Fingal Age Friendly County Strategy

2012-2017

County Fingal

MEATH

SOUTH DUBLIN

DUBLIN CITY

Balscadden

Balbriggan

Naul

Balrothery

Skerries

Garristown

Loughshinny

Lusk

Rush

Oldtown

Ballyboghil

Rowlestown

Donabate

Swords

Malahide

St. Margaret's

Kinsaley

Portmarnock

Santry

Baldoyle

Blanchardstown

Howth

Castleknock

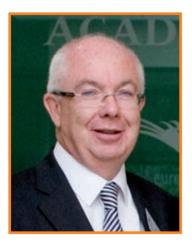**Fingal Age Friendly County Strategy**

2012–2017

Foreword

When I was first approached with the idea of having Fingal become an Age Friendly County I immediately felt that this represented a natural progression for us, as a Local Authority. This process has provided us with an opportunity to explore what the issues are for older people in the county and how we can tackle them together.

Over the past few months we in Fingal County Council have engaged with the various Agencies and Organisations and formed the Fingal Age Friendly Alliance which I see as the driving force for implementing the Fingal Age Friendly County Strategy.

A process of consultation was undertaken with older people in Fingal to hear their views on what they would regard as an Age Friendly County. As part of the process a survey was carried out which revealed that almost 70% of older people in Fingal regard their health as excellent, very good or good. To me this means that the perception of older people as infirm needs to be reconsidered. Our older people are an asset to Fingal and an Age Friendly County will benefit all of our citizens.

I was also struck by the large proportion of older people who feel safe and secure in their areas – almost 90%. However, I am aware that this varies from place to place and these are the type of issues that the Age Friendly Alliance will seek to address over the period of this strategy.

Moreover, I am aware that there is something of a digital divide for older people, which is more pronounced than for other groups. However, I feel that the development of social media is beginning to bridge this divide. There is now an opportunity to work in an interagency manner through the Alliance to strive to bring about change. In my capacity as Fingal County Manager I have found the initial phase of developing the strategy both informative and challenging and look forward to progressing to the implementation phase of this Age Friendly County strategy.

David O'Connor
Fingal County Manager

Contents

What is an Age Friendly County?

In a global context older people represent a rapidly increasing percentage of the population and people are living much longer. In response to this the World Health Organisation (WHO) has developed a concept of Age Friendly Cities and Counties with the following core values:

- Benefits people of all ages
- Universal Design
- Safe and Secure neighbourhoods
- Older persons have a lot to give their community
- Recognised as best practice to address the needs of changing society
- Local Authority leadership

Older people in Fingal

In 2006 about 14% (33,567) of people in Fingal were aged 55 or over. Between 2002 and 2006 the population of Fingal increased by 22%, compared to a national increase of 8%, which represents a growth rate unprecedented in the history of the State. In terms of population, Fingal is the third largest administrative county in Ireland. Nearly 6% of the country's population now lives in Fingal. According to the preliminary results of the 2011 census, the population of Fingal has grown almost a further 14% to 273,051 since 2006. In the context of this growth, it is timely to consider a strategy for meeting the changing needs of the population as they grow older and to ensure that a multiagency approach leads to the best use of the available resources.

Why have an Age Friendly County Strategy?

Working towards an Age Friendly County will benefit all residents, not just older people. In a County as young as Fingal and in the economically challenging climate the country faces, it is vital to plan to meet changing needs as the population age profile changes. Older people have an extremely valuable contribution to make to society and their communities and it is important to facilitate this for the benefit of all. As Dr. James Reilly T.D, Minister for Health said at the consultation day for Fingal Age Friendly County Initiative:

'We talk constantly about having the youngest population profile and the highest birthrate in Europe. We see both as an advantage. We talk less often about population ageing. But the reality is that we're going to have substantially greater numbers of older people in our population in the near future and we need to challenge the assumption that this is a negative. It isn't. It means we will have a wealth of skill, insight, expertise and energy available, if we play our cards right. Playing our cards right, means having age friendly policies and programmes in place so that people can enjoy the best possible quality of life as they grow older. It is important that older people should be able to live healthily and independently. They should be active participants in their own communities... This is about empowering, not treating. This is about enabling. And above all, it's about seeing ageing as an interesting and productive stage of life, not as a form of illness. We have a very exciting challenge ahead to make sure we meet the needs of the growing numbers of older people. If we want to promote positive, active ageing, we must do everything possible to transform attitudes towards ageing and older people'.

The Process

On the 29th of September 2011 Fingal Development Board and Fingal County Council jointly signed the Dublin Declaration on Age Friendly Cities and Communities, a World Health Organisation Initiative. Both have engaged in the process of development of the Fingal Age Friendly County Initiative to achieve the following actions:

■ Engage with Agencies in Fingal representing and working with older people

■ Form a Fingal Age Friendly Alliance

■ Engage with Service Providers

■ Establish a baseline of services and policies concerning older people

■ Engage with older people regarding their needs and their inputs to the strategy by conducting a survey and consultation.

■ Conduct a SWOT analysis to identify Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats

■ Draft a Strategy and submit to the Fingal Age Friendly Alliance for agreement

■ Launch the Fingal Age Friendly County Strategy

■ Implement the Strategy

An Interagency Approach: Fingal Age Friendly Alliance

The National Positive Ageing Strategy recognises that just like any other age-grouping in society the older population is a widely diverse group in terms of needs, preferences and capabilities. This is also reflected in the results of the survey and consultation carried out as part of the data gathering phase of the development of this strategy (a summary of the survey results is provided on a CD attached). Delivering better outcomes for older people will require joined-up thinking at national and local level between Statutory and State Funded Agencies, Voluntary & Community Organisations and the commercial sectors, and older people themselves. Ensuring well-being in later life is not only about addressing health or social care issues but must look at all of the issues impacting on the lives of people as they age i.e. income, housing, transport, education, employment and access to information. The Fingal Age Friendly Alliance has been formed to bring a range of stakeholders together to find practical and realistic ways to address issues with the resources available and aims to:

■ Work in an interagency way to deliver an age friendly county, through a five year strategy

■ Identify ways to collaborate and maximise use of available resources

■ Identify champions for the Age Friendly County in key agencies working to provide services and infrastructure in the County.

This will be achieved by:

■ Setting realistic goals and targets

■ Ensuring that specific issues raised during consultation that are of an operational nature are passed on to the appropriate agency and a response supplied to the Alliance

■ Establishing Working Groups on specific themes

■ Agreeing a time frame for delivery of actions on various themes, within corresponding Working Groups

■ Evaluating and measuring of progress

■ Reporting back to Fingal Development Board on progress and issues

■ Annual reporting of highlights and progress and a review of the strategy after two years.

Alliance members

- Fingal Development Board
- Fingal County Council
- An Garda Síochána
- Health Service Executive
- County Dublin Vocational Education Committee
- Dublin City University

- Institute of Technology Blanchardstown
- Ageing Well Network
- Age and Opportunity
- Fingal Senior Citizens' Forum
- Netwell Centre
- National Transport Authority
- Fingal Community and Voluntary Forum

The Strategy

The WHO *Guidelines for an Age Friendly City*, sets out specific themes, which are relevant to communities of all sizes. The consultation process and action plan for the Fingal Age Friendly initiative are based around this framework, as set out in the document under the following headings.

