

COUNTY LOUTH AGE FRIENDLY STRATEGY

2026-2031

LITERATURE REVIEW



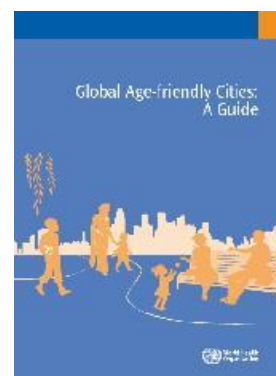
Background

This Literature Review was carried out in January 2025 as part of the development of the new Age Friendly Strategy for County Louth. It is meant to serve as a resource document for the development and implementation of the strategy.

The review details the international, national and local multifaceted approach to creating age-friendly communities. Numerous strategies and local plans address the needs of an ageing population across various sectors, including housing, transport, health, and social inclusion. These initiatives aim to foster active ageing, improve quality of life, and combat ageism through accessible services, community engagement, and supportive environments. A key focus is on enabling older people to live independently and participate fully in society, while also addressing challenges such as digital exclusion and rural decline.

The review aims to ensure that the Co. Louth Age Friendly Strategy aligns with international, national and local policies and plans and serve as a guide to resources for the implementation of the strategy.

International Policy



1. Age Friendly Cities and Communities: A Global Guide

This document from the World Health Organization (WHO) is a guide for establishing or improving national programmes for age-friendly cities and communities (AFCC). It details a framework with six key elements: partnerships, leadership, resources, capacity building, research, and monitoring & evaluation. The guide emphasises meaningful engagement of older people and uses numerous examples of successful AFCC programmes globally. It aims to support national authorities in creating environments that promote healthy ageing and well-being for older populations, aligning local, national, and international efforts. The text also addresses challenges like population ageing, urbanisation, and ageism, offering solutions to create more inclusive communities.

The key priorities of national programmes for age-friendly cities and communities (AFCC) include:

- Ensuring environments that enable and support health and well-being. This includes physical and social environments that provide the resources and support necessary for a healthy and active life as people age.
- Addressing health and well-being throughout the life-course. This involves considering the underlying biological, behavioural and psychosocial processes that operate during a person's life, which are shaped by individual characteristics and the environments in which they live.
- Promoting the inclusion and contributions of older people in all areas of community life. This involves creating communities that promote autonomy and respect the decisions and lifestyle choices of older people.
- Changing how people think, feel, and act towards age and ageing. This involves combating ageism and promoting positive attitudes towards ageing.
- Delivering person-centred, integrated care and primary health services that are responsive to older people. This involves ensuring that older people receive a continuum of services, including health promotion, disease prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation.
- Providing access to long-term care for older people who need it. This involves ensuring that people with a significant ongoing loss of intrinsic capacity can maintain a level of functional ability consistent with their basic rights.
- Fostering healthy ageing by developing and maintaining functional ability that enables well-being in older age. Functional ability comprises the health-related attributes that enable people to be and to do what they have reason to value.
- Developing age-friendly environments which promote healthy ageing. These environments should build and maintain intrinsic capacity throughout the life-course, and provide greater functional ability.
- Promoting active ageing by optimising opportunities for health, participation and security to enhance the quality of life as people age.
- Enabling ageing in place, which respects a person's choice of where they want to live and age, and enables older people to live longer in their own homes and communities.
- Ensuring accessibility to environments, services and products to allow access by as many people as possible.
- Addressing social exclusion and barriers to opportunity to build and maintain functional ability and overcome inequity among older adults.

These priorities are supported by enablers, which include:

- Listening to diverse voices and enabling meaningful engagement of older people.
- Nurturing leadership and building capacity to take appropriate action, integrated across sectors.
- Connecting various stakeholders to share and learn from the experience of others.
- Strengthening data, research, and innovation to accelerate implementation.

The AFCC approach recognises that a range of factors influence healthy ageing, including the built environment, social policies, and individual choices. These priorities are designed to improve the lives of older people, their families, and their communities by creating environments that enable healthy ageing.

2. The UN Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021 – 2030)

The United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021–2030) is a global collaboration, aligned with the last ten years of the Sustainable Development Goals, to improve the lives of older people, their families, and the communities in which they live. The World Health Organization was asked to lead the implementation of the Decade in collaboration with the other UN organizations and serves as the Decade Secretariat. Governments, international and regional organizations, civil society, the private sector, academia and the media are encouraged to actively contribute to achieving the Decade’s goals through direct action, partnering with others, and by participating in the [Healthy Ageing Collaborative](#).

The Decade is a transformative collaboration of diverse sectors and stakeholders that focuses on changing how we think, feel, and act towards ageing; cultivating age-friendly environments; creating integrated and responsive health care systems and services; and ensuring access to long-term care for older people who need it.

National Strategies and Plans



3. National Planning Framework

The document outlines Project Ireland 2040, a national planning framework for Ireland up to 2040. It details a vision for balanced regional growth, aiming to distribute population and employment more evenly across the country, reducing Dublin's dominance. The plan emphasizes sustainable development, including compact growth, brownfield development, and renewable energy. Key policy objectives are presented, covering various sectors like housing, transport, environment, and the economy. The framework is intended to guide public and private investment, aligning strategic planning with a substantial ten-year development plan.

The National Planning Framework (NPF) addresses the needs of an ageing population in Ireland and seeks to create age-friendly communities. The document acknowledges that the number of people over 65 is projected to more than double to 1.3 million by 2040, making up approximately 23% of the population, compared to 13.5% in 2016. Furthermore, the population over 85 is expected to quadruple.

Key aspects of the NPF related to age-friendly communities include:

- Supporting independent living: The NPF aims to support older people in living with dignity and independence in their own homes and communities for as long as possible.
- Housing Choices: The plan seeks to provide a range of housing choices with appropriate supports for older people. This includes well-designed, adaptable infill and brownfield developments close to existing services and facilities⁴. Such developments also allow older people to downsize from larger homes within their communities.
- Universal Design and Accessibility: The NPF promotes universal design in the built environment to make it more accessible and safer for older people. This involves direct and accessible walking routes, improved urban amenities, and public spaces.
- Community Engagement: The NPF recognises the importance of community interaction and support for older people. It encourages the integration of community facilities and uses to ensure active communities.
- Local Level Planning: Local planning, housing, transport, accessibility, and leisure policies are to be developed with a focus on meeting the needs of an ageing population. City and county development plans will include specific projections and proposals for ageing communities.
- The 'Age Friendly Ireland' Initiative: The NPF supports the 'Age Friendly Ireland' initiative, which is embedded within the local government system and provides guidance in identifying the needs of an ageing population.
- Healthy Choices: The NPF emphasizes designing communities to support physical activity, which includes things like footpaths, cycle lanes and recreation areas.
- Case Study - McAuley Place: As a model for age-friendly communities, the NPF includes a case study of McAuley Place, a development in Naas, County Kildare that offers independent living for older people, including apartments, tea rooms, an Arts and Culture Centre, and a Community Centre⁹¹⁰. It was designed to ensure there is no institutional feel, and it promotes community engagement, lifelong learning and social inclusion⁹¹⁰. The NPF's focus on creating age-friendly communities is part of a broader goal to promote a high quality of life and well-being for all citizens.

The First Revision of the NPF April 2025 updates the 2018 version to reflect changes since then—population, climate, infrastructure, housing, and so on.

Health & Social Care Investment

The HSE National Service Plan 2025 commits a large increase in funding, including for *older persons services*, dementia care, and home support hours.

The Older Persons National Clinical Programme aims to improve and standardise quality of care, including better continuity across hospital, home care, rehabilitation, etc., so older people have better access to appropriate care.

Home Supports and Living Arrangements

More hours of home support are planned, helping older people remain living at home rather than in institutions, when possible.

There is funding and schemes for nursing homes (private and voluntary) to upgrade premises to meet regulatory standards. The “Residential Premises Upgrade Scheme” provides grants toward structural improvements.

Integrated & Community-Based Care

The community specialist teams for older people under ECC / ICPOP (Integrated Care Programme for Older People) focus on holistic assessments and coordinated care in the community (e.g. physiotherapy, occupational therapy, social work etc.) so older people receive care suited to their individual needs.

