



IRELAND WALES
2007 – 2013



NUI MAYNOOTH
Ollscoil na hÉireann Má Nuad

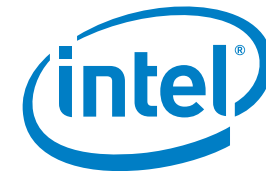


County Kildare
LEADER PARTNERSHIP



HE
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Ageing Well  Network





KILDARE
AGE-FRIENDLY
COUNTY STRATEGY
2011 - 2014

Kildare - a great county to grow old in



Throughout the developed world, the proportion of older people in the population has been increasing steadily over the past century. People are experiencing age differently, enjoying longer lives, better health and more active lifestyles. Europe is the world's oldest region, with the elder population expected to increase 5 fold from 40m to 219m by 2050.

Ireland has also experienced an increase in overall life expectancy. It is predicted that there will be approximately 1.1m people aged 65 years and over in 2036, an increase of almost 250% over the 2006 figure. The greatest increase is anticipated in the over 80 age group where numbers are expected to quadruple from 110,000 to 440,000 in 2041.

The CSO (2008) projects a nationwide doubling in numbers of older persons between 2006 and 2011 with the most marked increases likely to occur in the Mid-East Region at 164%. According to the 2006 census 6.9% of people in Kildare were aged 65 and over. The highest number of people in this category were in the south of the county around Athy, in the area between Kildare town and Newbridge and just south of Naas.

Reflecting the demographic change, the Programme for Government 2007-2012 made a commitment to prepare a National Positive Ageing Strategy 'to better recognise the position of older people in Irish Society'. The Strategy, now in its final stages of preparation will focus attention on issues relating to older people across the public policy process and put mechanisms in place designed to ensure coherence and integration in planning across services and programmes.

This Strategy document outlines our response to the changing demographic within Kildare and reflects our commitment to the vision of Kildare being a great county to grow old in.



Michael Malone,
County Manager,
Chair of KAFC Alliance



Brigid Butler,
Programme Manager,
KAFC Programme



Kildare Age Friendly County Programme



Silvia Gascon, Argentina and Michael 'Spike' Nolan, Mayor of Kildare signing the Dublin Declaration on Age Friendly Cities and Communities.

The National Age Friendly Counties Programme is an initiative of the Ageing Well Network. The Kildare Age Friendly County Programme as part of that initiative was launched in November 2010 with a view to making Kildare a great place to grow old in. The Kildare Age Friendly County Alliance was established comprising older people's representatives and senior decision makers from the key public, private and not-for-profit agencies in the county who are committed to jointly planning and working in partnership to achieve the Kildare Age Friendly County vision.

The Alliance membership is as follows:

- Kildare County Council
- The Health Service Executive
- Kildare LEADER Partnership
- The Ageing Well Network
- An Garda Síochána
- Kildare VEC
- Intel
- NUI Maynooth
- **EngAGE** Kildare

Kildare is a member of the WHO Global Network of Age Friendly Cities. Kildare was a signatory to the Dublin Declaration on Age Friendly Cities and Communities at an event held in Dublin as part of the **1st International Conference on Age Friendly Cities** in September 2011.



The Vision for Kildare as an Age Friendly County is that it will

Recognise the diversity of citizens as they age from those who are healthy and active to those who are frail and in need of a wide range of services and supports

Encourage healthy active ageing

Support the contributions of Kildare people as they age, recognising the wealth of wisdom, skills, experience and knowledge they have to share

Promote inclusion and participation in all aspects of community life

Engage older people directly in the development of policies that affect them

Create safe accessible environments

Treat citizens of all ages and generations with respect

Everyone will benefit. Kildare as an Age Friendly County aims to provide

- Secure neighbourhoods that are safe for all age groups
- Barrier free buildings and streets that enhance the mobility for citizens of all ages and abilities
- Opportunities for older people to participate in voluntary or paid work and civic activities from which everyone will benefit





Partners in Progress

Joint Consultation
Kildare Age Friendly Programme and Kildare Sports Partnership March 2011





In 2009, the Kildare VEC, Community Education service, Cill Dara ar Aghaidh Teo and the HSE Health Promotion Service Dublin Mid-Leinster, came together to develop a sustainable programme which would empower older people to become actively involved in their communities. This initiative, Older Voices Kildare, has worked to build confidence, address social isolation and build community participation. Since then Older Voices Kildare have successfully co-ordinated the Ageing with Confidence and Voices through Art programmes for older people.