- Community Support and Health Services
- Respect, Social Inclusion and Social Participation
- Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings
- Crime Prevention and Safety Issues
- Housing
- Communication and Information
- Transportation
- Civic Participation and Employment

In a survey of 622 older people in Fingal, Community and Health Services, Respect and Social Inclusion and Safety and Security, were ranked as most important followed by Communication and Information.

Overarching Issues identified during consultation with older people in Fingal

- Ageing is a natural cycle and older people are at a particular stage that is a natural part of the cycle and should not be perceived as 'different'.
- What is good for older people is good for society.

- One size does not fit all; there is diversity among older people as with all age groups.
- There is a need for joined up thinking in relation to services provisions and planning to meet the needs of older people. This could be demonstrated through more age friendly and integrated approaches to a range of areas including spatial planning, house design, provision and maintenance of footpaths, seating and safe open spaces, provision of healthcare, access to information, opportunities for social activity and transport.

Fingal Age Friendly County Survey – Summary of results

A survey was compiled and distributed among people aged 55 and over in Fingal as a first step in consulting with citizens on current and future issues related to ageing in the county. The survey was designed to gather feed back from respondents on a range of topics including health, leisure activities, challenges that people face in socialising in their area, safety and security and views on key features of an age friendly county. A total of 622 responses (2% of people aged 55 and over in Fingal) were received by mid December 2011.The survey results provide a snapshot of the views of these older people, many of whom avail of care and support services. It should be noted that observations made on the basis of the survey findings are in relation to the respondents only and should not be interpreted as relating to the overall population of people 55 and over in the County. Responses to the survey were received from people living all over Fingal with Blanchardstown and Swords being more strongly represented than other areas.

- Overall 95% of respondents live in their own homes; 54% live alone and 41% with others.
- The majority (79%) of respondents describe themselves as having an active or very active social life. Respondents engage in a wide range of hobbies and pastimes such as walking, reading, socialising and gardening.
- Almost 70% of respondents are in good health and respondents keep themselves healthy through regular contact with family members (65%), a balanced diet (45%) and regular physical exercise (42%).
- The greatest challenges for respondents in relation to socialising in their own area are poor health, lack of mobility and lack of contact with other older people.
- In comparison to the last twenty years the majority of respondents agreed that:
  - The world is a better place for older people (86%).
  - Ireland is a better place for older people (85%).
  - My local area/neighbourhood is a better place for older people (78%).
- 90% of respondents feel safe their own home and 87% feel safe going about their daily business outside in their neighbourhood or community.
- Key features of an age friendly county chosen by respondents are: community and health services, respect and social inclusion and safety and security followed by communication and information.

Evaluation and metrics

Following agreement of key actions, indicators and methodologies for evaluation will be agreed among relevant partners for each action in the strategy.

Community Support and Health Services

"I would like more advice on how to keep active mentally and physically."

Purpose

Put the person at the Centre of Community Support and Health Services.

Key challenges identified during consultation with older people

- There should be more emphasis on supporting older people to stay healthy and in their own homes. More preventative and early medical interventions should be prioritised.
- Access to transport and information influences access to medical and community services.
- It can be hard to find information on health supports e.g. lack of awareness of who the Public Health Nurse is for the district, on entitlements and how to access them (Provision of information on health and community supports will be addressed under the Communication and Information Theme)
- Transport, especially in rural areas, to hospital and other medical appointments is difficult for patients. Getting to hospitals and parking charges can also pose problems for visitors.

Specific Operational issues which will be conveyed to relevant Alliance members for consideration

- Mental Health issues need to be given the same priority as physical health issues. A more holistic approach would be desirable.
- Half of GPs in Fingal area not registered to cover Medical Cards.
- Breast check is not available after 65.

Key contributing partners

- Health Services Executive (HSE)
- Fingal County Council – IT Dept / Housing & Community (Arts, Sports and Community Dev) / Parks & Heritage Properties Division
- Fingal Senior Citizens Forum
- Institute of Technology Blanchardstown (ITB)
- Dublin City University (DCU)
- Blanchardstown Area Partnership
- Fingal Leader Partnership
- Fingal Volunteer Centre

Possible Actions

- Address transportation gaps for older people with impaired mobility issues who are attending hospital appointments, starting with the roll out of Phase 1 of a pilot transport project with Vantastic Ltd, a transport company providing a door to door service to older people. Roll-out of phase two has also commenced and will see the service extended to rural parts of Fingal, East of the M1. This pilot project will be evaluated to determine cost savings achieved.

- Deliver community based initiatives to promote health and well being in collaboration with Fingal County Council Sports Office, the HSE, ITB and DCU (students and staff). Use of existing Tone Zones (outdoor gym facilities in parks) will be promoted and college facilities will also be available. Older people involved in clubs or groups will be provided with tailored health and well being programmes and those in residential care will be targeted to promote social participation and inclusion as well as health and well being e.g. An aqua aerobics class has been arranged for Mount View Lady's club in the National Aquatic Centre in collaboration with Fingal County Council Sports Office.

- Promote neighbours and young people supporting older people during times of bad weather through existing structures such as Residents Associations or Transition Year. This would be undertaken in collaboration with the Fingal Volunteer Centre, Fingal Leader Partnership and Blanchardstown Area Partnership actively supported by Fingal County Council's Community Department through their 'Hello Neighbour' Initiative.

- Promotion by the Senior Citizens' Forum of existing programmes of the Fingal County Council Sports Office aimed at increasing physical activity among Older Adults such as:
  - Aqua-Fit Programmes
  - Pitch & Putt Programme
  - Fitline, a programme that helps callers check their exercise levels and volunteer mentors, who are all over 55 themselves, give information on what's going on in a caller's area, advice on what type of physical activity callers should be doing and, for those who would like it, ongoing phone calls to encourage them to be more active.
  - Explore opportunities for delivery of the PALS (Physical Activity Leader training) Programme in collaboration with Fingal Volunteer Centre. These workshops are designed for older adults who are willing to lead physical activities with groups or communities of independent living older people i.e. Active Retirement Groups and other groups. Participants do not need to have any background or formal experience in leading physical activities.

"There is room for everybody, or should be, even the smallest sardine, it's just tolerance and courtesy."

Purpose

Increase opportunities for older people to participate in their communities and promote awareness of the role that older people have to play.

Key challenges identified during consultation with older people

- One size does not fit all. Older people have diverse interests and needs; class, socio economic and health factors influence levels of social inclusion. Many people do not want to be part of a club so other ways of engaging with the community are needed.
- There is an apparent issue with men being less involved/harder to reach than women. There is a need to develop more groups for men to interact with.
- There is a lack of information about facilities/opportunities for social interaction. Meeting rooms at reasonable rates are difficult to access. It would be useful to identify and make the most of the facilities that exist (e.g. libraries, school, churches, community centres) to provide suitably diverse opportunities for socialising (Provision of information will be addressed under the Communication and Information Theme)
- Transport and safe access to facilities are key factors determining who can use them.
- Housebound older people can be particularly isolated, ways need to be found to reach these people; bring people out, send services in.
- There is a need for social groups and activities to be inclusive of ethnic minorities.

Key contributing partners

- Fingal County Council, Housing and Community Department, Parks & Heritage Properties Division and the Heritage Office
- Fingal Senior Citizens Forum
- Institute of Technology Blanchardstown (ITB)
- Dublin City University (DCU)
- Invest Fingal
- County Dublin Vocational Education Committee
- Fingal Volunteer Centre

Possible Actions

- Commission research or work with the third level Institutions to identify the specific needs of older people in relation to social inclusion and participation in different age bands and locations throughout the county. The Senior Citizens' Forum will be involved in specifying the brief for this research and will have an input on an on-going basis. Collaborate on data collection with service providers including the HSE (Meals on Wheels, Public Health Nurses), Fingal All in Care and Blanchardstown Friendly Call Service.