Infrastructure, Housing & Transport

While older people are not always named explicitly in the transport, housing or infrastructure sections, many of the investments (e.g. for housing, public transport, urban regeneration, active travel) have indirect benefits: better housing that is accessible; more transport options; improved infrastructure closer to services. The NDP sets large allocations for housing (including “affordable & social housing”) and improvements to water, transport, etc.

Zoning and planning under the revised NPF may help ensure that local services, shops, medical facilities etc. are more accessible, especially if housing is developed in built-up / infill areas, closer to existing amenities.



4. National Positive Ageing Strategy

This document outlines Ireland's National Positive Ageing Strategy (2013- 2017), a comprehensive plan addressing the opportunities and challenges of a rapidly ageing population. The strategy aims to foster a societal shift towards viewing ageing positively, promoting active participation and wellbeing for older people across all aspects of life. It advocates for a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, encompassing policy changes in health, housing, employment, and social inclusion. The plan details specific national goals, objectives, and priority action areas, supported by extensive research and international best practices. Implementation will be monitored through an outcomes framework, annual reports, and a multi-stakeholder council.

The National Positive Ageing Strategy outlines several key priorities for creating an age-friendly society in Ireland. These priorities address various aspects of older people's lives

and aim to promote their health, well-being, and participation in society¹. The strategy emphasizes a shift in mindset, viewing ageing as a lifelong process and older people as valuable contributors.

The key priority areas include:

- **Healthy ageing:** This involves promoting healthy lifestyles, preventing chronic diseases, and ensuring access to health services. It also includes addressing mental health issues like depression and dementia.
 - **Health and personal social services:** The strategy aims to develop a continuum of high-quality care services that are responsive to the changing needs of older people, including home care, respite care, and end-of-life care.
 - **Carers:** Recognising and supporting the role of carers is a priority, and the strategy promotes the implementation of the National Carers' Strategy.
 - **Employment and retirement:** The strategy aims to create more flexible employment options, including gradual retirement, and to remove barriers to continued employment and training for older people.
 - **Education and lifelong learning:** Promoting access to education and lifelong learning opportunities for older people is another priority, recognising the benefits of ongoing learning for personal development and well-being.
 - **Volunteering:** The strategy encourages active citizenship and promotes the value of volunteering for people of all ages, recognising the positive association between voluntary work and well-being.
 - **Cultural and social participation:** The strategy aims to develop opportunities for older people to engage in a range of cultural, social, spiritual, leisure, and physical activities in their communities.
 - **Transport:** Ensuring accessible, affordable, and flexible transport systems for older people is crucial for enabling them to remain active in their communities.
 - **Financial security:** The strategy aims to provide income and other supports to ensure older people can enjoy an acceptable standard of living.
 - **Housing:** Facilitating older people to live in well-maintained, affordable, safe, and secure homes that are suitable for their physical and social needs is a key priority.
 - **The built environment:** Designing age-friendly public spaces, transport, and buildings is important for supporting older people to live independently and participate in their communities.
 - **Safety and security:** The strategy aims to empower older people to live free from fear in their homes and communities, addressing issues such as crime and promoting a sense of security.
 - **Elder abuse:** Addressing elder abuse at all levels of society through raising awareness, improving reporting rates, and developing services is another crucial priority.
- In addition to these specific areas, the strategy also emphasizes the importance of:
- **Combating ageism:** Challenging age-related stereotypes and promoting positive images of ageing is crucial for creating an inclusive society for all ages. This includes mainstreaming ageing into all policy fields, promoting intergenerational solidarity, and improving consultation with older people.
 - **Improving information provision:** Ensuring older people can access user-friendly, up-to-date, and comprehensive information about services, supports, and activities is essential for enabling them to exercise choice and control over their lives.

- Supporting research: Supporting high-quality research on ageing and older people to better inform policy responses to population ageing is a key goal



5. Healthy Ireland Implementation Plan 2023 – 2027

This document outlines the Health Service Executive's (HSE) 2023-2027 plan for implementing Ireland's Healthy Ireland Framework. The plan aims to improve population health by promoting healthy behaviours, supporting chronic disease management, and fostering healthy environments. Four strategic priorities are detailed, focusing on embedding wellbeing within the HSE, strengthening community partnerships, supporting healthy behaviours across the lifespan, and promoting staff wellbeing. The plan builds upon previous initiatives and incorporates the transition to new HSE Health Regions. The Health Services Healthy Ireland Implementation Plan 2023-2027 aims to support healthy ageing through a variety of actions, many of which align with the principles of an age-friendly approach¹. The plan seeks to enable older people to maintain their intrinsic capacity and age well within their communities¹.

Specific actions outlined in the plan that support age-friendly initiatives include:

- Working with Health and Wellbeing, Age Friendly Ireland, and the National Clinical Programme for Older People in HSE Health Regions to promote healthy ageing through Local Authorities' Age Friendly structures: This indicates a commitment to integrating health and wellbeing initiatives with existing age-friendly frameworks at the local level.
- Collaborating with Health and Wellbeing and the National Clinical Programme for Older People to explore the World Health Organization's (WHO's) Integrated Care for Older People (ICOPE) Tool: This demonstrates a commitment to using evidence-based tools to enable older people to maintain their health and wellbeing.
- Evaluating the Community Connectors pilot project, a specialist social prescribing service for older people with complex care needs: This project aligns with the Enhanced Community Care (ECC) Integrated Care Programme for Older Persons in the HSE Health Regions. If the evaluation is successful, the service will be extended within the HSE Social Prescribing Framework.
- Supporting self-management of chronic conditions: which is critical for older adults who are more likely to be living with such conditions.
- Recognising that the largest proportional increases in the population in Ireland will continue to be those aged 85 years and older: The plan aims to ensure more of these years, particularly in later life, are spent in good health.

The plan also highlights the importance of reducing health inequalities. This is crucial for ensuring that all older adults, including those in marginalised or disadvantaged communities, have equal access to health and wellbeing services and opportunities.

Furthermore, the plan promotes creating healthy environments that support healthy behaviours. This includes building healthy communities and ensuring accessibility to services that support positive health. This approach recognises that the social determinants of health influence how well people can live their lives.



6. Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland

This plan highlights how the Government will work with the Department of Health and the HSE to ensure that older people are supported to stay in their homes and communities for as long as possible, fulfilling the Programme for Government vision of an age friendly Ireland in which older people can live long and healthy lives, participate in their communities and have a range of housing options to make this possible.

This plan acknowledges the importance of planning for the ageing population and sets out how dedicated social housing provision, appropriate to the needs of older people will be delivered.

Specific priorities include:

- Age Friendly and Universal Design
- Age Friendly Ireland Shared Services, to develop a new co-operation and co-ordination framework, nationally and locally, and implement Housing Options for Our Ageing Population actions
- To assist older people and people with a disability there is increased funding for Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability. The funding under the Disabled Persons Grant Scheme has also been increased.
- The Housing for All pathway commits to comprehensive measures to support these and other vulnerable groups.



7. Sustainable Inclusive and Empowered Communities

This document outlines a five-year Irish government strategy (2019-2024) to support the community and voluntary sector. It details the sector's significant contribution to Irish society, outlining its economic impact and the vital services it provides. The strategy aims

to foster sustainable, inclusive, and empowered communities through strengthened partnerships between government, local authorities, and community organisations. Numerous case studies illustrate successful community initiatives, highlighting the importance of local autonomy and participation. Finally, the strategy proposes a comprehensive action plan with specific objectives and timelines for achieving its goals.

The strategy does not directly mention "age-friendly" initiatives or programmes. However, the strategy does discuss a number of related concepts and initiatives that could be relevant to older people and age-friendly communities:

- Support for older people: The strategy recognises that community and voluntary organisations provide support for older people.
- Inclusion and participation: The strategy emphasizes creating inclusive communities where all members can participate in decision-making. This includes ensuring that marginalised groups are not left behind by economic recovery.
- Community well-being: The strategy seeks to support the social, cultural, and economic well-being of all community members. This includes a focus on improving quality of life and opportunities for all sections of the population, especially younger and older people in disadvantaged communities.
- Local government engagement: The strategy supports local government to work with communities, and notes that local authorities engage with communities through various initiatives. It also mentions that local authorities are responsible for supporting community development and providing civic leadership.
- Healthy Ireland Framework: The document mentions the Healthy Ireland Framework, which highlights the role of communities in improving health and well-being. This framework may have links to age-friendly initiatives, but this is not explicitly mentioned.
- Public Participation Networks (PPNs): These networks are designed to provide a direct link between communities and local decision-making bodies, which could include older people's groups or organisations. PPNs facilitate community engagement in decision-making at the local level.