As these programmes developed, a clear need emerged for the provision of artistic, cultural, social and psychological supports for older people in Co. Kildare. One identified outcome of the programme was the establishment of an Older Person's Forum. As this was also the vision of the Kildare

Age Friendly County Programme, both groups worked together to establish and support a Forum for Co. Kildare.

This Forum came together for the first time on August 10th 2011 as EngAGE Kildare.

EngAGE Kildare will:

- Be represented on relevant national, regional and local structures
- Be an information sharing hub for all on key identified areas
- Be actively involved in the promotion and development of the Older Voices Project
- Provide and promote opportunities for social inclusion with particular emphasis on the most socially isolated

- Work in partnership to reduce discrimination, promote respect, value and visibility
- Pro-actively engage across generations in the promotion of inclusive communities
- Provide representation on and work closely with the Kildare Age Friendly County Alliance in the development and implementation of the Kildare Age Friendly Strategy





INTERREG 4A Ireland Wales 2007-2013 Programme

Kildare Age Friendly County Programme under the auspices of the Ageing Well Network is a partner in an INTERREG 4A Ireland Wales Age Friendly Communities Project. This Project provides opportunities to engage with partners in Ireland and Wales in the creation of vibrant communities for all by supporting community regeneration and the development of intergenerational strategies on both a trans-national and local level.

The Primary aim of the Project will be to:

- Create cohesive communities through the implementation of pilot projects targeting the social inclusion of older people in their community
- Capture, preserve and protect cultural heritage through the implementation of pilot projects reinforcing the positive image of older people
- To ensure communities well-being through the implementation of pilot projects encouraging life long activities



K-Partners

K-Partners is a coalition of staff from Kildare County Council and hosted organisations, including the Ageing Well Network, in Community and Culture services. The overall aim of K-Partners is to maximise collective knowledge, contacts and expertise in order to plan strategically and co-ordinate service delivery in an integrated, efficient and effective manner. The Partnership includes:

- Kildare Sports Partnership
- Parks Dept
- FAI
- Community and Culture
- Integrated Services Programme
- Kildare, Housing
- The Arts Office
- RAPID Athy
- Library services
- Leisure services
- Children's services
- Ageing Well Network

This interagency approach will greatly support and enhance the vision and strategy of the Kildare Age Friendly County Programme as it progresses and develops over the coming years.



Kildare Age Friendly County Strategy

This Strategy was born out of a county-wide consultation process which reflects people's experiences, perceptions and choices as they transition through the later stage of their lives. Along side older people the consultation was carried out with service providers, agencies, business people, organisations and citizens committed to developing services and supports which create positive opportunities and outcomes for older people.

The themes for discussion were those highlighted by the World Health Organisation in their Global Age Friendly Cities Guide (2007) and are as follows:

- Respect, Social Inclusion and Participation
- Communication and Information
- Transport
- Outdoor spaces and Buildings
- Housing
- Community Support and Health services
- Civic Participation and Employment

From the outset the Kildare Age Friendly County Alliance recognised the impact and value of the multifaceted work being carried out with and by older people across the county by voluntary, statutory, not-for-profit and community groups. Throughout the process of engagement particular emphasis was placed on identifying initiatives and responses which involve and impact across generations and which relate to relationships, attitudes, learning and community cohesion.

The Strategy seeks to ensure that all actions arising from its consultations contribute to and build on the positive outcomes already achieved. It seeks to build on strengths, identify opportunities and highlight gaps in service provision and supports with the intent of improving the quality of life of everyone in the county as they age.



Respect, Social Inclusion and Participation



Research states that the positive aspects of social connections and social networks are well known and several international research reports have shown the view that people, regardless of age, with rich networks of active social relationships tend to be happier with their lives.

Research also states that social activities (e.g. church attendance, recreation and group activities), productive activities (gardening, shopping) and fitness activities were associated with longer life.

