

# Transportation Housing

Respect, Social Inclusion and Participation

## Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

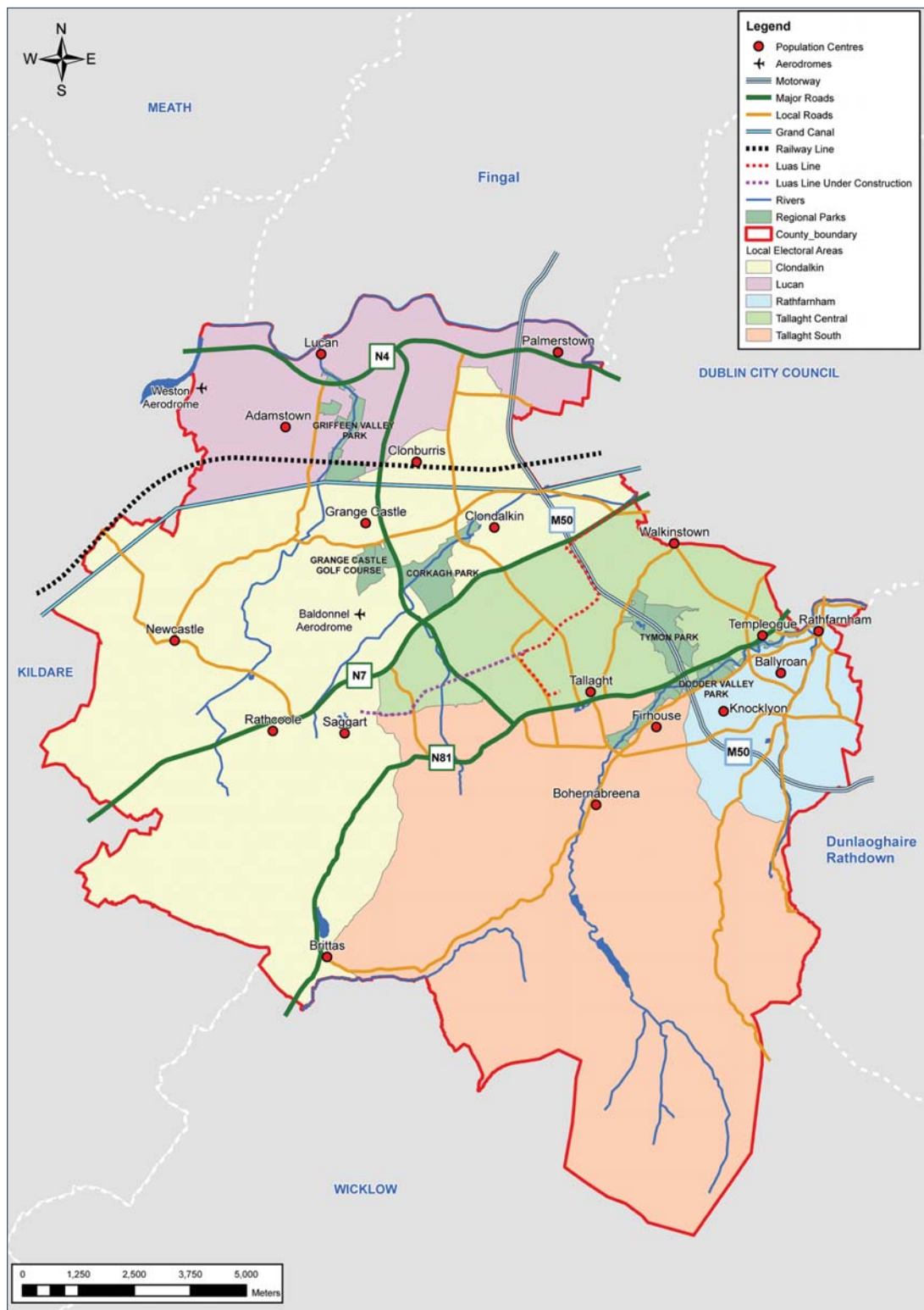
Community Support  
and Health

Civic Participation and Employment

## Communication and Information

**SOUTH DUBLIN  
AGE FRIENDLY  
COUNTY STRATEGY  
2012 - 2015**





## County Profile

South Dublin County covers an area of 223 square kilometres and contains a mix of large urban centres and villages as well as extensive rural areas.

