older People in the Consultation Process

- Stereotyping, ageism and assumptions of need (for instance assuming older people are hard of hearing).
- Difficulty in accessing services
- A feeling that older people are not always treated with the respect they deserve

Proposed Action

The delivery of Age Friendly Awareness Training to public sector agency staff. Topics to be covered will include; age awareness training, tailoring published material to it's potential audience using NALA guidelines, making use of plain English and involving older people in consultation on services that impact them

Outputs

Service provider organisations will have a better understanding of older people's issues, resulting in a more age friendly focus in the delivery of services that are targeted at, or have an effect on, older people in County Donegal.

Project Partners

Donegal Age Friendly Alliance
Donegal Older Persons Forum



Social Participation is strongly connected to good health and well being. In its simplest form Social Participation can be summarized as “things to do and places to go” but it is much more than that. Participating in various social and leisure activities provides health and wellbeing benefits that are well documented.

It allows older people to maintain relationship with others and it helps people to stay informed and connected with local communities. The people consulted stated that ability to participate in social life is closely linked with having access to adequate transport and means to access information about activities.

“ We have very good over 65 club which we all enjoy. We meet once a week and have many outings. I enjoy mixing with other clubs, people my own age”





Action 5.1 - Raising Awareness of the range of training and education opportunities which are available to older people

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process

- Basic communication and information sourcing required computer skills that older people don't possess.
- Low levels of older people using computer technologies
- Few older people using texts or emails
- Very little knowledge of the type of courses that are available
- It would be beneficial if useful courses were held locally

Proposed Action

Raise awareness through the Older Persons Forum and other relevant networks of the range of training and education opportunities that are available that will assist older people in meeting their education needs

Donegal ETB Adult Guidance & Information Service

The Information Service is open to members of the public who are seeking information about Donegal ETB's courses and programmes for adults, as well as those available through other providers. A hard-copy prospectus outlining courses and contact details of relevant personnel is also available free of charge.

Community Education

Donegal ETB's Community Education Programme supports the delivery of adult and further education courses in the community through provision of funding for tuition costs and support in the setting up of courses. The Programme targets educationally disadvantaged adults who do not normally avail of educational courses and who may not have the financial means to engage in normal circumstances. By its nature, community education provision is driven by the needs of the community and organised locally.

This 'bottom up' approach ensures that adult education in a community setting is always addressing the educational needs of the local community. The Community Education Programme funds a wide range of courses from short unaccredited courses to Major FETAC Awards. Courses cover an extensive range of topics, including art, yoga, health & nutrition, crafts introductory ICT courses, history and genealogy.

Older adults wishing to avail of courses may

- Join an existing class already being delivered by a community group in their area
- Set up a specific group for themselves based on interest and need and apply for funding and other assistance through the programme



Adult Basic Education

Donegal ETB's Basic Education Programme (Learning for Living) offers tuition to adults who are unsure of their skills and knowledge in reading, writing, spelling, maths, numbers. The programme offers learning that is tailored to the needs of each student in a supportive and friendly environment. Time is given to acquire skills and tutors are aware that progress is often made in small stages. Students can choose to accredit their study with FETAC Major and Minor Awards offered from Level 1 to Level 4 and State Examination Commission (SEC) examinations. Adults who wish to pursue non-accredited options may also do so. These courses are free to all adults and the service is confidential and provided on a county-wide basis

Outputs

Increase in the number of older people who are aware of the training and education opportunities that are available to them

Project Partners

Donegal ETB
Donegal Age Friendly Alliance
Donegal Older Persons Forum



Action 5.2 - Increased Opportunities for Participation in Social, Cultural and Community Activities

Issues raised by older people in the Consultation Process:

- Scope for greater involvement of older people in the community activities
- Mens Sheds & Community Gardens are a great resource for older people especially men
- Lower levels of older people accessing sporting opportunities
- Lack of information or access to services in local areas
- Many older people are not engaging in activities or events in their local community
- Older people would like to volunteer more, and have opportunities to contribute their skills and experience