According to the TILDA report (2011)

- Approximately 90% of older adults visit with family and friends once a week or more
- One in five older people aged 65-74 do voluntary work at least once a week or more

However:

- 6% of older women and 7% of older men in Ireland are socially isolated
- Older persons with poorer self-rated health are most likely to be socially isolated



Respect, Social Inclusion and Participation

What you said was working well in Kildare

- Active retirement groups, senior citizen groups, day care centres, specialist support groups
- Voluntary and non-statutory groups who very successfully facilitate a range of community participative activities which effectively promote inclusion and well-being



- The interdependent nature of individual's lives, the value of family, neighbours and community and their critical importance to individual's health and wellbeing

- Reduced rates for community activities resulting in greater choice for individuals

What you said were the key issues arising

- A perceived lack of understanding of the place and role of older people in the community
- Loneliness and isolation experienced by some
- Stigma attached to people who have particular needs
- The need for a greater range of affordable opportunities for community and social engagement
- Delay in the appointment of volunteers due to lengthy vetting process





Respect, Social Inclusion and Participation



The Plan

The Kildare Age Friendly County Alliance will:

Short term - by the end of 2012

- Work in partnership with **EngAGE** Kildare in the development of all key policy and planning initiatives undertaken in the county which have an impact on people as they age
- Work with the Kildare Leader Partnership and the Gaa Social Inclusion Initiative to develop specific projects with men's groups
- Involve older people in research activities relating to people as they age
- Pursue with NUI Maynooth the promotion of the civic engagement of students and their involvement in intergenerational initiatives
- Initiate in conjunction with community groups, educators, arts, libraries and culture a range of intergenerational activities which serve to create greater mutual understanding and respect between young and old
- Work with **EngAGE** Kildare to enhance opportunities for social inclusion for all
- Work with the relevant authorities to build on the culture of volunteering in the county

Medium Term - by the end of 2014

- Undertake a number of specific initiatives to support the establishment of good neighbour schemes
- Initiate research and dialogue among the major educational providers with a view to creating opportunities for the inclusion of an age related agenda on relevant curriculum



Communication, Information and the Media

Research states that staying connected with people and events and getting timely practical information to manage life and meet personal needs is vital for active ageing. Rapidly evolving information and communication techniques are both welcomed as useful tools and criticised as instruments of social exclusion. The central concern for older people is to have relevant information that is easily accessible to older people with varying capacities and resources.

What you said was working well in Kildare

- Parish newsletters, parish and local radio and the local printed media
- The availability of computer skills training
- Citizens Advice centres and outreach

What you said were the key issues arising

- Automated systems, particularly relating to Government departments and State bodies
- Accessibility of Government information
- People with poor literacy skills not catered for
- Difficulty in accessing relevant local information in one place
- The need for telephone supports during emergencies
- Residents lack of knowledge of local events

The Plan

The Kildare Age Friendly County Alliance will:

Short Term – by the end of 2012

- Work with **EngAGE** Kildare to support the development of templates for 'easy to read' documentation relevant to older persons
- Work with the relevant authorities to ensure the communication of emergency supports in times of adverse weather conditions
- Undertake a number of specific initiatives to enhance individuals skills and knowledge in technology

Medium Term – by the end of 2014

- Support **EngAGE** Kildare to create an information hub which will have a number of strands including the development of an age friendly website and brochure/newsletter which addresses the information needs as highlighted



Research states that transport for all ages, and especially for older people, is closely linked to independence, autonomy and quality of life. Transport and mobility are key factors in facilitating active ageing. TILDA (2011) states that 76% of older people drive themselves, 14% are driven primarily by a family member and 5% used public bus most frequently.

The TILDA study also found that attitudes to public transport were linked to location with the negative perception of public transport systems increasing as an individual's geographic location became more rural. Over 70% of the rural population reported the local public transport system as poor, compared to 20% in Dublin.

The availability of transport is essential to sustaining rural life and maintaining social connections between people living in rural areas.