The population of South Dublin County in 2011 was 265,205 people, an increase of 7.4% on the 2006 census figures. Of this population 8.7%, or a total of 23,053 are aged 65 or over, which is lower than the national total of 11.6%. Although South Dublin is a young County by national standards, there is a growing older population, with 58,501 people, or just over 22% aged between 45 and 64 years. As people are now living longer and healthier lives it is important that we plan for the future. South Dublin County wants to be recognised as an Age Friendly County, a place where older people can continue to enjoy a good quality of life, and make a contribution to their communities.

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## Foreword

The population of South Dublin continues to grow, and with that growth comes an increase in the number of older people living in our County. People are now living longer and healthier lives, and want to be active and participate in their communities. This has come through very clearly from the consultation process carried out as part of the development of this strategy. It is also clear from the information gathered that there is a wealth of activity already taking place. In South Dublin we have active communities, volunteers and neighbours. We have some excellent facilities, such as our parks and our libraries, and we have many groups of active citizens working together to develop their areas.



In South Dublin we have developed useful links and working relationships between our partner agencies and service providers. The establishment of the Age Friendly County Alliance has provided an opportunity to further strengthen these working relationships, and with a new awareness of the issues affecting older people. Members of the Alliance have committed to the actions contained in this strategy. Through these actions we will continue to develop South Dublin as a safe, healthy and positive place to live, and a great County in which to grow older.

This strategy is a living document. We are aware that we have not had the opportunity to hear the views of everyone living in the County. The Age Friendly County Alliance will continue to work together and consider new issues and new ideas as they emerge and as more resources become available the Alliance will develop new plans for the future. This strategy recognises the value of our older people and the contributions they have made and continue to make to our County. The members of Age Friendly County Alliance are also committed to working with the new South Dublin Older Person's Forum to ensure a good flow of information through this new channel of communication.

Handwritten signature of Cathal King.

# Age Friendly County Programme

In September 2011 South Dublin signed up to the World Health Organisation Dublin Declaration on Age Friendly Cities and Counties. South Dublin is now committed to being an Age Friendly County, and the development of this strategy is part of that commitment. South Dublin is participating in the National Age Friendly County Programme, an initiative of the Ageing Well Network.

The objectives of the South Dublin Age Friendly County Programme are to:

- Improve the health and well-being of older people in the County
- Increase participation in the social, economic and cultural life of the community
- Encourage effective partnerships between local statutory, private and voluntary organisations

In January 2012 the Age Friendly County Alliance was established and is chaired by the County Manager. This Alliance includes representatives of agencies who are providing services to older people. Through their membership of the Alliance these agencies are committed to working in a creative partnership to improve the quality of life of older people in South Dublin, and making this a great County in which to grow older.

## Alliance Members

Philomena Poole,	County Manager, South Dublin County Council, Chair.
Billy Coman,	Director of Housing and Community, South Dublin County Council
Regina Buckley,	National AFC Programme Manager, Ageing Well Network
Brigid Butler,	Programme Manager, Dublin Mid Leinster, Ageing Well Network,
David Walsh,	Area Manager, HSE
Anna Lee,	Manager, Dodder Valley Partnership
Peter Byrne,	Chief Executive, South Dublin Chamber
Tricia Nolan,	Manager, South Dublin Volunteer Centre
Sergeant Margaret Kennedy,	An Garda Síochána
Maria Price Bolger,	Non-Statutory Services Providers representative
Noel McCarron,	Older People with Intellectual Disabilities Representative
Mary Lyons,	Older Person's Forum
Diarmuid O'Flanagan,	Older Person's Forum
Professor Des O'Neill,	Tallaght Hospital and Trinity College Dublin

## Themes

The Age Friendly County Themes, as developed by the World Health Organisation, are considered to be the factors most affecting the quality of life of older people. During the consultation process participants were asked to tell us about their experiences under each theme heading.