Proposed Action

Enhancing opportunities for older people's participation in social, cultural and community activities through further developing the following areas and increasing their focus on older persons participation:

Donegal County Council Cultural Services

- Cultural Services will consult with Donegal Older Persons Forum to remove barriers and ensure services are as accessible as possible.
- Cultural Services will deliver a year round programme of events suitable for older people, which includes literature, music, film, theatre, exhibitions, lectures, seminars, workshops, reminiscence, intergenerational and other activities. Most events are free. As well as quality events in themselves, these are opportunities to meet other people in neutral venues.
- Cultural Services will deliver a broad range of events countywide during the annual Bealtaine festival, in association with other Council Services and external partners.
- Through the PPN, Cultural Services will encourage Older People to join internal contact lists for updates and information on events and other items of interest.
- Cultural Services will facilitate, where possible, the use of the spaces which are available in its network of public buildings for daytime use by groups for meetings, classes, book clubs or other related activities.
- Cultural Services provides access to an extensive range of Donegal-related material in hard copy and online for local history and family history researchers.
- The Library Service provides free books, large print books, and talking books, with the main libraries having accessible software so reading material in a variety of formats is available to all.
- The Library Service provides access to public computer suites suitable for contacting family and friends at home and abroad, following online courses, or for recreation.



- Older people comprise a sizeable proportion of those attending and participating in cultural events and programmes managed by Cultural Services, as well as those by arts organizations assisted by Donegal County Council. While most events are free, Cultural Services will offer reduced or concessionary rates of admission to older people to all of its ticketed cultural events and programmes and will encourage the Council's client organizations to do likewise.
- Cultural Services will lend its support to community and older peoples' organizations making submissions to such funding programmes as the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme for assistance towards older peoples' participation in social and cultural events.

County Donegal Social Inclusion Week

Donegal Social Inclusion Week takes place annually and it provides a platform for Donegal County Council and its partner stakeholders in the social inclusion field to showcase the vast array of initiatives taking place locally to tackle social exclusion, poverty and deprivation. It is proposed that Donegal Older Persons Forum and other relevant networks will be invited to input into Social Inclusion Week to ensure that older persons issues are represented in the programme.

Community Garden Initiatives

Expand the number of Community Gardens that are currently available in County Donegal through collaborative initiatives between local community organisations and local development agencies in the context of the County Donegal Local Economic & Community Plan through funding packages that will become available such as Peace and Leader. Community Gardens Initiatives are about so much more than growing, gardening and the environment. They are about bringing the local community together; growing relationships; allowing people to learn together and laugh together along the way. They provide company for the lonely and the isolated; a sense of achievement and self-worth for the unemployed and retired; physical activity for the old; knowledge about health, nutrition and diet for the young.

The community garden networks in County Donegal have proven to be valuable local resources for older people and it is proposed to expand this network of local projects during the lifetime of this strategy. The North West Healthy Living Community Gardens and Allotments Project offers an excellent model of an initiative that had older person input and will deliver positive health and recreation outputs to older people, The objective of the facility is to develop healthy living provision and encourage accessible and sustainable use by way of the creation of five demonstration allotments/community garden sites and to promote healthy living programmes as a benefit for the whole community, realising the opportunity they offer for lifelong learning, improved capacity and social inclusion.



Mens Shed Initiatives

Further develop opportunities for older men through the expansion of the Men's Sheds network in the County and encourage greater networking and collaboration between the local Men's Shed projects. A Men's Shed is a dedicated, friendly and welcoming meeting place where men come together and undertake a variety of mutually agreed activities. Men's Sheds are open to all men regardless of age, background or ability. It is a place where men can share skills and knowledge with others, learn new skills and develop their old skills. An objective of local Men's Shed projects is to enhance or maintain the well-being of the participating men.