What you said was working well in Kildare

- The Public transport system where it is available
- The Rural Transport scheme particularly in regard to its flexibility and availability in serving those living off the public transport route

What you said were the key issues arising

- The public bus service is not available in many rural parts of the county
- The cost of taxis is prohibitive but necessary for many to connect with public and sometimes rural transport
- The cost of getting to and from hospital in the absence of public transport

The Plan

The Kildare Age Friendly County Alliance will:

Short term - by the end of 2012

- Support the LEADER Partnership in --bringing together both Rural Transport companies and users with a view to reviewing the transport needs across the county and developing a response
- Support a tri-partite initiative to roll out a pilot project in the provision of non-emergency transport from Kildare Town to Naas Hospital



Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Age Friendly built environments can make the difference between independence and dependence for all individuals but are of particular importance for those growing older. Older people who live in an unsafe environment or areas with multiple physical barriers are less likely to get out and therefore more prone to isolation, depression, reduced fitness and increased mobility problems. Research suggests that the most frequently identified problems for older people in public open spaces are pavements, streets, safety, poor maintenance and traffic.

What you said was working well in Kildare

- Some locations are very accessible
- Parks and public spaces are clean and pleasant, outdoor seating is well maintained and safe in many areas

What you said were the key issues arising:

- Inaccessibility of pavements and footpaths for wheelchair users
- Lack of seating in streets and shops
- Inaccessible bathroom facilities in some shops and hotels
- Pedestrian crossings inadequate
- Some walking routes too rough for those unsteady on their feet
- Consultation carried out too late when buildings are near completion
- Post offices being closed down or being relocated to supermarkets
- Limited creativity and consultation in the planning of public spaces





Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

The Plan

The Kildare Age Friendly County Alliance will:

Short Term - by the end of 2012

- Support Kildare County Council to underpin the planning of outdoor spaces, parks and buildings with age friendly principles and guidelines
- Support **EngAGE** Kildare to be involved in the consultation process with Kildare County Council representatives during the development and review of the Local Area Plans

Medium Term – by the end of 2014

- Ensure each town engaged in a redevelopment/integrated service planning process will carry out an age friendly audit and plan for the area
- Work with the business representatives in the county to address the accessibility needs identified in the development of an Age Friendly County



Research states that most people would like to grow old in their own homes and remain there for as long as they are able. The stability of housing can play a role in compensating for or alleviating the symptoms of age related conditions. An Irish Hospice Foundation survey 2009 confirmed that for most people the preferred location in later life was their own home with only 1% preferring a retirement community and none opting for either sheltered housing or a nursing home.

Feeling secure and safe is of paramount importance. In a comparison of perceptions of safety among people in two age groups, (CSO 2007), approx. 12% of people over 65 years either felt unsafe or very unsafe alone at home after dark.

The increased sense of vulnerability caused by crime against older people also affects those who have not been the victims of crime. Research argues that those who are physically vulnerable or physically weak fear that they will recover slowly from bodily harm and therefore experience higher levels of stress in relation to crime.

What you said was working well in Kildare

- Good neighbours, family and friends
- The availability of personal alarms and security systems
- The availability of meals on wheels, home help and home care packages
- Sheltered housing





What you said were the key issues arising

- Fear of crime in the home and on leaving the home
- Disconnect between young and old and different cultures causing fear
- Distrust of strangers coming into homes to provide essential maintenance services
- Fear of the unknown, lack of awareness of choice, fear of change in regard to change in housing
- No local 'centre' for gathering in some towns
- Home adaptations take a long time, a complicated process
- Accessing information on grants for home repair

- Loneliness and isolation
- Lack of connection with Gardaí

The Plan:

The Kildare Age Friendly County Alliance will:

Short Term – by the end of 2012

- Work with the relevant stakeholders to reinvigorate Community Alert and Neighbourhood Watch
- Work with An Garda Síochána in progressing the Garda Strategy for Older People
- Plan for the extension of the Text Alert system
- Plan for the introduction of the Bogus Caller Alert Card

- Work with relevant stakeholders including the Joint Policing Committees and communities to develop an intergenerational approach

Medium Term – by the end of 2014

- Compile and publish directories of reputable tradespersons
- Work with Planners to ensure that the Age Friendly principles inform house planning and assessment of housing need



Community Support and Health Services

Community supports and Health Services are vital to the maintenance of health and independence. Having well located easily accessible health services is fundamentally important for older people.

Research states that preventative screening, physical activity, education on injury prevention, nutritional guidance and mental health counselling are reported as key community supports.