# Transportation Housing

Respect, Social Inclusion and Participation

# Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Community Support  
and Health

Civic Participation and Employment

# Communication and Information



## Transportation

### You said

- You need quality transport that will enable you to connect between areas in the County.
- You want to be consulted when changes are being made to public transport.
- You want to feel safe when using public transport.
- You want to be comfortable when waiting for public transport.



### What is happening

- Dublin Bus consult with passengers about changes to routes and new ways to connect between areas in the County.
- Dublin Bus are committed to the ongoing reduction of anti-social behaviour and CCTV cameras are installed in all buses.
- All Dublin Bus drivers receive customer service training which includes a focus on the specific needs of older people.
- Dublin Bus provide training in schools which includes an element on respect for other bus users, including older people.
- Veolia Transport Ltd., who operate the Luas are committed to quality customer service for older people and security for all passengers.
- South Dublin County Council is involved in a number of smart travel projects, funded by The National Transport Authority. Initiatives include the Travel Smart Communities Project which aims to build a new mobility culture in the County, improving local permeability links, and improving cycling Networks. Support is provided to communities who are interested in developing cycling groups or clubs.

### Plans for the Future

- Members of the Older Person's Forum will be invited to sit on local Public Transport Committees which include staff from Dublin Bus and Veolia and meet regularly in South Dublin County. This will be an opportunity for older people to be involved in decision making and to feedback information to the community. It will also be an opportunity for highlight the specific needs of some older people who might have issues with gait, balance and mobility.
- Possibilities for volunteer drivers and appointment pals for hospital outpatients will be explored.
- South Dublin Chamber will continue to work with businesses in the County to see how business can best engage in assisting the mobility of customers who otherwise would be challenged to use services or retail in the County.



## Housing

### You said

- The majority of you told us that you want to continue to live in your own homes for as long as possible but you may need help to allow you to do so.
- You want to feel safe and secure in your own home and community. It is important for you to know your neighbours and especially the young people who live nearby.
- During severe weather conditions you may need extra support, it would be good to know that this support is in place.
- As your needs change you may need to make changes to your home and it is important that information about grants and other supports is readily available.
- Some of you would like to have the option to move to supported accommodation where you could continue to be independent while feeling secure and part of a community.

### What is happening

- A home repair service for older people and provided by skilled workers under the TÚS scheme is now in place in the West Tallaght area. This service is managed by Dodder Valley Partnership and there is the possibility that it may expand to cover a wider geographical area in the future.
- An Garda Síochána are committed to ensuring that older people feel safe and secure in their homes and communities. This is reflected in the Garda Strategy for Older People, published in 2010. Gardaí in South Dublin use a community focussed approach to reduce fear of crime and maintain effective links with older people.
- An Garda Síochána continue to support many Neighbourhood Watch Committees in the County, and the number of these committees continues to increase, with 110 in place in September 2012.
- An Garda Síochána work with Age Action Ireland to develop strategies that address the targeting of older people by criminals. Actions include Garda presence at post offices on pension collection day, high visibility of Gardaí in older residential areas and at places of worship, and raising awareness of bogus callers and suspicious trades people.
- There are 3 Local Policing Forums in the County. Through these forums South Dublin County Council, An Garda Síochána and the Local Drugs Task Forces are committed to providing communities with information on safety and security.
- The Mobility Aids Housing Grants Scheme is available to fast track grant aid to cover a basic suite of works to address mobility problems, primarily, but not exclusively, associated with ageing.
- The Housing Aid for Older People Scheme is available to assist older people (over 60 years of age) living in poor housing conditions to have necessary repairs or improvements carried out such as re-wiring or re-roofing type works. This grant is means tested. The possibility of extending this scheme to cover technology which would assist older people to live independently is currently being explored.
- The Gardaí are involved in many intergenerational initiatives which aim to improve understanding between people of all ages.
- South Dublin County Council is committed to the principles of universal design for all developments.