Donegal Volunteer Centre

The Donegal Volunteer Centre will develop volunteering workshops for older persons groups across Donegal. The workshops will focus on working with active age and other older persons groups to discuss and promote volunteering with the local community. The Donegal Volunteering Centre will through these workshops engage with development groups in each local area to enhance volunteering opportunities for older people

Output

Increased participation opportunities for older people in social, cultural and volunteering activities

Project Partners

Donegal County Council

HSE

Donegal Volunteer Centre



Action 5.3 - Increased participation by Older People in Sport

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process

- Limited social activities.
- Older people would welcome more opportunities to take part in sport.
- Lack of opportunities to meet older people.
- Lack of things to do, especially for older people

Proposed Action

The provision and implementation of an Action Plan to outline programmes and projects which will provide opportunities for older people to participate in sport.

This plan will focus on relevant age related physical activity programmes such as Go for Life Games, New Age Curling, Walking related programmes.

Outputs

The implementation of age appropriate opportunities such as the following:

- Further provision of the Go for Life Games initiative
- Further provision of the New Age Curling initiative. To date a league has been established with a number of Active Retirement groups in Lifford and Letterkenny areas.
- Men on the Move has been established as a key programme to develop social inclusion and to provide sporting and health enhancing opportunities for older marginalised men with programmes delivered in areas such as Falcarragh, Magheroarty, Letterkenny, St Johnston, Muff and Frosses to date.
- The 'Step on It' 8 week walking programme has been piloted in Letterkenny is to be rolled out in further areas during the lifetime of the Donegal Age Friendly Strategy

Project Partners

Donegal Sports Partnership
Age & Opportunity Ireland
Community Development Network in Donegal.
Active Retirement Groups
Health Service Executive
Donegal County Council
Irish Sports Council



The easiest way of describing the concept of civic participation is sense of responsibility individuals feel to uphold their obligations as part of community.

Older people do not stop contributing to their communities on retirement as many of them continue to provide unpaid and voluntary work.

An age friendly community should provide options for older people to continue to be engaged in the political process on local and national level and voluntary work if they so choose. Many older people are actively involved in voluntary activities and enjoy many benefits from volunteering, including a sense of self worth, feeling active and maintaining their health and social connections. Being actively involved in community also prevents isolation. Many older people have the experience and qualifications and they are willing to share it with others.

“It will be pleasant to have more opportunity to attend more classes. I have received my Certificate of Basic Computer Skills”





Action 6.1 - Enterprise Mentoring Programme

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process

- A feeling that the knowledge and expertise of older people is under utilized.
- Older people would welcome the opportunity to share their skills and experiences with the younger generations

Proposed Action

The creation of an enterprise and skills programme aimed at older people, particularly from business and enterprise backgrounds that allow their experience and expertise to be utilized in the enterprise development sector through a “mentoring role” to new and existing businesses at local level.

Output

A defined role for older people and better equipped enterprise development sector

Project Partners

Donegal County Council Local Enterprise Office

Action 6.2 - Age Friendly Business Programme

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process

- Given the choice, older people would rather talk to someone of a similar age while shopping.
- Most older people do not shop online and would prefer to shop in local shops.
- Older people find it hard to know about special offers as much promotional material is disseminated electronically

Proposed Action

The introduction of a pilot Age Friendly Business Programme in Letterkenny

Outputs

- Products and services which are appropriate for older adults
- Special offers and discounts available for older adults
- Increased footfall for participating businesses

Project Partners

Letterkenny Chamber of Commerce



Staying connected with events and people and getting timely, practical information to manage life and meet personal needs is vital for active ageing. A frequent barrier is lack of awareness of available information or services, or not knowing how to locate the information needed. Word of mouth is the principal and preferred means of communication for older people, both through informal contacts with family and friends and through clubs, community centres or public meetings. Oral communication is especially important for older people who are visually impaired and for those who are not literate.