- Support of the on-going development of the Senior Citizen's Forum by Fingal County Council to facilitate older people's voices being heard. The Forum will meet twice a year and the executive will meet eight times a year.
- Establish a Fingal Men's Shed as a way of targeting men for participation in the Men's Sheds project http://www.menssheds.ie/
- Explore possibilities to expand the Housebound Library Service to reach more marginalised people.
- Run a pilot project with the ITB and DCU to facilitate a skills exchange between younger and older people e.g. IT skills and life knowledge.
- Identify and support/extend suitable intergenerational projects such as Young Social Innovators or Transition year projects which address social exclusion among older people through pilot projects with the County Dublin Vocational Education Committee.
- Organise Tea Dances for older people (Senior Citizens' Forum).
- Promote the use of cultural and natural amenities in Fingal (parks, community gardens, demesnes, theatres, galleries and music venues) to facilitate an expanded range of social and cultural events for older people e.g. guided tours, tea dances, coffee mornings, fitness classes, walks, gardening, exhibitions or musical performances. This will happen in collaboration with Invest Fingal and the Senior Citizen's Forum.
- Raise awareness of the on-going programming for older people by the Arts Office and the Heritage Office of Fingal County Council through appropriate channels available through all Alliance Members. A whole range of activities including music, theatre, visual arts events, talks by the Fingal Heritage Network[1] are available as well as Bealtaine events that celebrate creativity in older age. Bealtaine takes place annually in May and showcases the talents and creativity of both first-time and professional older artists.

---

1 As part of the implementation of the Heritage Plan, the Heritage Office works with Community Division to support the Fingal Heritage Network. The Network represents eleven heritage groups across Fingal and supports them in the work they undertake in their own communities. Typically each group runs a programme of talks and other events throughout the year and some groups undertake project work in their own community. The Heritage Office facilitates the Network to meet several times each year and assists the work of the Network and its constituent groups in undertaking their own work programmes.

- Develop an over 55's discount card for use at off peak times in Heritage, Sport and Leisure facilities run or supported by Fingal County Council.
- Develop a pilot project that would engage with older people as a cognoscenti of place, with a wealth of knowledge on folklore and stories about the county. Technology, such as QR codes, could be used to allow people to associate a place with its history as they move around it, rather than sitting in front of a PC. Older people would be invited to contribute the narrative for these in collaboration with Fingal Senior Citizens' Forum with the assistance of the Arts Office, the Heritage Officer, and the County Archivist.
- Pilot new projects in collaboration with ITB and DCU to look at providing older people with opportunities to engage in a range of activities in the colleges and within their communities around topics ranging from gardening to IT to both share and develop skills. This could lead on to volunteering in the community.
- Pilot specific initiatives tailored to target those in residential care or assisted living environments to promote social participation and inclusion as well as health and well being in partnership with Fingal County Council and ITB and DCU.
- Facilitate older people and younger people working together to address issues of pre-conceived ideas or negative attitudes that may exist between generations, through the Fingal Senior Citizen's Forum and Fingal Comhairle na nÓg.
- Compile a list or database of affordable venues for meetings and make available on-line.
- Explore feasibility of a pilot transport initiative for shopping and cultural activity (day trips to heritage sites arranged in collaboration with Fingal County Council and Nifti).

Communication and Information

"I'd like updating on technology."

Purpose

Identify and use effective methods and channels of communication with older people through a collaborative approach among agencies, service providers and voluntary & community organisations.

Key challenges identified during consultation with older people

- ■ A challenge exists in getting information on existing services and supports to older people and their families.
- ■ A range of approaches to information provision are needed as although technologies such as the internet and smart phones are very useful and should be used, access is not universal.
- ■ Lack of transport can be a barrier to finding information.
- ■ Rural people are disadvantaged in terms of access to information.
- ■ Print can often be too small to read in forms, manuals, signs, leaflets, directories and other print media.

Specific Operational issues which will be conveyed to relevant Alliance members for consideration

- ■ There can be a stigma associated with going to a local Health Centre to seek advice and concerns about privacy issues can be a barrier (people don't want neighbours that work at or use the centre knowing their business).

Key contributing partners

- ■ Fingal County Council, IT Department, Library Service, Communications Unit
- ■ Fingal Senior Citizens' Forum
- ■ Citizen Information Service
- ■ Institute of Technology Blanchardstown (ITB)
- ■ Dublin City University (DCU)
- ■ Blanchardstown Area Partnership
- ■ Fingal Leader Partnership
- ■ Fingal Volunteer Centre
- ■ Health Services Executive (HSE)
- ■ Fingal Comhairle na nÓg
- ■ County Dublin Vocational Education Committee

Possible Actions

■ Plan and develop an Age Friendly County Communications Strategy (involving collaboration with students at DCU and ITB) to deliver a co-coordinated information campaign providing a portal to the information requested during consultation under the eight key themes, using a variety of media and approaches including:

- A portal to on-line information for older people and their families.
- A newsletter or section within existing newsletters/publications (Fingal County Council have committed to this).
- Public talks.
- Information leaflets distributed through Health Centres, Medical and Dental Surgeries.
- A network for dissemination through service providers to assist in contacting harder to reach older people.
- A mechanism to oversee delivery of key information in a coordinated, cross agency manner.

■ Secure a commitment from all Alliance members to keep information (in the public domain) on services for older people relating to their own organisation up to date.

■ Work with the HSE, ITB and DCU to provide guidelines on accessible information provision for all service providers and organisations working with older people to ensure high quality and accessibility. This should encourage the use of, for example:

- Web accessibility features like Browse Aloud, a computer program that reads aloud all website content including PDF and MS Word documents. As you move the cursor over words, they are spoken aloud. BrowseAloud is free to the end user who just needs to download and install the client onto their pc.
- The 'text size facility' which allows the user to increase the size of the text on the website

■   Establish the needs of older people in terms of IT for example:

■   Up-skilling in the use of technology. Courses could be tailored to meet various needs; from those who want to use social networks, Skype or e-mail to keep in touch or find information on line to those seeking employment or setting up a business.

■   More user friendly interfaces for devices like phones and tablets

■   Develop and deliver, in collaboration with ITB, DCU, County Dublin VEC and the Library Service, programmes to meet these needs (e.g. FETAC level 5 Health Care programme). Some of the clients of the Blanchardstown Friendly Call Service have completed a computer course under the FIT Programme[2] with a view to enhancing independence and involvement in modern society through the use of computers and the internet. FIT courses are already run in a number of centres in Fingal so a structure exists for delivery and collaborating partners may offer the facilities to expand delivery options. Explore possibility of securing funding to run a FIT programme targeting older adults. Delivery could be through collaboration with a range of organisations including service providers, Fingal Comhairle na nÓg (Youth Council) IBM and Google.

---

2   FIT (Fastrack to IT) is an industry-led initiative which works in close collaboration with government departments and national education and training agencies, local development organisations and a host of community based organisations. Primary partners in education and training include FAS, VECs, Third Level Institutions, Leargas, Leader Companies, Rapid Coordinators, Local Authorities and Employment Pacts. FIT's mission is to promote an inclusive Smart Economy by creating a fast track to marketable technical skills for those at risk of unemployment long term. It is the primary industry skills development initiative facilitating collaboration with government, education & training providers and disadvantaged communities to enable greater access to employment for marginalised job seekers.