While the term "age-friendly" is not explicitly used, the strategy's focus on inclusion, participation, and community well-being aligns with the principles of age-friendly initiatives and could be used to support such programmes. The strategy also aims to ensure that all communities are afforded opportunities, including older people



8. Our Rural Future – Rural Development Policy 2021 – 2025

Our Rural Future is a comprehensive Irish government policy document outlining a five-year plan for rural development. The plan addresses challenges like population decline, ageing demographics, and economic diversification, particularly in light of Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic. It proposes a holistic, place-based approach, focusing on improving digital connectivity via the National Broadband Plan, promoting remote work, and investing in infrastructure and community development. Key initiatives include town centre regeneration, support for sustainable agriculture and the marine sector, and a just

transition to a climate-neutral economy. The policy emphasizes collaboration between government departments, local authorities, and communities to achieve its ambitious goals.

Age-Friendly Services and Supports

- The government aims to ensure that people living in rural areas have access to good quality public services that enable them to continue to live sustainably and maintain a good quality of life.
- The National Positive Ageing Strategy promotes active citizenship and the health, wellbeing and quality of life of people as they age.
- The policy recognises that improved digital connectivity will help older people to live independently with access to more supports and services through connected technologies.
- The government is exploring the potential to develop a pilot scheme to support the use of rural pubs as community spaces and hubs for local services.
- There are plans to engage Approved Housing Bodies to develop accommodation in town centres more suited for those with reduced mobility.
- The Healthy Ireland programme supports the improved health and wellbeing of rural communities in collaboration with Local Authorities and local stakeholders and partners.

Additional Considerations

- The policy seeks to promote social inclusion and cohesion in rural areas, recognising the diversity of age, family type, and other factors.
- The Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020–2025 sets out goals to measure progress across aspects of social inclusion, including housing, healthcare and social integration, with the overall objective of achieving a better quality of life for all.
- The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) aims to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion and equality, while supporting disadvantaged individuals to improve the quality of their lives.
- The policy acknowledges the importance of community infrastructure, such as community centers, libraries and sports clubs, which can serve as hubs for local communities to meet and engage in shared activities.
- Libraries provide an inclusive space for personal development, lifelong learning, health and wellbeing information, and social interaction.

These initiatives and considerations aim to create more age-friendly rural communities by addressing the needs of older people and fostering intergenerational connections, and improving public services to create more sustainable communities.

Intergenerational Initiatives

- The policy acknowledges the needs of older people and the value of intergenerational initiatives within rural communities to support the transfer of knowledge, skills and heritage between different age groups.
- Intergenerational programmes have been shown to be effective in combating negative stereotypes of ageing and promoting age-friendly communities.
- There is an opportunity for young people to support older age groups to adapt to digital technologies.



9. Ireland National Public Library Strategy 2023 – 2027

This document outlines Ireland's National Public Library Strategy 2023-2027, aiming to enhance library services nationwide. It details the strategy's vision, mission, and values, focusing on improving access, usage, and visibility of libraries as essential community hubs. The plan sets out nine strategic objectives and three enablers, encompassing themes such as literacy, community engagement, digital inclusion, and sustainability. Extensive stakeholder consultation informed the strategy, highlighting user satisfaction and areas for improvement. The document includes an action plan and details on implementation and monitoring.

The document outlines several ways in which the public library system in Ireland supports age-friendly initiatives:

- **Age-Friendly Recognition:** The strategy aims for every library in Ireland to achieve age-friendly recognition by the end of the strategy period. This suggests a commitment to making libraries welcoming and accessible for older adults.
- **My Open Library Service:** The My Open Library service provides access to library facilities from 8 am to 10 pm, 365 days a year. This extended access is beneficial for older people who may have different schedules and preferences for when they visit the library². The service has increased usage from the 35-55 year old group in the evenings and families with young children at weekends.
- **Digital Inclusion:** Libraries are positioned to enhance digital inclusion, which can be particularly important for older people who may need support to use technology and the internet. Library staff also became tutors to older users of digital library services through the Age Friendly Digital Ambassadors programme.
- **Skills for Life Programme:** The "Skills for Life" program includes resources and activities that support basic digital skills, financial literacy, media literacy, and health awareness. These can help older people maintain their independence and engage with the community, and navigate the changing world.
- **Community Spaces:** Libraries are designed to be central to communities and offer safe and welcoming spaces that encourage participation. This is significant for older people, as libraries can become a place to meet and come together.
- **Library as a Resource:** Libraries are recognized as a vital resource for older people. This indicates that the library service is designed to provide materials, services and support that meet the needs and interests of older adults.
- **Partnerships:** The strategy includes working with Age Friendly Ireland to ensure libraries meet the needs of older adults. This collaboration suggests a joined-up approach to supporting older people through the library system.

In summary, the strategy for public libraries in Ireland explicitly addresses the needs of older adults through various initiatives. The plan is to create accessible, inclusive, and relevant services to empower and support the aging population.



10. Town Centre First Policy – A Framework for Irish Towns

The document outlines Ireland's "Town Centre First" policy, a plan-led approach to revitalising Irish towns. It details the policy's aims, including creating vibrant town centres that are attractive places to live, work, and visit. The policy establishes a national framework with local implementation through Town Teams supported by Town Regeneration Officers. Funding mechanisms, such as the Urban and Rural Regeneration Development Funds, are highlighted to support the initiative. The document also emphasises data-driven decision-making and collaboration between government, local authorities, and communities.

The Town Centre First (TCF) policy supports age-friendly initiatives by promoting town centre living, accessibility, and community engagement, which are all beneficial to older people.

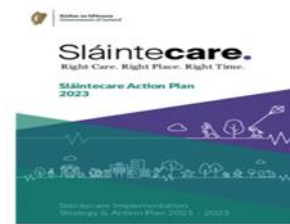
Here's how the TCF policy supports age-friendly environments:

- **Housing Choices:** The policy recognises that many town centres lack a variety of housing types and supports development proposals of varying character, scale and density. It seeks to provide a mix of housing options, including those suitable for older people, to enable them to "rightsized" as they move through different stages of their lives. The TCF also aims to increase and improve housing options and supports for people with disabilities. The policy supports the development of accommodation in town centres more suited for those with reduced mobility, in collaboration with Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) and Local Authorities.
- **Accessible Town Centres:** The TCF policy aims to manage traffic to prioritise pedestrians, enabling them to move about safely and comfortably. It also promotes the creation of public spaces that are accessible to all, including those with disabilities or reduced mobility. This focus on accessibility makes it easier for older people to navigate and enjoy town centres.
- **Proximity to Services and Amenities:** By encouraging town centre living, the TCF policy places older people closer to local services and amenities. This reduces the need for car travel and facilitates access to shops, healthcare, and social activities. The policy promotes the "10-minute town" concept, where most daily needs are within easy walking or cycling distance.
- **Social Inclusion:** The TCF policy recognises that as the population ages, the need to develop urban centres that are place-focused with an appropriate mix of housing types will become increasingly important. By encouraging older people to live in town centres, the policy facilitates social interaction and helps them to remain active, healthy, and socially connected.
- **Community Engagement:** The policy emphasises community participation in local decision-making structures. This ensures that the needs and preferences of older people are taken into account when developing town centre plans. The policy's focus on empowered, inclusive, and engaged communities means that everyone has a say in the decisions that affect their lives

and places. Local authorities will engage with the Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) and the Public Participation Networks (PPNs).