Receiving the attention of a real person who is helpful, clear and unhurried is highly valued while automated answering machines are general source of complaint. Information technology, especially computers and Internet, is appreciated by some older people for its comprehensiveness and convenience but many older people also experience a sense of exclusion because they do not use computers or Internet. Valued everywhere is information that reaches older people in their daily lives and activities, through direct personal delivery, phone and printed distribution in key locations i.e. Libraries and local post offices. That information should be presented in easy, uncomplicated way using bigger fonts and plain language.

“It’s very difficult to get information on entitlements. There is no published information, only internet, but I don’t know how to use it”





Action 7.1 - Awareness raising about the Age Friendly approach

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process :

- The need to educate the public about the Age Friendly approach
- Language on forms is not user-friendly particularly for those who have literacy issues
- Complicated information, poor return of calls from service providers and confusion over whom to contact in services.
- An over reliance on the internet in the provision of information.

Proposed Action

Raise awareness among older people, service providers, and public agencies of the Age Friendly Strategy and the implementation of its actions in County Donegal and at regional and at national level.

This initiative will include promoting the age friendly ethos in a collaborative partnership in County Donegal in the context of the delivery of the Donegal Local Economic and Community Plan

Outputs

- Greater awareness of the Age Friendly process
- Improved service delivery to older people, including increased use of plain English principles
- Delivery of improved public services to older people based on their expressed needs as indicated through the Age Friendly Strategy consultation and ongoing need identification by the Donegal Older Persons Alliance
- Community and voluntary sector to have a better understanding of age friendly issues

Project Partners

Donegal County Council
Donegal Age Friendly Alliance
Donegal Older Persons Forum



Action 7.2 - Implementation of the Cúl Taca Programme

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process:

- People find it difficult to find the right person to talk to about the right service
- Lack of access to up to date information over entitlements and rights
- Difficulty to access information on what is going on in your town or county.
- The most effective method of communication is word or mouth, preferably from trusted sources such as home helps and GPs. Good sources of information in the community for older people include local shops, credit unions, post offices, parish newsletters, Citizens Information Centres, libraries, resource centres, local newspapers and radio.
- Lack of information on issues of importance to older people such as septic tank charges, fuel poverty and availability of local services.

Proposed Action

The Good Morning Service will explore the development of a new service for older people. A new social model of care based on the role of Cúl Taca, ('strong support' or 'backup') developed by the Netwell Centre in Dundalk IT, specifically for older people.

This service includes home visits to frail elderly in which the Cúl Taca will listen to the person's wants and needs and develops a personal plan to suit, empowering access to services and entitlements and following through to ensure full implementation of the plan to empower older people to maintain their independence and remain in their home for as long as they wish.

There are many aspects of the role of the Cúl Taca already being carried out by the Good Morning Service through the telephone befriending and the home visit befriending where information on rights and entitlements and signposting to other service providers is part of the daily service. Service users are supported and assisted in securing appropriate services for their needs and the Good Morning Service advocates on client's behalf. The Good Morning Service is well placed to take on the role of the Cúl Taca as it is a countywide service with six centres/bases; Donegal Town, Burtonport, Falcarragh, Letterkenny, Lifford and main office in Buncrana.

The principle which underpins the role is one of empowerment not direction. In addition, because the main target group is the "oldest old", the personal plan is constantly revised in line the changing needs.



Outputs

An independent advice service on social entitlements, grants, social alarms, form-filling etc., in the person's home. Understanding the language content on forms and information gathering is a huge stumbling block for older people accessing services;

Facilitation of access to services such as Day Care and Community Support Groups as well as a full range of statutory services;

Development of strong communities, filling gaps in provision as necessary (e.g. developing older men's groups, older women's groups) and working with the community to pass responsibility for these services back to the community, for example by developing a volunteer service; connects with other community groups and organisations, providing increased opportunities for older people to engage in their community;

Liaison with service providers and health and social care professionals on behalf of older people;

Project Partner

Donegal Good Morning Service

Other stakeholders as required



Action 7.3 - Donegal Age Friendly Directory of Information

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process:

- Lack of access to up to date information about the entitlements and rights of older people
- Difficulty to access information on what is going on in your town or county.
- Need for a central “one stop shop” hub for all information on all services that are of relevance to older people

Proposed Action

The production and dissemination of a Directory of Older Persons Services.