Transportation

"In my opinion one of the most important issues for the older/elderly is reliable transport as when the time comes that one is no longer able to drive, several issues then manifest themselves, e.g. socialising, shopping, hospital appointments."

Purpose

Deliver more integrated transport services to provide older people with greater access to health and community services and enhanced opportunities for social participation (health appointments, socialising, shopping, cultural events).

Key challenges identified during consultation with older people

■ Public transport is a key service for older people as many are reliant on bus and train services.

■ Access to transport directly influences access to medical care, social activity and other services for many older people.

■ Access to public transport in rural areas can be absent or inadequate.

Specific Operational issues which will be conveyed to relevant Alliance members for consideration

■ Older people identified issues with existing bus services relating to for example: late or unreliable services, routes being removed in areas where people feel unsafe walking, lack of direct routes and issues with connection to DART services, lack of joined up thinking.

Key contributing partners

■ Fingal County Council, Director of Operations

■ Fingal Senior Citizens' Forum

■ Iarnród Éireann

■ Dublin Bus

■ Bus Éireann

■ Health Services Executive (HSE)

■ Vantastic Ltd

■ Nifti

■ National Transport Authority

■ Institute of Technology Blanchardstown (ITB)

■ Dublin City University (DCU)

Possible Actions

■ Deliver a Fingal Pilot Health Route Transport Initiative. This pilot should demonstrate savings when compared to the cost of taxis paid for by the HSE to take patients to and from medical appointments.

■ Examine, through the Fingal Integrated Transport Working Group, the outcomes of the Pilot Transport Initiatives and explore long term options for developing a full hospital transport service including provision for patients and visitors.

■ Identify opportunities, through the Fingal Integrated Transport Working Group, for the development of mobile/online real time information services where appropriate.

■ Consider options, through the Fingal Integrated Transport Working Group, for carrying out a full audit of transportation services in the county to include a tender process/or modular studies of parts of the county.

■ Work with ITB to assess the potential for a more centralised approach to fleet management of service providers currently delivering transport for people with impaired mobility in the county to maximise the use of available vehicles. Explore the possibilities to utilising school buses during downtime. Students of ITB already developed a real time information map showing the location of the Urbus service in Dublin 15.

■ NTA in collaboration with Fingal County Council will review at traffic management in Skerries town centre in the context of the Age Friendly Town Initiative.

Crime Prevention and Safety Issues

*"Neighbourhood Watch in all areas
would be a great advantage to everyone."*

Purpose

Identify and address issues for older people in relation to personal safety and security in the home.

Key challenges identified during consultation with older people

■ Problems with getting information out to the community about personal safety and security (Provision of information will be addressed under the Communication and Information Theme)

Specific Operational issues which will be conveyed to relevant Alliance members for consideration

■ Inadequate lighting, overgrown shrubbery, illegal parking and antisocial behaviour, break-ins, bogus callers, empty houses and under used house alarms are all issues of concern.

■ Various issues around policing were identified including a perceived lack of Garda resources.

Key contributing partners

■ Garda Siochána

■ Fingal Development Board, Joint Policing Committee

■ Fingal County Council, Operations

■ Fingal Senior Citizens' Forum

Possible Actions

The following Actions will be pursued through the Joint Policing Committee

■ Collaborate with partner agencies to make sure that key personal safety information e.g. contact details for emergency services at a local level is made available to older people in a user friendly format (e.g. on a fridge magnet or in a pocket guide). Information could also be included about services available to older people such as personal alarms.

■ Promote more widespread uptake of the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme and explore a Community Policing initiative to use text alerts to warn older people about suspicious activity in their area.

■ Deliver four meetings a year in the county between Gardaí, Fingal County Council Operations staff and older people to discuss issues of concern.

■ Increase crime prevention awareness through local media e.g. Gardaí on local radio stations (to be included in communication strategy).

■ Pilot a 'Safety on the Roads' initiative as part of the Skerries Age Friendly Town Initiative.

Housing

"Local help in maintenance of household repair, gardens, is very hard to find."

Purpose

Ensure that the housing needs of older people are considered from the planning stages, through provision and maintenance to retrofit.

Key challenges identified during consultation with older people

■ Some existing housing is not suitable moving into old age; age friendly housing design and location are key issues for older people and should be considered at the planning stage. There needs to be more provision of housing that is suitable for older people e.g. bungalows should be incorporated in all housing programmes.

■ Access to reliable and inexpensive assistance with maintenance would be desirable. Vetting of those providing services is critical – Gardaí clearance is necessary.

■ Information: Legislation regarding housing and adaptability needs to be very clear and available. Information on grants for alarm systems; upgrading insulation; window repairs/replacements and bathroom upgrades is needed (Provision of information will be addressed under the Communication and Information Theme)

Specific Operational issues which will be conveyed to relevant Alliance members for consideration

■ Planning needs to take more consideration of the needs of older people e.g. traffic management near shops and accessibility for less mobile people.

■ Housing for older people needs to be integrated into the community. If no facilities are available for children it can lead to a situation where intimidation happens.

■ Have seating and specific queues for older people at Housing Counters.

Key contributing partners

■ Fingal County Council, Architects, Housing And Planning Departments
■ Fingal Senior Citizens' Forum
■ Voluntary Housing Associations
■ Age Action Ireland
■ Age and Opportunity
■ Health Services Executive (HSE)
■ Blanchardstown Institute of Technology (ITB)

Possible Actions

■ Fingal County Council's Housing Department in association with the HSE, ITB and others will carry out a feasibility study to look at retrofitting and new build projects, possibly in public/private partnership on the use of assistive technology to support people remaining in their own homes for longer.

■ Fingal County Council will facilitate older people in contributing to Local Area Plans[3]. A LAP is being prepared at the moment in the Donabate and this involves a period of public consultation. While the views of all residents of Donabate are being sought a number of specific questions have been included in consultation documents in relation to the needs of older people in relation to community facilities, housing and getting around. This document has been circulated in Donabate through the Community Centre and train station and is also available in the mobile library, Swords library and the Council website. A number of paper copies have also been delivered directly to the Seniors Citizens Group in the area in an attempt to ensure that as wide a cross section of the population as possible contribute their views in relation to the future development of the area.

■ Look at identifying suitable vacant property in central locations that could be developed as assisted living space for older people to allow them to stay in their communities.

---

3 In addition to the Fingal Development Plan, which is reviewed every six years, the Planning Department prepares Local Area Plans (LAP) for various urban centres and rural villages on an ongoing basis that tie into the overall Development Plan. An example of one such LAP which is being prepared at the moment is the Donabate LAP. The initial stage involves a period of public consultation for which a Public Consultation Document – Strategic Issues Paper for Donabate LAP 2012-2018 is currently on display/being circulated.

- Explore mechanisms for more flexibility in housing provision to better meet the needs of people as they get older.
- Develop a Care and Repair[4] initiative that provides a list of Garda vetted trades people available locally.
- Provide accessible and clear guidance information on:
    - Energy efficiency in the home and the grants and services available to older people in Fingal.
    - Housing Aid for Older People – available to assist older people living in poor housing conditions to have necessary repairs improvements carried out.
    - Housing Adaptation Grant scheme provides for works which are reasonably necessary for the purposes of rendering a house more suitable for the accommodation of a person with impaired mobility issues.
    - Mobility Aids Grant covers works to address mobility problems, primarily, but not exclusively, associated with ageing such as grab rails, access ramps, level access showers, stair lifts & other minor works.
- Age and Opportunity in collaboration with the Fingal Senior Citizens' Forum will provide Home Audit Training to ensure homes are more elder friendly.