- **Retrofitting and Re-use:** The policy supports the sustainable and adaptive reuse of existing buildings and the thermal upgrading of the historic building stock. This approach benefits older people by ensuring they have warm, comfortable homes in existing town centre locations that are already equipped with a range of amenities and local services.
- **Age-Friendly Housing:** The TCF policy seeks to provide age-friendly housing for senior citizens in town centres. This can help older people to age independently and comfortably within their community.
- **Use of Technology:** The policy aims to integrate digital technology into daily commercial and social life to improve the quality and accessibility of services. This can be beneficial for older people, enabling greater choices in terms of location and lifestyle.

In summary, the Town Centre First policy supports age-friendly environments by promoting compact, mixed-use development, ensuring accessibility, encouraging community participation and ensuring that services and amenities are available within easy reach for older people living in town centres.



11. Sláintecare Action Plan 2023

The document is the 2023 Sláintecare Action Plan for Ireland, detailing progress towards a universal health system. It outlines key initiatives for improving access to care, reducing waiting lists, and enhancing community services. Significant achievements in 2022 are highlighted, along with planned projects for 2023 focusing on Enhanced Community Care, Regional Health Areas, and a new consultant contract. The plan also addresses workforce planning, digital health, and health inequalities. Finally, governance and communication strategies are described to ensure transparency and effective implementation.



12. Understanding Life in Ireland – The Well-Being Framework 2024

This 2024 report assesses Ireland's well-being using 35 indicators across eleven dimensions, including subjective well-being, health, income, housing, environment, safety, work, time use, community, and civic engagement. The report analyses trends over time and compares Ireland's performance to other countries, highlighting areas of progress and

areas needing improvement, such as environmental sustainability. Particular attention is paid to inequalities experienced by various groups, including women and single-parent households. The report also identifies indicators crucial for economic, social, and environmental sustainability and mentions ongoing efforts to integrate the well-being framework into government policy. Finally, the report includes a section on forthcoming data releases.

"Understanding Life in Ireland: The Well-being Framework 2024," offers some insights into the well-being of older people in Ireland, though it doesn't specifically use the term "age-friendly." Here's how the report addresses issues relevant to older people:

- **Life Satisfaction and Mental Health:** The report indicates that working-aged people (25-49 and 50-64) have the smallest proportion of 'very high' life satisfaction. Similarly, these age groups are also less likely to have not felt downhearted or depressed
- **Income and Wealth:** Households of retirement age tend to have greater net wealth, while working-age adults tend to have higher disposable income. However, the report also notes that households of retirement age had higher rates of difficulty making ends meet in 2021 or 2022, with a slight recovery year-on-year to 2023.
- **Employment and Work:** The employment rate varies less by age, with those aged 60-64 having the lowest rate (60.6%). The report also mentions that those aged 65-74 have a higher labour force underutilisation rate (13%) compared to those aged 35-44 and 45-54.
- **Time Use:** The report states that demands on time for care is higher for people of child-bearing age (34% for those aged 35-44) and those of retirement age (32% for those aged 35-75, and 51% of those aged 75 and over). In 2022, retirement-aged people living alone were the most likely to have high satisfaction with their time use. A higher proportion of people from disadvantaged (35%) and very disadvantaged (36%) households provide at least 20 hours of care per week compared to very affluent households (23%).
- **Safety and Security:** People over 60 years are more worried they could be a victim of crime than younger people.
- **Social Connections and Loneliness:** The report indicates that in 2023, adults of retirement age living alone had higher proportions of feeling lonely at least some of the time (29.4%). Older people of working age were also more likely to feel lonely (15.8%).
- **Civic Engagement:** The report notes that there was very little variation in perceived social inclusion across age groups.
- **Health:** In 2021, women had higher healthy life years at birth than men, however, this gap has reduced since 2020. The report also states that women had higher rates of reported depression than men.

Key Considerations for Age-Friendly Initiatives:

While the report does not use the term "age-friendly," it does provide data points that are relevant to age-friendly initiatives. For example, the data on loneliness, safety, and access to services is important for understanding the challenges faced by older people. Some of the areas of focus may include:

- **Social Inclusion:** The report highlights the importance of social connections in reducing loneliness, a significant issue for older people.
- **Health and Well-being:** The data on healthy life years and unmet medical needs are important when considering the healthcare needs of older populations.
- **Economic Security:** The report's findings on income, wealth, and the cost of living are relevant to ensuring older people can maintain a good standard of living.

- Community: The findings suggest a need for better safety measures for older people.

Limitations:

- The report does not specifically focus on older people as a distinct group. The analysis often groups older adults with other age cohorts or uses broad categories.
- Data specific to older people is not always available for all indicators, making it difficult to assess the full picture of their well-being.
- The report does not directly discuss the concept of 'age friendly' environments.

In conclusion, while the report offers valuable data relevant to the well-being of older people in Ireland, it does not directly address "age-friendly" initiatives. It would be beneficial to have more granular data specifically focused on older people across all dimensions of well-being, and to incorporate the concept of 'age-friendly' environments to develop targeted interventions.



13. National Dementia Strategy

The National Dementia Strategy, published by the Department of Health, was launched on 17 December 2014. The aim of the Strategy is to improve dementia care so that people with dementia can live well for as long as possible, can ultimately die with comfort and dignity, and can have services and supports delivered in the best way possible.

The Strategy identifies key principles to underpin and inform the full range of health and social care services provided to people with dementia, their families and carers. Six Priority Areas for Action have been identified in the Strategy, as follows:

- Better awareness and understanding
- Timely diagnosis and intervention
- Integrated services, supports and care for people with dementia and their carers
- Training and education
- Research and information systems
- Leadership

The National Dementia Office was established in 2015 to oversee the implementation of the strategy. A mid-term review of the National Dementia Strategy was published in 2018.



14. Ireland's Digital Connectivity Strategy 2022

This 2022 Irish Digital Connectivity Strategy outlines targets for nationwide gigabit broadband and 5G mobile coverage by 2028 and 2030 respectively. The strategy also addresses cybersecurity, emergency services, and digital inclusion, aiming to ensure all citizens benefit from enhanced connectivity. Regular review and updates are planned to adapt to technological advancements and evolving needs.

The Digital Connectivity Strategy aims to ensure that digital connectivity is available to all, which includes supporting older people. The strategy recognises that digital connectivity is a pre-requisite for social inclusion and aims to ensure that disadvantaged groups are not left behind in the digital transition. Several aspects of the strategy could be beneficial for older people:

- **Access to high-speed broadband:** The strategy aims to provide all Irish households and businesses with access to a gigabit network by 2028. This would enable older people to access online services, stay connected with family and friends, and participate more fully in the digital world. The National Broadband Plan (NBP) is designed to bring high-speed broadband to rural areas, which will benefit older people living outside of cities and towns.
- **Public Broadband Connection Points (BCPs):** These will be established in over 280 publicly accessible community buildings, allowing for community use of digital technologies in rural and isolated areas⁶. These BCPs can act as testbeds for new technologies and provide digitally enabled services to rural communities, which could include services targeted at older people.
- **Mobile Connectivity:** The strategy also aims to ensure that all populated areas are covered by 5G by 2030. This enhanced mobile connectivity can support older people in a number of ways. For example, it could facilitate access to telehealth services and enable communication through mobile devices.
- **Digital Literacy:** The strategy aims to promote the adoption of digital technologies through pilot initiatives and programmes to develop research and innovation. This includes a focus on addressing digital literacy deficits. Increased digital literacy would benefit older people by increasing their ability to use digital services and tools.
- **Cybersecurity:** The strategy recognises the importance of cybersecurity and aims to protect users from cyber threats. This is especially important for older people, who may be more vulnerable to online fraud and scams.
- **Emergency Services:** The strategy includes measures to improve emergency call services and implement a public warning system using mobile phones. These improvements will be of benefit to all citizens, including older people, ensuring they can access help quickly and receive important information during emergencies.

By addressing the challenges of digital connectivity and promoting digital literacy, the Digital Connectivity Strategy aims to create a more inclusive and accessible digital environment for all, including older people. The strategy's emphasis on ensuring that no one is left behind in the digital transition signals its commitment to supporting the needs of all age groups in the digital age.



15. Climate Action Plan 2024

Ireland's 2024 Climate Action Plan details the nation's strategy for achieving carbon neutrality by 2050, outlining targets and actions across various sectors. The plan addresses mitigation through emissions reductions, emphasising renewable energy, a circular economy, and improvements in transport and agriculture. Adaptation strategies are also presented to build resilience against climate change impacts.