This information will be made available through electronic means such as dedicated web pages and through facebook but the directory will also be made available through a handbook style format.

Outputs

Easily accessible information tailored to the needs of the older population of County Donegal.

Project Partners

Donegal County Council
Donegal Older Persons Forum
Donegal Age Friendly Alliance



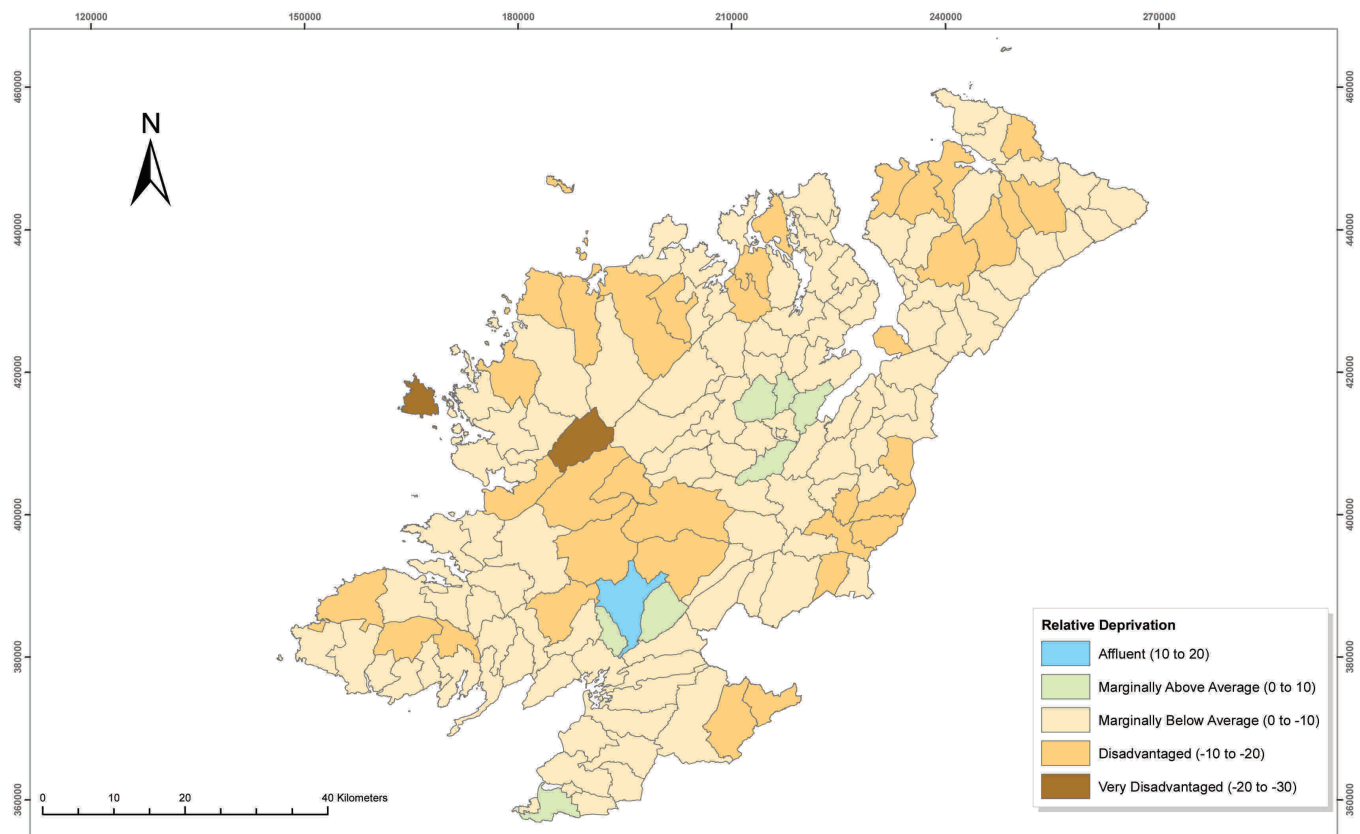
Health and support services are vital to maintaining health and independence in the community.