4   The Care & Repair Programme was established by Age Action to carry out "odd jobs" for older people and to provide a befriending service. The programme is currently based in Dublin, Galway and Cork, and on a franchise basis in other locations around the country. The main aim of the Programme is to assist older people to carry out necessary small repairs and improvements to their homes, enabling them to live independently in the community in increased comfort and safety.

Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings

"I would like outside seating for elderly people to rest and socialise with neighbours and parishioners."

Purpose

To identify and address issued for older people relating to Outdoor Spaces and Public Buildings

Key challenges identified during consultation with older people

■ Some of the issues identified in relation to outdoor spaces overlap with those regarded as safety issues.

■ Many outdoor spaces and walking in general could be safer and more age friendly

Specific Operational issues which will be conveyed to relevant Alliance members for consideration

Seating

■ Lack of public seating, insufficient maintenance, better quality seating is needed

Footpaths

■ Grass verges cut up, people parking on them to answer mobiles, leaving a mess

■ Illegal parking on paths forcing pedestrians onto the roadway. People with disabilities cannot walk on road.

■ Double yellow lines worn away.

■ Overgrown shrubbery blocks up areas and makes them less safe.

■ Inadequate gritting and salting in winter.

■ Access for people with disabilities.

■ Uneven surfaces causing trips and falls.

Signage

■ Inadequate directional signage for pedestrians and drivers.

■ Lack of signage, e.g. M50, speed signs, directional signage, or signs too small.

Key contributing partners

■ Fingal County Council, Director of Operations

■ Fingal Senior Citizens' Forum

■ Institute of Technology Blanchardstown (ITB)

Possible Actions

- Arrange Consultation about provision of street furniture and signage between Fingal County Council Operational Teams and older people, possibly through representation on the Town Liaison Committees.
- Deliver four meetings a year in the county between Gardaí, Fingal County Council operational staff and older people to discuss issues of concern.
- Promote use of parks and Tone Zones (outdoor gyms) e.g. a pilot project with ITB and Fingal County Council Sports Office in Millennium Park Dublin 15 to support recreation initiatives targeting older people. This could then be extended to Malahide Castle Park and other parks in the county.
- Establish Skerries as an Age Friendly town in collaboration with Skerries Town Liaison Committee, Fingal County Council Operations Team and Skerries Community Development Association. Age and Opportunity will provide Town Audit training to ensure more elder friendly towns.
- Pilot an Access Quality mark for streets and towns in Fingal.

Civic Participation and Employment

"People over 65 should not be told they are too old to work."
"Find a way to benefit from older peoples' many talents."

CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Purpose

Provide opportunities for older people to engage with and contribute to their communities.

> **Key challenges identified during consultation with older people**
> ■ Older people can sometimes feel that they do not have a say or are not listened to

Key contributing partners

■ All Alliance members

Possible Actions

■ Develop a model for best practice for agencies to facilitate greater engagement with and participation by older people, perhaps in the form of a charter that commences with the Age Friendly County Initiative.

■ Secure a commitment from all Alliance members to meet with the Senior Citizens' Forum at least once a year.

■ Look at how older people engage with agencies and participate in local democracy and seek more specific targeted input from older people in terms of improvements.

■ Provide and promote opportunities for older people to participate in their communities through, for example:
  ■ The 'Read to me' programme run by the Library Service.
  ■ Careers talks in schools, in collaboration with Fingal Comhairle na nÓg
  ■ Link to Fingal Volunteer Centre from Fingal Age Friendly website

■ Age and Opportunity will deliver Age Wise programmes (Ageing with Confidence, Taking Stock) in an interagency way with other Alliance members.

EMPLOYMENT

Purpose

Provide opportunities for older people for continued employment, up-skilling, mentoring and new business opportunities.

Key challenges identified during consultation with older people
- There can be negative attitudes to ageing in the work place. There can be an attitude that "Older adults should not be in a job a younger person could be doing".
- Older people have a range of skills and experience to offer and are entitled to engage in paid employment (not always as volunteers).
- Organisations are losing skills and experience as older people leave.
- There are waiting lists for IT training.

Key contributing partners
- Fingal County Council, Economic Development Department
- Fingal Senior Citizens' Forum
- Invest Fingal
- Institute of Technology Blanchardstown (ITB)
- Dublin City University (DCU)
- Chambers of Commerce
- Health Services Executive (HSE)

Possible Actions
- Provide IT training opportunities (see key actions under Communication and Information).
- Explore, through the County Enterprise Board, ways to support older people in starting new businesses.
- Explore the viability of an enterprise based around refurbishment and re-conditioning of mobility aids and similar equipment, to include mentoring by older people.
- Promote a positive attitude to ageing in the work place and develop an age friendly customer services charter through a campaign in collaboration with the Dublin Fingal Chamber and the Senior Citizens' Forum.
- Consult with Invest Fingal to identify possible collaboration as part of the Age Friendly County Initiative.

Appendix 1

Organisations invited to participate in consultation as part of the Age Friendly County Initiative.

Access Action Malahide

Advocacy Service Dublin 15

All In Care

Arthritis Ireland

Aware - Swords

Balbriggan Citizens Information Centre

Balbriggan Public Library

Baldoyle Public Library

Blanchardstown Centre for Independent Living

Blanchardstown Public Library

Blanchardstown / Dublin 15 Citizens Information Centre

Carers Association

Central Remedial Clinic Coolock Day Activity Centre

Central Remedial Clinic Hartstown Day Activity Centre

Community Speech and Language Therapy Service

Crosscare Blanchardstown

Daughters of Charity Service Community Residential Service, Coolmine

Daughters of Charity Service St. Joseph's Centre, Clonsilla

Deaf/Hear Service

Fingal Home Care Ltd – HQ

Fingal Volunteer Centre

Friendly Call Service

Garristown Public Library

Headway

Health Centre - Balbriggan

Health Centre - Baldoyle

Health Centre - Corduff

Health Centre - Donabate

Health Centre - Hartstown

Health Centre - Howth

Health Centre - James Connolly Memorial Hosptial

Health Centre - Kilbarrack

Health Centre - Lusk

Health Centre - Malahide

Health Centre - Mountview

Health Centre - Oldtown

Health Centre - Portmarnock

Health Centre - Riverside

Health Centre - Roselawn

Health Centre - Rush

Health Centre - Skerries

Health Centre - Swords

Howth Library

Including Me Advocacy Service Dublin

Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind

Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind - Balbriggan

Irish Wheelchair Association

L'Arche Dublin

Malahide Citizens Information Centre

Malahide Library

Marymount Care Centre

Meals on Wheels - Balbriggan

Meals on Wheels - Bayside

Meals on Wheels - Blanchardstown

Meals on Wheels - Howth

Meals on Wheels - Lusk

Meals on Wheels - Malahide

Meals on Wheels - Portrane

Meals on Wheels - Swords

National Council for the Blind of Ireland (NCBI)

National Parents' & Siblings' Alliance

Skerries Citizens Information Centre

Skerries Day Care Centre

Skerries Library

Swords Citizens Information Centre

Swords Library

Vantastic

Prosper Fingal Skerries

Sophia Housing Association

Special Olympics - Estuary Centre (EVE)