The sources outline several ways in which climate action plans and related initiatives support older people and promote age-friendly environments:

- **Accessible and Sustainable Transport:** The plan emphasizes a shift towards public and active transport. The measures aim to improve accessibility and reduce reliance on private cars, which can be beneficial for older adults who may not drive or prefer alternative modes of transport. Additionally, new transport projects are designed to be accessible, and older infrastructure is being retrofitted for improved accessibility.
- **Community Benefits:** The Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS) and Offshore Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (ORESS) require projects to establish a Community Benefit Fund (CBF), which can be used for the wider economic, environmental, social, and cultural well-being of the local community. These funds can support age-friendly community initiatives and infrastructure.
- **Just Transition:** The Just Transition Framework ensures that the costs of climate action are shared equitably, so that existing inequalities are not exacerbated. It also calls for social dialogue to empower impacted citizens and communities and ensure they are central to the transition process. This framework is integral to all aspects of climate action. The National Dialogue on Climate Action (NDCA) provides a forum for people to input on climate action and its impacts, with just transition at its core. These measures would seek to protect vulnerable groups, including older people, from negative impacts of the climate transition and ensures costs are fairly distributed.
- **Addressing Energy Poverty:** The plans recognise that the transition away from fossil fuels should be done in a way that considers the needs of particular groups, including older people, and addresses energy poverty. Research has found that targeted supports for low-income households can address energy poverty. This is particularly relevant for older adults, who may be on fixed incomes.
- **Retrofitting:** The National Retrofit Plan aims to make retrofitting more affordable and accessible. The rollout of the Social Housing National Retrofitting Programme will continue, with increased funding to help low-income households upgrade their homes. These measures can make homes warmer, more energy-efficient, and more comfortable for older people.

These measures, taken together, aim to create a more sustainable and equitable environment that is also more age-friendly.



16. NTA Statement of Strategy 2023 – 2025

The National Transport Authority's (NTA) 2023-2025 Statement of Strategy outlines the NTA's goals for sustainable transport infrastructure and services across Ireland, focusing on reducing emissions, improving public transport, and promoting active travel.

The document outlines several initiatives and objectives of the National Transport Authority (NTA) that support age-friendly environments, primarily by focusing on accessibility, inclusivity, and sustainable transport options. These are some ways the NTA supports age friendly policies:

● **Accessibility:** The NTA aims to ensure that infrastructure and services are accessible to all, including the elderly and people with disabilities. This is supported by specific measures:

- The PSO bus and coach fleet has been fully transitioned to be wheelchair accessible.
- A large percentage of the Local Link vehicle fleet that provides regular services are low floor vehicles.
- Wheelchair accessible bus bays have been installed.
- Railway stations have been upgraded with new lifts and escalators, and video calls are installed in some lifts.

● **Inclusivity:** The NTA aims to proactively engage with different user groups to inform improvements that meet their specific needs. This can mean that they are taking into account the needs of the elderly or those with mobility issues.

● **Public Transport Improvements:** The NTA has implemented several measures to make public transport more convenient and user-friendly:

- The Connecting Ireland programme aims to improve connectivity in rural areas.
- The TFI 90-minute fare allows free transfers between different modes of public transport within 90 minutes.
- The roll out of the BusConnects programme in multiple cities to redesign the bus network will likely improve services for all users.
- There has been a focus on increasing service levels, particularly outside of peak hours and at weekends.

● **Sustainable Transport:** By promoting sustainable modes of transport like walking and cycling, the NTA is creating more age-friendly environments.

● **Cost-Effective Transport:** The NTA has implemented measures to reduce the cost of public transport.

The Authority will continue to develop a deep understanding of customer needs.

These initiatives and strategic objectives indicate a commitment to creating a transport system that is accessible, inclusive, and convenient for people of all ages and abilities, thus supporting age-friendly policies.



17. An Garda Síochána National Older Person's Plan

The An Garda Síochána National Older Person's Plan outlines a strategy to address the policing needs of Ireland's growing older population. Acknowledging that while crime rates are low, fear of crime is higher amongst older people, the strategy focuses on building trust through improved communication, increased visibility, and stronger community partnerships. Extensive consultation with stakeholders, including older people and relevant agencies, informed the strategy's development. The plan includes specific actions to enhance communication, improve response times, reduce fear of crime, and continuously assess and adapt to the evolving needs of older citizens. The strategy aims to ensure older people feel safe and remain active within their communities.

The An Garda Síochána Older People Strategy aims to support older people through various initiatives and partnerships, addressing their specific needs and concerns. The strategy acknowledges that while crime rates against older people are low, their fear of crime is significantly higher, which can negatively impact their quality of life, leading to isolation and exclusion. The strategy is designed to ensure older people remain active and safe within their communities.

Here's how the strategy supports older people:

- **Improved Communication and Engagement:** The strategy seeks to establish effective communication links between Gardaí and older people by engaging with statutory and non-statutory agencies to assess their needs. This involves instilling the importance of communicating with older people in all Gardaí, and promoting the use of diverse technology channels to increase engagement. The strategy also aims to keep communities informed of policing issues that affect older people through local and national media, reducing isolation and increasing engagement.
- **Proactive and Effective Response:** The strategy emphasizes delivering timely and proactive responses by An Garda Síochána to the needs of older people. This includes determining their specific policing requirements, providing high-visibility patrols in areas where they reside and congregate, and developing and distributing crime prevention and personal safety advice. Additionally, the strategy aims to address elder abuse by working with statutory and non-statutory agencies to develop and implement strategies and improve awareness of this issue.
- **Reducing Fear of Crime:** The strategy focuses on increasing trust and confidence in the police by lessening the fear of crime among older people. This is achieved through several measures, including increasing awareness among Gardaí of the challenges faced by older people and developing a station/district register of older people to support engagement by Community Gardaí. The strategy also promotes supportive and caring neighbourhoods, improves the quality of follow-up with older victims of crime, and develops partnerships with agencies to reduce the fear of crime.

- **Community Involvement:** The strategy also encourages the participation of older people in crime prevention initiatives, such as Community Alert and Neighbourhood Watch. Furthermore, they seek to utilise the experience and wisdom of older people in their communities.
- **Addressing Specific Needs:** The strategy addresses the unique needs of older people, including their vulnerability to bogus callers, by promoting initiatives like the Bogus Caller Initiative. It also focuses on the impact of noisy group behaviour by making young people aware of the fear it can cause to older people. It also seeks to promote crime prevention through environmental design by working with planning authorities.
- **Ongoing Assessment and Improvement:** The strategy includes mechanisms to regularly assess and respond to the needs and expectations of older people. This includes gathering feedback through public attitude surveys and bi-annual forums with agencies working with older people. Regular interaction with older people is also used to identify key issues and update policing plans. They are also using a standard approach to recording and updating incidents involving older people.
- **Collaborative Partnerships:** The strategy is underpinned by a strong emphasis on collaborative partnerships. The Gardaí work with a variety of organisations and agencies to better support older people. This collaborative approach ensures that the strategy is implemented effectively and that the needs of older people are met.

By implementing these measures, the An Garda Síochána Older People Strategy aims to create safer, more secure, and inclusive communities for older people. The strategy is designed to be flexible, adapting to the evolving needs of this diverse group. The strategy also acknowledges that everyone can play a part and invites suggestions on how services can be improved.



18. Housing Options for Ireland’s Ageing Population

This policy statement, jointly produced by Ireland's Department of Housing and Department of Health, addresses the housing needs of Ireland's ageing population. It outlines six key principles for housing older people, focusing on ageing in place and supporting urban renewal. The statement projects a significant increase in the demand for older person housing and proposes various actions to meet this need, including developing diverse housing options, improving data collection, fostering collaboration, and enhancing community supports. These actions aim to provide older people with greater choice and enable them to live independently for longer. Case studies of successful housing projects illustrate the policy's practical application.