What you said was working well in Kildare

- Day Care centres, support groups and voluntary organisations
- Support from Public Health Nurses and Community services
- Meals on wheels, home care packages, screening services and palliative care

What you said were the key issues arising:

- There is a requirement for greater co-ordination between the patient, carers and the community team on patient discharge from hospital
- Carers health, wellbeing and support
- The need for an advocacy service for those in hospital who do not have personal supports
- The need for a comprehensive directory of all supports and services available
- The length of time taken to receive a carer's allowance
- The need for greater co-ordination between members of multi-disciplinary teams treating the same person
- The need for a Day Care centre in every town





Community Support and Health Services



- The need for enhanced respite services to cater for the number of people with dementia who are being supported at home.

The Plan

The Kildare Age Friendly Alliance will:

Short Term - to the end of 2012

- Work with the relevant agencies to introduce an Advocacy service to people resident in nursing homes
- Develop and implement innovative positive health and safe living initiatives in conjunction with the Health Promotion service and the Kildare Sports Partnership

Medium Term - to the end of 2014

- Work with relevant stakeholders to address the factors identified relating to hospital discharge
- Work with HSE Primary Care in public engagement initiatives in the research and evaluation of services
- Develop in partnership with the Carers Association and HSE a strategy for supporting family caregivers
- Establish a Service Providers Forum to provide for planning and co-ordination of services
- Work with the relevant stakeholders in the development of a range of supports to carers of people with dementia living in their own homes



Civic Participation and Employment

Civic Participation activities benefit not only the community, they keep older people engaged and prevent social isolation. Most people want to spend their later years involved in a mix of work, leisure and education rather than in passive retirement.

According to a survey carried out by the National Council on Ageing and Older People in 2001, 70% would prefer retirement to be more gradual to allow for personal choice and to accommodate their own needs and circumstances.

Research on the participation rates of the over 55s in the Irish Labour market revealed that about 25% of those aged over 55 who are retired are interested in participating in the labour force, provided certain barriers to their participation are overcome.

These include: lack of flexible or part-time hours, lack of appropriate skills and education, low take-home pay, concerns about reductions in pensions income and benefits as a result of taking up paid employment and age discrimination.

What you said was working well in Kildare

- The availability of training and education programmes
- Volunteering opportunities
- Support in the form of grants for the development of community initiatives
- The availability of part-time employment and opportunities for graduated retirement





Civic Participation and Employment

What you said were the key issues arising

- Active retired people would welcome opportunities to be involved in specific paid work projects which require skills and knowledge acquired by them through a lifetime of work
- Grandparents who undertake full-time childrearing roles often experience stress and isolation as a result
- The need for flexible working conditions for long-term carers

The Plan

The Kildare Age Friendly County Alliance will:

Short Term - to the end of 2012

- Compile a Business of Ageing Strategy and Plan in consultation with Chambers of Commerce and Business Associations
- Support the involvement of the active retired in mentoring programmes
- Support the development of Senior Enterprise

Medium Term - to the end of 2014

- Introduce a recognition scheme for businesses who promote Age Friendly Principles and Practice
- Organise projects which result in the transfer of skills from the retired to the employed and students
- Promote the multi-functional use of schools and sports halls in down time



Implementing the Strategy

The Kildare Age Friendly County Alliance will jointly plan and oversee the implementation of the Kildare Age Friendly County Strategy. The County Alliance will work closely with **EngAGE** Kildare, the Business Forum and the Service Providers Forum to ensure representation of all members of the community at all stages of implementation and review.

The Ageing Well Network's National Implementation Group will support the County Alliance in the development of responses and initiatives which support positive outcomes.

The Baseline Study, carried out in Kildare in 2011 will provide evidence of the degrees of satisfaction of older people at this time and will act as a benchmark by which to measure the impact of the Programme over time.

An Annual Report will be published each year to reflect the status of the Strategy.



From the left at the signing of the Dublin Declaration September 2011 were: Peter Minnock, Director of Services, Kildare County Council, Kate Connaughton, EngAGE Kildare, Michael 'Spike' Nolan, Mayor of Kildare and Jean Moynan, EngAGE Kildare.