Blanchardstown Active Retirement Ireland

Castleknock Active Retirement Association

Clonsilla Golden Oldies

Dublin Airport Active Retirement Association

Fingal Home Care

Howth Retirement Association

St. Mary's Hospital & Residential School, Baldoyle (St. Michael's House)

Rivervalley/Rathingle Active Retirement

St. Peregrines Senior Citizen Network

Balbriggan Senior Citizens

Ballyboughal Senior Citizens

Donabate/Portrane Senior Citizens

Fingal Senior Citizens Network

Man-o-War Senior Citizens

Mountview Senior Citizens

Mullhuddart Senior Citizens

Naul Senior Citizens

Portmarnock Senior Citizens

Rush Senior Citizens

St Margaret's Active Age

Young at Heart Senior Citizens Group

Older & Bolder

U3A Age

University of the Third Age

Age Action Ireland

Care & Repair Programme

Friends of the Elderly

Age & Opportunity

Swords Day Centre Senior Citizens

Malahide Active Retirement

Howth Senior Citizens

Active Retirement Ireland

Retired Workers Committee of ICTU

Irish Senior Citizens Parliament

National Federation of Pensioners

Older Women's Network

Go For Life

ALONE

Baldoyle Active Retirement

Evergreens Active Retirement

Federation of Active Retirement

Lusk Active Retirement Group

Skerries Active Retirement Association

M.A.R.A.

Fingal County Council

Blanchardstown A.R.A.

St Anne's Afternoon Club

Swords Senior Citizens

Glasnevin North A.R.A.

Howth A.R.A.

Balrothery O.A.P.

Balscadden Senior Citizens

Corduff Evergreens

Garristown Senior Citizens

Howth/Sutton A.R.A.

Huntstown Senior Citizens/Young at Heart

Lusk Senior Citizens

Malahide Senior Citizens

Mulhuddart Over 55's Club

Mulhuddart Senior Citizens

St Margaret's Senior Citizens

Fingal Home Help Services Ltd

Skerries 65 Club

Housing Association for Integrated Living (HAIL)

Respond Housing Association

Appendix 2

Summary of policies and services currently provided for older people in the County by Alliance members:

Fingal County Council

The mission statement of Fingal County Council is, 'To improve the quality of life of our citizens and communities...' and the following are some of the policies and services offered by various departments which are of particular relevance in the context of the Age Friendly County Strategy.

1.   Fingal Planning Department

The Fingal Development Plan 2011-2017 http://www.fingalcoco.ie/Planning/FingalDevelopment Plan2011-2017/ sets out Fingal County Council's policies and objectives for the development of the County over the Plan period. While the Plan includes policies and objectives that apply to every citizen in the County there are specific sections within the Plan which target older people in particular and include Social Inclusion and High Quality Design. The policies set out below represent a small number of those which are directly relevant to and aimed at meeting the needs of the older people within the community:

Urban Fingal
- Inclusivity
- Adaptability
- Crime Prevention through Design
- Universal Access
- Community Infrastructure
- Residential Care Home/Retirement Home/Nursing Home
- Health Centres/Services

Rural Fingal
- Rural Accessibility
- Cycling and Walking

The Planning Department prepares **Local Area Plans (LAP)** for various urban centres and rural villages on an ongoing basis that tie into the overall Development Plan. A LAP for Donabate is being developed and while the views of all residents of Donabate are being sought through consultation a number of specific questions have been included in relation to the needs of older people.

Other measures of relevance in this context include the **Village Improvement Schemes** to facilitate erection of public lighting, benches at strategic locations and also the dishing of kerbs and the laying of tactile pavement at junctions. The Planning Department is currently trying to secure funding for 2012 for a number of projects across the County which if completed will significantly improve accessibility and movement in and around a number of the urban areas e.g. traffic Improvements, enhancement of pedestrian facilities and creation of pedestrian/ cycle routes.

2. Architect's Department

The Department undertakes a number of tasks that have a direct impact on our older citizens:

- Design of new public buildings (such as libraries, community centres and Council offices) to be accessible to all in accordance with Part M of the Building Regulations.
- Adaptation of existing public buildings to the same standards as above.
- Design of new housing for lifetime use or to be adaptable.
- Design and procurement of dedicated "sheltered" housing for older people
- Design and procurement of accessibility equipment or installations (ramps, chair-lifts, accessible bathrooms etc.) in the Council's housing stock under the Disabled Persons' Grant scheme.
- Consideration of housing repair schemes to up-grade the energy efficiency of some of stock, generally occupied by older and more vulnerable tenants for whom fuel poverty can be an important issue.
- Inspections and recommendations for housing grants for the Housing Grants for Older Persons scheme
- Design of small estate management works, often to eliminate sources of anti-social behaviour, which can have a disproportionate affect on older or more frail citizens.

3. Housing Grants

- The Housing Aid for Older People
- Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability
- Mobility Aids Grant

4. Operations Department

A range of services are provided by the Council's Operations Department for all citizens regardless of age e.g. maintenance of roads, footpaths and open spaces, planting, pruning & removal of trees and traffic related issues. However it should be noted that accessibility issues have been prioritised in Fingal in recent years and very many of them relate to traffic matters which concern older people. Traffic management schemes, for example, place significant emphasis on addressing the needs of the 'vulnerable road user', i.e. children, older people and the disabled.

5. Fingal Sports Office

The Sports Office has a number of programmes aimed at increasing physical activity among older adults in the community as follows.

- Aqua-Fit Programmes
- Pitch & Putt Programme
- Fitline Programme
- Bowling
- Physical Activity Leader (PAL) training

6.   Community Office

Fingal County Council is placing great emphasis on working to ensure that Fingal is a place where broad personal and social needs are met. The Community Office plays a key role in this regard and key stakeholders in addition to the people of the communities include other departments within FCC, local community and voluntary sector bodies and relevant statutory agencies. The overall goals of the Community Office are to strengthen communities across Fingal to ensure that people living in them:

a)   Have a sense of place within their community, which can involve identifying with, having pride in, having opportunities to develop and live a full life within their community;

b)   Have a voice within their community, have the skills and opportunities to input into decision making that affects their community.

The overall ethos is "Cradle to the Grave" thereby ensuring that projects are inclusive of older people. The Community Office works with the Fingal Senior Citizens' Forum, supporting the group to be a strong voice for all older people in Fingal and linking them into the Fingal Age Friendly initiative.

7.   Arts Office

Fingal County Council supports older people in the following ways:

- Grants scheme (under the 1973 Arts Act, revised in 2003) issues grants to many groups who would be made up of mostly retired people.
- Direct Programming by the Arts Office, in other words organising and financing special events for a particular audience. Ted Courtney, who is a well known figure in the music world, has worked with older adults in Fingal on our behalf for the last ten years.
- The Councils Arts Centres e.g.:
  Draíocht Arts Centre – The 'Dabblers' Visual Arts Group has been running for ten years for older people and meets on a weekly basis in Draíocht. The group has interacted with professional artists and has exhibited in Draíocht and other galleries.
  The Seamus Ennis Centre – a number of events aimed specifically at older people are held in the Seamus Ennis Centre in the Naul as part of the Bealtaine Festival in May every year.
- Intergenerational Photography Project as part of the 10th birthday celebration of Draíocht
- Artist in residence Garvin Gallagher worked with older people on an exhibition called 'My Way'.
- The Bealtaine Festival takes place annually in May; thousands of older people now take part in the festival, with 2011 being its 16th year. From dance to cinema, painting to theatre, Bealtaine showcases the talents and creativity of both first-time and professional older artists.