Local Level Strategies and Plans

County Louth



19. Louth County Development Plan 2021 – 2027

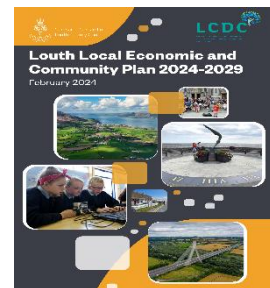
The Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 outlines a comprehensive strategy for sustainable development across County Louth, incorporating spatial, economic, social, and environmental considerations. Key focus areas include the growth of Drogheda and Dundalk as Regional Growth Centres, promoting compact development, and addressing climate change through mitigation and adaptation measures. The plan details policies and objectives across various sectors, such as housing, transport, heritage, and infrastructure, and includes numerous tables and maps for further clarification. Finally, it specifies implementation procedures and monitoring mechanisms to ensure its effective execution.

The Louth County Development Plan 2021-2027 incorporates several strategies and objectives to support age-friendly communities. Key aspects of the plan supporting age-friendly initiatives:

- **Housing Options:** The plan seeks to provide a range of suitable accommodation options for older people, promoting independent living and community integration. This includes:
 - Supporting housing located near amenities and services.
 - Promoting adaptable and accessible housing that can meet the changing needs of older people.
 - Encouraging the use of assistive technology in housing.
 - Facilitating opportunities for older people to "rightsize" within their communities
 - Supporting the provision of single-story units in larger developments to allow older people to move to smaller houses.
- **Community and Social Inclusion:** The plan prioritizes the development of inclusive communities with accessible facilities for all ages and abilities. It supports the provision of community, social, recreational, educational, and cultural facilities that are accessible and meet the needs of older people.
- **Age-Friendly Strategies:** The plan aims to implement the principles outlined in the 'Housing Options for Our Ageing Population' policy statement. It also seeks to integrate age-friendly strategies into new neighbourhoods.
- **Universal Design:** The plan promotes the principles of universal design in the design and construction of buildings and external areas. This ensures environments are accessible to all users regardless of age or disability.
- **Accessible Environments:** The plan supports the creation of walkable and cyclable environments.

- **Transportation:** The plan aims to facilitate affordable, accessible, and cleaner transportation options, as well as support a modal shift away from the private car to more sustainable modes of transport, such as public transport, walking and cycling
- **Town Centre Revitalisation:** The plan includes strategies to revitalize town centres, making them more attractive and accessible to older people. This involves:
- **Open Space and Recreation:** The plan supports the creation of multi-functional open spaces with a focus on accessibility and promotes the provision of accessible social, community, cultural and recreational facilities.

These measures aim to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for older people in County Louth, aligning with national strategies and guidelines to address the needs of an ageing population.



20. Louth Local Economic and Community Plan

The Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) for 2024–2029, details a six-year strategy for the county’s economic and social development, built upon extensive community and stakeholder consultation. The plan integrates economic and community goals, aligning with national and regional strategies, and prioritises sustainability and climate action. A flexible two-year implementation plan, subject to review, is included, along with key performance indicators and data sources for monitoring progress. The LECP aims to create a prosperous, sustainable, and inclusive Louth.

The Louth Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2024-2029 includes several references to age-friendly initiatives and considerations for older people, with the aim of creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for all age groups in the county.

Key aspects of the plan related to older people:

- **Housing:** The plan seeks to increase housing options for older people, including supporting the creation of independent or assisted living arrangements and encouraging the adaptive reuse of existing structures for housing. It also recognises that elderly households may benefit from downsizing and relocating closer to urban amenities.
- **Accessibility:** The LECP aims to improve physical accessibility in towns, villages, and rural communities, with particular attention to providing sufficient parking in appropriate locations for older people and those with mobility issues.
- **Health and Well-being:** The plan commits to working with national and local health agencies to support the health and lifestyles of older people, who are a significant percentage of the population in Louth. It aims to provide accessible public health and family services, and to address gaps in the provision of socially inclusive care for marginalised and vulnerable community members.

- **Community Engagement:** The plan emphasises the importance of engaging with vulnerable groups, including older people, to create inclusive and healthy communities. It also aims to support and develop an age-friendly society in County Louth.
- **Age-Friendly Strategy:** The plan includes the development and implementation of a new Age Friendly Strategy for County Louth, as well as the support of the Age Friendly Programme to deliver ageism awareness initiatives.
- **Public Realm Design:** Public realm redesigns will follow best practices in creating new spaces accessible to all, including the provision of sufficient parking for older people and those with mobility issues.
- **Consultation:** The plan was informed by consultations with various groups, including older people. Specifically, there were consultations with older people at The Mill Enterprise Centre Drogheda and at The 4 Seasons Carlingford. Additionally, the plan was promoted through the Louth Age Friendly Alliance and Louth Older People's Council.

Specific Actions in the Implementation Plan:

- **Action 1.1.3:** To facilitate the creation of increased housing options for older people, such as rightsizing, and to support independent and/or assisted living.
- **Action 3.2.1:** To follow best practice in public realm redesign to create new accessible spaces, including sufficient parking for older people.
- **Action 5.4.1:** To develop and implement a new Age Friendly Strategy for Co. Louth.
- **Action 5.4.2:** To continue to support the Age Friendly Programme to deliver ageism awareness initiatives.

These actions demonstrate the LECP's commitment to creating a county that is inclusive and supportive of its older residents.

The Louth Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2024-2029 identifies a number of challenges facing the county's future development, drawing upon socio-economic analysis, consultation findings, and a Strengths, Constraints, Opportunities, and Threats (SCOT) analysis. These challenges are relevant to the Age Friendly Strategy.

Key challenges identified in the plan include:

- **Housing:** A significant challenge is the lack of adequate and affordable housing, both for purchase and rent. The plan also notes the need for diverse housing options to match the needs of different household compositions and occupant requirements. The plan recognizes the need to support the provision of housing, also stating a need for housing options that include older people, people with disabilities and those with additional needs.
- **Economic disparities:** There is a two-speed economy, with strong opportunities in urban areas, but some residents are unable to take advantage of these due to insufficient education, skills, and access to transport. This issue is noted as often being intergenerational. Rural areas also face challenges with unemployment, neglected sites, and lack of public transport, compounded by the rising cost of living.
- **Business Vacancy:** Louth has a high business vacancy rate.
- **Public Transport:** The shortage of public transport options and frequency is a problem, especially in connecting towns with rural areas.

- **Infrastructure and Accessibility:** While Louth's location on the Dublin-Belfast corridor is advantageous, accessibility can also be a challenge, as visitors may easily bypass the county. There is also a lack of sports facilities, especially in rural areas and new estates.
- **Climate Change:** The plan acknowledges the threats of climate change and its consequences on infrastructure, services, and the built environment. The county also needs to address issues related to flooding, water quality and coastal erosion.
- **Social Issues:** The county has areas of deprivation, with concentrated disadvantage in Dundalk and other areas across rural and urban Louth. The plan recognizes the need to address issues such as mental health, and social inclusion and to support marginalized communities, such as the Traveller Community.
- **Digital Connectivity:** The need for good digital connectivity and removal of broadband blackspots is noted.

Local Link Rural Transport Programme – Louth Meath Fingal 4 year Strategic Plan 2018 –



2022

Flexibus, a not-for-profit rural transport provider in Louth, Meath, and Fingal, Ireland, presents its 2019-2022 strategic plan. The plan, developed through stakeholder consultation, outlines Flexibus's vision, mission, and objectives, aligning with national transport strategies and local development plans. Key priorities include sustaining existing services, expanding into new areas, and maintaining a strong social enterprise ethos. The document also addresses financial challenges and proposals for new services, contingent on securing sufficient funding from the National Transport Authority and other sources. Ultimately, the plan aims to improve rural accessibility and community engagement through innovative and sustainable transport solutions.



21. Creative Ireland Louth Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023–2027

The Creative Ireland Louth Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023–2027 aims to support older people through various initiatives and actions, focusing on their participation, health, and wellbeing. Here's how it supports age-friendly older people:

- **Encouraging Participation:** The strategy seeks to encourage older people's involvement in creative programmes by partnering with organisations that advocate for the older generation. This aims to improve their health and wellbeing through creative activities.
- **Partnerships and Collaboration:** The initiative plans to work in partnership with the Community Section, Age Friendly Co-Ordinator, and Healthy Ireland Co-Ordinator to contribute creative and artistic solutions to programme and project development within

Louth. This collaborative approach ensures that the needs of older people are considered in the design and implementation of creative projects.