The geography of County Donegal, both in terms of its location nationally and the size of the county, which is a contributing factor to transportation worries, make local service provision the single most important issue for older people in the County today.

Most of older people taking part in the consultation process felt that their health is good or very good however many pointed out issues such as long waiting time to see specialists and lack of out-of-hours GP services. Many older people living in rural areas often have to make long and difficult journeys to keep medical or hospital appointments due to lack of transport services. They also outlined the importance of information sessions on good health promotion and disease prevention.

“ We would like to avail of exercise at affordable prices. I try to spend active as much time as possible”

“ It would be great if we had more chats about health and well being. Public health nurse could visit our Friday club”





Action 8.1 - Investigate the possibility of implementing Age Friendly principles within Hospital facilities in the County.

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process

- Hospital appointments should be more patient friendly.
- Waiting list to access health services creates worry and stress amongst older people.
- The facilities where services are provided are not always age friendly
- Older people are hugely reliant on local service providers

Proposed Action

Based on the model of an Age Friendly Hospital currently being implemented at Beaumont Hospital, Dublin, it is proposed to proceed towards the development of comprehensive, integrated and patient focussed services and facilities for older persons. Potential sites for development of age friendly facilities include Letterkenny General Hospital and Community Hospitals in the County.

Outputs

- Improved accessibility to and in and around hospital facilities across the physical environment
- Timely admissions to hospital and effective discharge planning for older people
- Improved care pathways and ease of access to geriatric care
- Reduction in premature admission to residential care
- Maintain and continually improve experience when attending hospital facilities as an inpatient, outpatient or visitor
- A focus on patient centric care

Project Partner

HSE



Action 8.2 – Promotion of the Fall Prevention Programme

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process

- More initiatives to promote healthy living
- More information workshops for families on how to deal with older people living with chronic health conditions
- Lack of understanding about how to stay fit and healthy while ageing.

Context of Proposed Action

Donegal has 21,471 older people representing 13.3% of the population compared with 11.7% nationally. Furthermore, there are higher proportions of oldest old i.e. those over 75 years in Donegal (5.8%) compared to the nationally average (5%). This will present additional local challenges as those over 75 years of age and especially over 85 years are at the highest risk of Falls.

Evidence suggests that between 30% (Gillespie et al., 2009) and “more than one third of persons 65 years of age or older” fall each year, and in half of such cases the falls are recurrent (Tinetti & Kumar, 2011). In people over 80 yrs of age 50 % fall each year. 20-30% of older people who fall suffer moderate to severe injuries such as bruising hip fracture or head injuries (Donegal 1,431-2,255 of people over 65 yrs))

- Falls injuries are responsible for significant disability, reduced physical function and loss of independence in older people. Falls are costly and complex and preventable.
- Feeling fearful and experiencing a loss of confidence can result in a limitation of physical activities, a problematic outcome because a reduction in physical activity leads to reduced mobility and a loss of physical function which in turn increase the risk of falling (Love & Allen, 2011)

Proposed Action

The creation of greater awareness of the importance of falls prevention and how to maintain a healthy lifestyle that reduces the risk of falls. Inform older people and their families about the risk of falls and fall prevention activities that can be undertaken. This activity is to be undertaken through the Older Persons Forum and other relevant support networks