8.   Fingal Library Service

The library service provides a wide range of services and events. The Service is operated through 9 branch libraries at Balbriggan, Blanchardstown, Garristown, Howth, Malahide, Swords, Skerries, Rush and Baldoyle and a mobile library service that operates in areas not

serviced by library infrastructure. www.fingalcoco.ie/library

The range of materials offered by Fingal Libraries is chosen to appeal to all users and to ensure that everyone has access to information regardless of age or physical capabilities.

In keeping with the ethos of the Age Friendly County concept, the following are some of the ways in which the Library Service engages with older people as a service provider.

- **Information provision:** From the area of health care right through to entertainment and social outlets, lack of ability to access good quality information can be an issue for older people. An over reliance on the internet as a tool for communication and lack of IT training for older people can be barriers to accessing information. The library branch network provides an inclusive and informal setting to provide training in the following areas:
  - Basic internet skills
  - Social media skills
  - Mobile phone/smart phone skills

We have, on many occasions run these courses and have a ready supply of contacts and teachers who could tailor their programmes for the older audience. Our branch network has internet access computers and Wi-Fi so provision of such training would not require any investment in hardware.

- **Assistive technology facilitates:** The use of information and communication technology by children and adults with special needs or the elderly. Specialised equipment designed to meet the needs of the individual user and enhance the learning experience is available for use free of charge. This service was extended to Balbriggan, Malahide, Swords and Rush. Equipment includes screen readers and magnifiers and "big" keyboards and specially adapted mice.
- **Social Activity:** The libraries have a very positive role in the area of social interaction for older people. Balbriggan library runs a coffee morning once a month and this could be extended to include other branches. The idea of "parlours" was initiated by Louth as part of their age action initiative. This idea aims to provide a welcoming and inclusive arena in which older people could meet informally.
- **Bealtaine** is a national event during the month of May that aims to encourage activity and participation of the older residents of our communities. The library service programmes a diverse range of activities during the Bealtaine festival that will typically involve coffee mornings, arts and crafts activities and classes in computers or photography or other leisure activities.
- **Grandparents as champions of literacy:** Older people and grandparents are of huge importance when it comes to the children in our society. Fingal libraries hope to launch a literacy strategy early next year. It is hoped that older people in our society would have a role to play and would be willing to give of their time to talk and read to school children. This would involve training in storytelling that could be provided by the libraries network. The wealth of local knowledge that could be imparted is of major value also with a role for our older residents to participate in our local history activities.

9.   The Heritage Office

The Heritage Office delivers a range of services to all the people of Fingal. The office leads the implementation of the Fingal Heritage Plan and also undertakes outreach activities such as publications, seminars and exhibitions on an ongoing basis. The Heritage Office works with the Community, Sports and Recreation Division to support the Fingal Heritage Network, which represents eleven heritage groups across Fingal and supports them in the work they undertake in their own communities. The publications, seminars and exhibitions run by the Heritage Office are aimed at the entire population and are always freely available. While every effort is made to accommodate senior citizens it is recognised that transport to events and access to information in relation to events may limit participation for some.

10.   IT Department

The IT department has implemented the following web accessibility features:

- **BrowseAloud**

BrowseAloud is a computer program that reads aloud all website content including PDF and MS Word documents. As you move the cursor over words, they are spoken aloud. BrowseAloud is free to the end user who just needs to download and install the client onto their pc.

- **Text size facility**

   Allows user to increase the size of the text on the website

The IT GIS team has made datasets available on-line including the following:

- Interactive map of disabled car parking spaces
- Sat-nav download of disabled car parking spaces

Garda Síochána

In order to ensure that the needs of older people continue to be met within the broader policing service delivered by an Garda Siochana, an Older Peoples Strategy has been developed and is available at http://www.garda.ie/Documents/User/older%20people%20strategy%20english.pdf The strategy is linked to the overall strategy for 2010-2012 and the National Model of Community Policing. These documents explicitly iterate the aim to increase collaborative partnerships, while committing to a more visible Garda presence and a reduction in crime and the fear of crime. An Garda Síochána acknowledges and appreciates the significant contribution given by older people to their communities through voluntary and other activity. From the policing perspective, crime victimisation has been found to be lower amongst older people than other groups, however the fear of crime has been shown to be significantly higher. Fear of crime can have negative effects on quality of life. It can significantly limit or restrict the movement and activities of individuals, which can further impact physical, social and emotional well-being. This, along with a feeling of vulnerability, can lead to isolation and exclusion of older people from their local community. Therefore it is important to ensure the needs of older people are being met with regard to policing, security and safety to ensure older people remain active within their communities.

Health Services Executive

Primary Care and other services

The HSE provides a broad range of services for older people in the community, including in-patient acute services, step down and convalescent care, day services, rehabilitation, community services, home care and home helps. The HSE is committed to supporting people to stay in their own homes in a healthy and safe manner. Primary Care services include all of the health or social care services found in the community, outside of the hospital setting including GPs and the Public Health Nurse. A range of other services are provided and include:

- Meals on Wheels
- Home Help
- Day Centres
- Hospitals and Homes for Older Persons
- Home Improvement Scheme
- Hospice Care

Benefits and Entitlements

Older People in Ireland are entitled to a range of benefits and schemes, to help with medical costs and daily living.

- Medical Cards
- Medical Cards for over 70s
- GP Visit Cards
- Long Term Illness Scheme
- Drug Payment Scheme
- Nursing Home Subvention Scheme
- Home Care Packages
- Hospital charges
- Optical benefit
- Hearing Aid grant
- Housing Aid for Older People Scheme
- Carer's Allowance
- Respite Care Grants
- Community Support for Older People Scheme
- Protecting Older People from Elder Abuse

Netwell Centre

The Netwell Centre based at the Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) is developing new ideas that enhance the quality of life and well-being of older people and those who care for them, through more integrated community-oriented services, more sustainable home and neighbourhood design, and more age-friendly technologies. Companies, organisations and people dealing with, or just interested in ageing-in-place and ambient assisted living technologies can be a part of Netwell and Netwell research programs in different ways. For more on current projects go to http://www.netwellcentre.org/projects.html

Department of Social Protection

The following services and schemes are administered by the Department of Social Protection; full details are available at http://www.welfare.ie/en/Schemes/Pages/default.aspx

- Pensions
- Illness, Disability and Caring
- Back To Education
- Death and Bereavement
- Dental, Optical and Hearing Benefits
- Free Travel
- Household Benefits
- Fuel Allowance
- Supplementary Welfare Allowance
- Rural and Community Supports

County Dublin Vocational Education Committee

County Dublin Vocational Education Committee delivers educational services to young people and adults in the County Dublin. The region has a population of approximately 680,000, the largest population of any VEC in the Country. The wide range of services includes adult & further education courses as follows:

- PLC (Post Leaving Certificate) Courses
- VTOS (Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme)
- BTEI (Back to Education Initiative)
- FIT (Fast Track to Information Technology)
- Fee Paying Adult Education
- Community Education
- Adult Literacy Service

Fingal Community and Voluntary Forum

Fingal Community & Voluntary Forum (the 'Forum') was established in March 2000 to fulfil Fingal County Council's obligations under Government directive. The Forum acts as a platform for Community & Voluntary Groups to come together and voice their opinions and develop common policy on issues affecting Fingal, and equally important, it enables ordinary citizens to influence the decisions of statutory bodies.