- **Accessible Creative Opportunities:** The strategy will encourage participation in creativity through resources at libraries, arts centres, galleries and museums. It also aims to bring creativity into communities outside of traditional venues, ensuring opportunities are accessible to all, including older people. This approach ensures that creative activities are not confined to specific locations, thus making it easier for older people to participate.
- **Health and Wellbeing Focus:** The strategy aims to deliver tailored programming that supports health and wellbeing, encouraging the participation of older people in these initiatives. This focus highlights the importance of creative engagement for the overall wellness of older adults.
- **Inclusive Programme Delivery:** The programme aims to include marginalised groups and those experiencing social exclusion, ensuring older people are not overlooked. This commitment to inclusivity ensures that creative opportunities are available to a diverse range of older individuals.
- **Projects That Build Resilience:** The plan intends to provide supports and tools that build resilience and create projects that are welcoming and beneficial to the communities involved, which would include older people. These projects will aim to be welcoming and beneficial for older people.
- **Community Grants:** The Creative Louth Community Grant fund is intended to promote projects to community groups, fostering collaborations with local artists and arts organisations, which can include projects specifically designed for or including older people.
- **Policy and Practice:** The Creative Communities initiative will support local authorities to deliver relevant local, regional, and national policies and priorities, and ensure that culture and creativity teams provide an agile and adaptable approach that will address local priorities such as support for older people



22. Louth Arts Development Plan 2022-2026

The Louth Arts Development Plan 2022-2026 outlines the strategic priorities for the arts sector in County Louth, Ireland, for the next five years. Key goals include supporting artists through residencies and grants, enhancing community engagement and wellbeing through inclusive arts programming, and promoting Louth as a vibrant artistic destination. The plan is based on extensive consultation with stakeholders and the public, incorporating feedback to shape its five key priorities. These priorities focus on supporting artists, engaging older people, improving community health and wellbeing, promoting Louth, and nurturing children and young people.

The Louth Arts Development Plan 2022-2026 outlines several ways that the arts service will support older people in the community:

- The plan recognises the importance of arts and creativity to the ageing population and aims to deliver an arts service that enhances their quality of life
- The Arts Service will work with groups and facilities that specifically support older people to deliver arts programmes designed to enhance their well-being and quality of life.
- The Arts Service will also endeavour to deliver a range of projects to address mental health issues and feelings of isolation by working with community organisations that have established relationships with older people, such as HSE (Health Service Executive) and Age Friendly groups
- The plan includes support for older artists in the community in accessing services and promoting their work.

The Arts Service intends to support older people's participation in arts initiatives, such as the Bealtaine festival through "Music in Healthcare settings". The plan also aims to ensure older artists can continue their practice where possible.



23. Louth County Council's Climate Action Plan 2024-2029

The County Louth County Council's Climate Action Plan (2024-2029), outlines strategies for mitigating and adapting to climate change. The plan, mandated by legislation, establishes a baseline emissions inventory, assesses climate risks, and proposes actions across various sectors (agriculture, transport, built environment, communities). It sets ambitious targets for emissions reduction by 2030 and achieving net-zero by 2050, emphasising community involvement and a just transition. A key initiative focuses on designating Dundalk Blackrock as a decarbonising zone to pilot innovative climate action projects.

While the sources do not explicitly use the term "age-friendly" or mention older people as a specific focus group, the Louth County Council Climate Action Plan includes elements that would positively impact older people and support their well-being, such as:

- **Improved Public Health:** The plan aims to reduce air pollution and promote sustainable transportation, leading to better respiratory health, which is beneficial for older individuals.
- **Enhanced Resilience to Climate Change:** By investing in infrastructure that is resilient to extreme weather events, the plan helps to protect all communities, including older people who may be more vulnerable to such events. This includes measures like flood-resistant infrastructure.
- **Community Engagement:** The plan emphasises engaging communities in decision-making, which can provide opportunities for older people to participate and voice their needs. This engagement can help ensure that environmental policies are distributed equitably, and vulnerable populations, including older people, are supported.

- **Green Spaces:** The plan supports tree planting and community gardens to increase green spaces. Access to green spaces promotes physical and mental well-being, particularly beneficial for older adults.
- **Active Travel:** The plan aims to improve pedestrian infrastructure and promote walking, which can enable older people to maintain mobility and social engagement within their communities.
- **Just Transition:** The plan aims to ensure a just transition to a more sustainable way of living, meaning that no one is left behind. This implies that the needs of older people would be considered in the transition to a green economy.
- **Community Support:** The plan seeks to enhance and build the growing culture of community climate action. Such community support can assist older people in adapting to climate change, particularly for those who may need assistance.

The plan recognises that many people in Louth live in low-lying coastal communities that are vulnerable to sea level rise and flooding. It also notes that the housing stock in Louth is mixed, with many older, energy-inefficient dwellings. These statements imply that actions taken under the plan would have to address the needs of older residents as they would be more likely to live in such communities and dwellings.

It is important to note that the plan doesn't explicitly use the term "age-friendly" or focus specifically on older people; however, many actions outlined in the plan would have positive implications for them.



24. The Louth Library Service Development Programme 2020-2025

The Louth Library Service's five-year development plan (2020-2025) outlines its vision, mission, and strategic objectives. Extensive community consultation shaped the plan, which focuses on enhancing services, infrastructure, and staff development. The plan aims to improve access to resources and technology, promote literacy, and strengthen community engagement. Key initiatives include expanding digital services and upgrading library facilities, while upholding the library's role as a community hub. The plan is aligned with national and European strategies for sustainable development.

The plan aims to support the community, and while it does not specifically mention "age-friendly" initiatives, it includes several elements that can be beneficial to older adults:

- **Accessibility:** The programme aims to improve access to library services for all members of the community. This includes ensuring library buildings and service points are fit for purpose and that there are user-friendly opening hours. The "My Open Library" initiative, which allows access outside staffed hours, can be particularly helpful for older adults with varying schedules.

- **Community Hubs:** Libraries are positioned as community hubs. The document notes the importance of the library as a civic space and for social inclusion. The programme seeks to provide welcoming and inclusive spaces for all. Older adults can benefit from these social spaces to connect with others, participate in book clubs, and enjoy various events.
- **Technology and Digital Services:** The plan recognizes the importance of technology and aims to establish libraries as key places for accessing, learning and using innovative information technology. Free Wi-Fi, public internet access, and self-service print and copy facilities are available in all branches. The plan also mentions investment in digital learning spaces and a programme of STEAM activities. These technology initiatives can benefit older adults who want to improve their digital literacy and access online resources.
- **Events and Activities:** The library service delivers a vibrant programme of events each year, including book clubs, coding classes, computer classes, Irish conversation groups and creative writing workshops. This is in addition to events specifically for children and families, including grandparents. These opportunities can offer older adults opportunities for lifelong learning and social engagement.
- **Health and Wellbeing:** The programme aims to improve health and wellbeing through a programme of events in collaboration with local agencies. The library provides collections of books and online resources on all aspects of health and wellbeing. These resources and programmes can benefit older adults in maintaining their health and well-being.
- **Partnerships:** The library service values strong partnerships with organisations such as the Louth Older People's Council. These partnerships can lead to initiatives and programmes that are specifically tailored to the needs of older adults.

The plan also states that Louth Library Service will reinforce the use of innovative technologies to meet the needs of the community. This could include technologies and services that make the library more accessible and usable for older adults, even though it does not specify which technologies or services. The document indicates that the library service will seek to leverage inclusive partnership approaches to promote the library as a community resource available to everyone. This approach would also include older adults.

25. Louth Local Sports Partnership Strategic Plan

Louth Local Sports Partnership is developing a new Strategic Plan 2025-2029. This presents an opportunity to align with the Age Friendly Programme and the new Co. Louth Age Friendly Strategy.

26. Healthy Ireland for Louth Plan



The "Healthy Ireland for Louth" plan is a five-year plan developed by Healthy Louth to implement Healthy Ireland initiatives at the local level, focusing on promoting healthy behaviours and creating healthier environments within the county. This plan is a local

response to the broader national Healthy Ireland Framework and includes specific initiatives to address the health and wellbeing needs of the Louth population, including older people.