Outputs

- Improved Knowledge on falls and falls prevention
- Reduction in the number of falls
- Promoting independence living
- Reduced demand on health services

Lead Partner

Health Service Executive

Donegal Age Friendly Alliance

Donegal Older Persons Forum



Action 8.3 - Promotion of Physical Wellbeing Programmes for Older People

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process:

- Older people wish to be pro active about health and wellbeing
- Older people wish to participate in local activities that are of benefit to them

Further provision of programmes such as green prescription and community gardening would be welcome Proposed Action

The development of healthy and sustainable communities, particularly in the older persons demographic through the involvement of older people in community based health and wellbeing programmes such as the green prescription and community gardening

Outputs

The use of natural capital for health and wellbeing benefits and the development of supportive environments for older people

Project Partners

HSE

Donegal County Council

Donegal Age Friendly Alliance

Donegal Older Peersons Forum



Action 8.4 - Quality of Life Programme

Issues Raised by Older People in the Consultation Process:

- Older people worry about their future health
- Older people find it difficult living in their own homes through lack of support

Proposed Action

Provision of the Quality of Life Programme in County Donegal

The programme is designed to support people living with a long term health condition with the knowledge, skills and confidence to achieve optimum health and wellbeing. The course is provided over six weeks, 2 1/2 hours per week, is free of charge and takes place in locations across the county.

Outputs

Participants will learn and be provided with information on

- Health Eating and weight management
- Physical activity and endurance exercise
- Pain and fatigue management
- Preventing falls and improving balance
- Positive thinking, dealing with difficult emotions and distraction techniques
- Better breathing and relaxation
- Communication skills and making decisions
- Problem solving and action plans

Project Partners

HSE

Donegal Age Friendly Alliance

Donegal Older Persons Forum



Action 8.5 - Ensure that Connect Donegal - the county wide suicide prevention action plan delivers actions to prevent suicide in older people.

Context of Proposed Action

A new national framework for suicide prevention will be launched in 2015. In Donegal a unique opportunity arose to link closely with this development and an interagency planning group is in the final stage of developing a local suicide prevention plan for the county called 'Connect Donegal'.

Proposed Action

1. Implement programmes to promote the mental health and reduce social and rural isolation of older people in their communities e.g. Social Prescribing
2. Ensure that programmes which address depression are available to older people e.g. Stress Control

Outputs

- Improved mental health of older people
- Improved connection at community level
- Reduced demand on health services

Lead Partner

Health Service Executive

The Way Forward

This strategy has set out high level actions to ensure that older people in County Donegal are included in all aspects of the community, and that their voices and opinions are recognised and incorporated into all relevant decision-making processes in the county.

This strategy will be implemented over a three year period. Its delivery will be overseen by the Donegal Age Friendly Alliance. The Alliance will meet on a quarterly basis and will review progress annually.

We feel that this strategy is innovative in nature, it will see the implementation of national programmes that are new to the County such as the fall prevention programme and the Cúl Taca programme, it also aims to create brand new initiatives that build on the local resources of the county such as enterprise mentoring and an age friendly business programme. We have also included actions that will make a substantial impact on the lives of older people such as Age Friendly Town Planning, Age Friendly Hospitals and increased participation by older people in social, cultural and sporting activities.

Older people will continue to be at the forefront of the implementation of this strategy through their participation in the Alliance and its working group structures.

A critical component of the delivery of this strategy will be the creation of the County Donegal Older People's Forum, which will be an extensive network of older people which will form part of the Donegal Public Participation Network.

Implementation of the twenty one actions outlined in this Strategy will obviously have a positive impact on the lives of older people, also, the collaboration between agencies and service providers that will occur through the work of Donegal Age Friendly Alliance and Donegal Older Persons Forum will have longer term effects on the overall vision of making Donegal an Age Friendly County.

In Donegal, we want to ensure that County Donegal becomes the best county in Ireland in which to grow old. This strategy will be our guide in realising that goal.