Ageing Well Network

The Ageing Well network is an independent group of leaders, heads of organisations and strategic thinkers who share a **Vision of "an Ireland that is one of the best countries in the world in which to grow old"**. The 75 members include CEOs and heads of units across public, private and voluntary organisations, Secretary Generals and Assistant Secretaries of the relevant government Departments, the Director of the Office for Older People and leading academics. The mission of the network is two-fold:

- To reframe the agenda on ageing – by extending the focus beyond health, care and pension provision to also address the significant opportunities of a rapidly ageing global population: and
- To act as a catalyst and support for better long-term planning and greater collaboration among agencies involved in policy development and service provision across the public, private and voluntary sectors.

The Ageing Well Network is involved in a number of initiatives across Ireland including:
- Ireland's Age Friendly Counties Programme
- Business of Ageing
- The Silver Tech Group
- OPRAH (Older People Remaining at Home)
- The Social Connectedness Study
- Working Groups

National Transport Authority

In June 2011 a draft Transport Strategy for the Greater Dublin Area (Dublin, Kildare, Meath and Wicklow) for the period up to 2030 ('2030 Vision') was presented to Transport Minister Varadkar for his consideration. The draft strategy report takes account of submissions received during a public and stakeholder consultation on the preliminary draft. This consultation took place between February and April 2011.

The Strategy vision for the Greater Dublin Area 2030 is for **"a competitive, sustainable city-region with a good quality of life for all".** The five overarching objectives of the Strategy to support this vision are:
- Build and Strengthen communities
- Improve Economic Competitiveness
- Improve the Built Environment
- Respect and Sustain the Natural Environment
- Reduce Personal Stress

The strategy states that 'At a local level too, there is a need to connect people to the jobs, shops, schools, health facilities and other essential community services they need, by a range of travel modes, focussing in particular on improving local public transport, cycling and walking facilities.' The Strategy needs to pay particular attention to improving connectivity for those living in disadvantaged areas. The Strategy also needs to ensure that transport facilities are designed with the needs of mobility impaired people and people with disabilities in mind. The current public transport network is not very easy to understand, deterring new users. Simplification of fares and ticketing and improvements to travel information all need to be addressed. Making the public transport network easier to use needs to be at the heart of the Strategy. Comprehensive stakeholder and public consultation has been carried out at key stages during the development of the Strategy, to help ensure that a Strategy that meets desired objectives and addresses key issues is prepared.

Department of Transport, Sport and Tourism

The Department's strategic objectives in relation to public transport include the provision of a well functioning, integrated public transport system, which contributes to social cohesion, at reasonable cost to the customer and the taxpayer. The Department's vision for a **sustainable travel and transport** future is set out in the policy document 'Smarter Travel *A Sustainable Transport Future*', published in February 2009, and represents a new transport policy for Ireland for the period 2009-2020. Following public consultation, which resulted in almost 500 responses, the Smarter Travel policy was drafted and consists of five key goals, one of which is to:

■ Improve quality of life and accessibility to transport for all and, in particular, for people with reduced mobility and those who may experience isolation due to lack of transport

Pilot projects on local and rural integrated transport services (LARITS) commences in 2011. This supports Government commitment to 'maintain and extend the Rural Transport Programme with other local transport services as much as is practicable'.

The Rural Transport Programme (RTP) was launched in 2006. It was initiated as a response to the economic and social impacts of inadequate transport in rural areas and because of the interest of community groups in implementing local solutions. The RTP is funded by the Department of Transport and managed on its behalf by Pobal. The Programme, which has expanded to provide national coverage, is delivered locally through 35 community based groups, all of whom operate on a not-for-profit basis. Funded by €10.6 million per annum under the National Development Plan 2007-2013, the aim of the RTP is to provide a quality nationwide public transport system in rural Ireland which responds to local needs. Funding is projected to reduce to €9.1m. in 2013 and to €8.5m. in 2014. In addition, the Department of Social Protection contributes €1.5m to the Free Travel Scheme of the RTP.

Institute of Technology Blanchardstown (ITB)

ITB was established in 1999 with a wide ranging remit, one of which was to become a vital resource for the region. At ITB we see all members of our communities as being full partners in our project. ITB will meet the needs of older people directly and in partnership with Fingal County Council to make Fingal an Age Friendly County. We will achieve this through:

■ Our commitment to **lifelong learning**. As a significant provider of education ITB will make access to education open to older people through flexible learning and other initiatives and by designing and delivering specific programmes in partnership with older people.

■ Promoting **health and well-being**. Through active engagement with older people ITB will deliver targeted activities, events, and programmes that foster fitness, health and well-being.

■ Promoting access to **new technologies**. ITB will support older peoples' interactions with new technologies by opening up opportunities presented by these technologies and by meeting the challenges posed by new technologies for older people in our community.

■ Providing **information** on how ITB can be a resource and a partner in building quality lives for all and by listening and responding to the needs of older people.

Dublin City University (DCU)

The University is currently (2012) seeking to establish a generic model of an Age-Friendly University and as part of this process has identified a set of 10 generic principles which define the actions of an Age-Friendly University. The University is committed to benchmarking its activities against these principles.

DCU is committed to building on its extensive body of expertise and track record to address the interests and needs of older adults in our community and beyond. To support its mission as an age-friendly university DCU will consult with its recently established Age-Friendly University External Advisory Board to ensure that age-friendly programmes and initiatives are relevant and correctly targeted.

Among its current Age-Friendly initiatives DCU offers:

TEACHING AND LEARNING:
Oscail, DCU Distance Education – Programmes delivered online including:
- Introduction to online delivery of courses
- Foundation Literature; Foundation History; Foundation Philosophy;
- Foundation Psychology; Foundation Sociology; Computing;
- Introductory Module to the Humanities

Intergenerational Learning Programme
The Intergenerational Learning Programme brings together students of the university and older learners in a third level learning environment to exchange knowledge and learn from each other. Learning outcomes include enabling the older learner to acquire computer skills necessary to access the internet and for use in their daily lives. The suite of programmes on offer includes: Basic Computer Skills; Life Writing; Health & Well-being; Practice Makes Perfect (internet/ email/online shopping); and To the Internet and Beyond (internet/Facebook/Twitter/Skype)

School of Applied Languages & Intercultural Studies:
Extra Mural Language classes in Spanish, Chinese, French, Italian.

Health and Wellness:
DCU offers a wide range of services focussed on difference aspects of exercise, sport and physical activity. Participants are given the opportunity to take part in medically supervised exercise and wellness programmes. The range of programmes offered includes: HeartSmart; BreatheSmart; SmartSteps; MoveOn and DiabetesHealthSteps.

DCU Research Projects/Expertise:
DCU has extensive research expertise and is engaged in research projects in such areas as, for example: Health and wellness; Diabetes; Cardiovascular Disease, Universal Design; Dementia.

CURRENT INITIATIVES:

Taste of DCU

DCU also plans to host a one day long Taste of DCU programme which will be offered to older adults from the local community later this year (date to be confirmed).

Campus-wide audit of Age-Friendly initiatives:

Purpose: to identify courses that can be offered as discrete modules (credit/non-credit bearing) to individuals wishing to pursue more flexible modes of study.

Acknowledgements