27. County Louth PEACEPLUS Programme

This document outlines proposed projects for County Louth, Ireland, funded by the PEACEPLUS programme. The projects aim to foster peace and prosperity through community regeneration, promoting thriving communities, celebrating cultural diversity, and sharing narratives from the past. Two major capital projects involve upgrading the Battle of the Boyne site and St Nicholas' Church, creating shared spaces.

The Louth PEACEPLUS Action Plan outlines several projects that could indirectly support age-friendly initiatives for older people, although none are explicitly targeted at older people, there are several projects that include older people or could be adapted to better support their engagement.

Here's a breakdown of how different projects could potentially contribute to age-friendly goals:

- **Community Regeneration and Transformation:**

The Battle of the Boyne site project (CRT A) aims to improve access and understanding of the site, which could be beneficial for older people who wish to engage with local heritage and history. The project intends to develop interpretative materials, improve signage and visitor facilities. The development of an educational program could include older people as a key audience. The walking clubs associated with this project could also include older people. The St. Nicholas' Church of Ireland project (CRT B) aims to upgrade the church into a dual-use music facility. This could provide accessible cultural events for older people, particularly those interested in music. The project also includes an open day with history tours that could be of interest to older residents.

- **Thriving and Peaceful Communities:**

The Collaborative Arts Programme seeks to engage diverse communities in arts-based exploration activities. This could include older people, offering opportunities for creative expression and social engagement. The program includes community-based programs with women's groups, which could be inclusive of older women's groups.

The Animating Shared Spaces project which focuses on local stories through art, could include older people in sharing their experiences of historical and modern figures. This project aims to work across community and youth groups, which could be inclusive of older people's groups.

The Youth Leadership and Mentoring Programme has an intergenerational element which could involve older people in a mentoring capacity. This could be an opportunity for older people to share their skills and experiences with younger generations.

- **Celebrating Cultures and Diversity:**

- The Culture Heritage/Multi-cultural history project aims to increase understanding and respect for all cultures. The "Around the World in 7 Days" events and shared learning could be of interest to older people wanting to learn more about diverse cultures.

- The Shared Narratives Storytelling Programme, especially the women-focused elements, could provide an opportunity for older women to share their experiences and contribute

to a shared history. The project specifically aims to include people not previously included in peace initiatives. The educational resources and toolkit developed could be used to share these narratives with older people in the community.

While these projects don't specifically target older people, their inclusive nature and focus on community engagement, history, arts, and culture make them relevant to creating age-friendly communities. The projects all aim to encourage cross-community and cross-border engagement, which can help reduce social isolation and promote a sense of belonging for older people.

To more directly support older people, the projects could:

- Actively recruit and include older people in their activities.
- Ensure physical accessibility of venues and activities.
- Be mindful of different health needs or abilities of older people during activities.
- Provide transport and other resources to enable participation.
- Tailor activities to suit older people's interests and capabilities.

By making these adjustments, the PEACEPLUS projects could contribute to a more inclusive and age-friendly environment in Louth.



28. SICAP

The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2024-2028 provides funding to tackle poverty and social exclusion at a local level through local engagement and partnerships between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies. It is a targeted, holistic programme, for those who are most disadvantaged and less likely to access mainstream services, which provides supports directly to beneficiaries and links them into existing services. Programme Implementers (PIs) engage with marginalised communities and service providers using a community development approach to address issues relating to social exclusion and inequality. SICAP also prioritises local engagement and partnerships, between SICAP Programme Implementers, disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies.



29. LEADER Programme 2023 – 2027

Since its launch in 1991, LEADER has provided rural communities across County Louth with the resources to enable local partners to actively engage and direct the local development of their area, through a community-led local development (CLLD).

LEADER is a French acronym (Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale), which roughly translates as 'Liaison among Actors in Rural Economic Development'.

Decisions on LEADER funding are made at a local level by a Local Action Group (LAG), through the framework of a Local Development Strategy (LDS). A LAG is made up of people from the

local community as well as from the local public and private sector. The LDS is a plan that is developed by local rural communities to support sustainable development of their area. LEADER supports the delivery of local development actions in rural communities. It is a Community Led Local Development (CLLD) approach that involves the participation of rural communities in developing local responses to key economic, environmental and social challenges identified in their areas.

There are three Themes under which LEADER can support applicants:

Theme 1: Economic Development and Job Creation

Theme 2: Rural Infrastructure and Social Inclusion

Theme 3: Sustainable Development of the Rural Environment and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaption

LEADER is implemented by Louth Local Development Company.

30. Public Participation Network



The Louth Public Participation Network (PPN) is a network of not for profit community, voluntary, social inclusion and environmental organisations working together to improve and enhance the quality of life of our citizens.

Louth Public Participation Network gives groups the opportunity to input into local policy decisions that affect their Community through representation on Local Authority Committees and Boards.

The PPN also provides its members with training and capacity building opportunities, keeps members informed of available grants and funding, provides Networking opportunities for members and keeps members up to date with Community News, Events, Supports and Resources via our weekly Newsletter, The Friday Communiqué. The link between the PPN and the OPC is very important as is the involvement of older person's groups in the PPN.

31. Active Travel 2025



Active Travel involves travelling with a purpose, using your own energy via sustainable means. It includes walking, wheeling, and cycling or the use of self-powered, non-motorised scooters as part of a purposeful journey. For example, walking to school and cycling to work are both considered forms of Active Travel.

The NTA has a dedicated Active Travel team who work in collaboration with Local Authorities across the country on the delivery of hundreds of Active Travel projects. This includes the development of segregated cycle lanes and widened footpaths, new walking and cycling bridges, and new pedestrian crossings.

Funding totalling €5.8million has been allocated to Louth County Council for Active Travel projects throughout the county. A further €500,000 has been allocated under the bus stop enhancement programme. The largest allocation, €2,625,000, is for the Active Travel Pathfinder project on the R132 inner Relief Road in Dundalk.

32. VARCITIES – Drogheda

In an increasingly urbanised world, cities face several challenges and threats and struggle to propose credible urban futures and new opportunities for their citizens. VARCITIES is an ambitious project that puts the citizens and the “human communities” at the centre of future cities’ vision, in the belief that future cities should become fully human-centred.

The project officially started in September 2020 and will last until August 2025 (the project has received a 6-month extension). The Consortium is composed of 25 partners under the lead of Telecommunication System Institute (TSI) from the Technical University of Crete. Seven Pilot Cities test and implement a series of innovative nature-based actions.

The vision of VARCITIES is to implement real, visionary ideas and add value by establishing sustainable models for increasing the health and well-being of citizens: women, children, young people, middle aged, and the elderly, who are exposed to diverse climatic conditions and challenges in and around Europe. VARCITIES sets the ambitious target to advance innovation across different urban scales by fully exploiting nature-based solutions from a digital, social and cultural perspective. Public spaces are envisioned as people-centred areas that support creativity, inclusivity, health, and happiness for the citizens.

Dundalk is the administrative capital of County Louth and is the pilot town of VARCITIES. The pilot proposes the “Creation of an Outdoor Learning Hub” within the courtyard area of County Library / Museum Quarter. One of the biggest changes in Dundalk’ VARCITIES Pilot will be the removal of the car parking spaces, increasing the resultant open public spaces and the benefits deriving from reduced climate risk exposure, noise and air pollution, and environmental stress. VS 1 saw the installation of a new facility, an Outdoor Learning Pod, which showcases the newest technologies and hosts shared functions. Alongside was also installed Virtual Learning Pod Sensors used to collate data on visitor numbers and duration of stay. A new Software was also installed to record PV savings from existing PV roof panels on the Museum roof.

VS 2 developed a sensory garden, and the area was enhanced with new seating throughout the site and improved public lighting with LED lights. A rainwater harvesting system now encourages visitors to be more sustainable in the use of water. A new touch screen monitor displays green learning’s and information on the project.

VS 3 saw the installation of new bike-stations at the site, all equipped with sensors. The data collected on cyclist numbers helps the city better understand the use of the space.