### Plans for the Future

- The establishment of a Committee to respond to the needs of older people in emergencies, for example in extreme weather conditions will be explored.
- The possibility of developing a Garda Text Alert Service is currently being explored nationally.



*Family and good neighbours – that's the most important thing.  
We all need each other.  
Ballyroan Resident*

# Community Support and Health Services

## You said

- Some of you are having issues with GP services, including difficulties getting home visits and not being able to see the same Doctor each time you visit your local clinic.
- Some of you are having difficulty accessing health related services and feel that waiting times for older people need to take your particular needs into account.
- Some of you have said that you would like to see improved coordination between health related services particularly in relation to discharge from hospitals.
- You have told us that you recognise the benefits of keeping fit and active as you get older, and you would like more opportunities to do this as part of a group.
- Some of you are having difficulty accessing home help services, respite services, meals on wheels, and other supports.

## What is happening

- Tallaght Hospital provides services to about 500,000 adults from both within and outside South Dublin County, of which 36% are aged over 65. A key focus in the hospital is to ensure older people receive urgent care tailored to their needs.
- The Go for Life and PALs programmes, funded by the Irish Sports Council, are in place in South Dublin, providing opportunities to older people to keep active in a very sociable environment.
- There are several Day Care Centres across the County providing for the social needs of older people.
- South Dublin County Council has installed exercise equipment in Parks which is designed to be accessible for use by older adults. Equipment is now in place in Parks across the County.
- Both Tallaght and Clondalkin Leisure Centres offer services tailored for older people. Staff in both centres have received Agewise training and are focussed on the particular needs of older Centre users.
- Several Meals on Wheels Programmes are in place across the County and provide an invaluable service to older people living in their own homes.
- The Voluntary Services Programme in Tallaght Hospital continues to support older people attending day care facilities.
- There are many voluntary services operating in the County including the Senior Helpline, Homelink, Friends of the Elderly, Befriending the Elderly and Trustus we care. These services provide invaluable assistance to Older People who want to remain living in their own homes.



*I wish I had looked after myself better, your health is your wealth, especially when you are older.  
Clondalkin Resident*





## Plans for the Future

- Care Local, a non-profit organisation which works to alleviate loneliness and isolation in Dublin's older community are in the process of bringing their services to the South Dublin County Council Area. A variety of programmes, including Plate Pals and Appointment Pals will be available in the near future in conjunction with a number of local service providers including TLC and Trustus we care. These services will greatly add to the quality of life of older people in the County. South Dublin County Volunteer Centre will be working with Care Local to recruit volunteers for these new services.
- The Primary Care Teams are now operational in most areas. Contact details are available from your local health centre or from the HSE website. The HSE will continue to support the development of these teams to respond in a multi-disciplinary way to the needs of the older population.
- A programme to support Older Persons called the Frail Elderly Programme is now in place to assist older persons upon discharge from the acute hospitals. The Social Workers and discharge planners in the hospitals are working with the Community Services.
- A Service Providers Forum, which will be chaired by a member of the Age Friendly County Alliance, will be established before the end of 2012. This forum will be an opportunity for service providers to share supports and information to improve the experiences of older people in the County.
- The IMO have committed to communicating with Older People living in the County to ensure information about services and resources is clearly disseminated. This will be facilitated through the Older Person's Forum.
- The Alzheimer's Society in partnership with the Ageing Well network aim to create a dementia friendly community in Tallaght.

# Respect, Social Inclusion and Participation

## You said

- You want to be active members of your community, and you want to have more opportunities to come together.
- Some of you feel that your lifetime of experience, and the skills that you have built up, are not recognised.
- You would like more opportunities to mix with younger people and to bridge the gap between generations.
- Some of you feel that you are not always treated with respect by staff and other members of your community.

## What is happening

- Bealtaine, a month long festival of events and activities for older people is held in South Dublin each year during the month of May. This festival is growing each year. With the establishment of the older person's forum, older people will be given the opportunity to have even more involvement in the organisation of the festival.
- Social inclusion week takes place in South Dublin County each year in November. In 2012 the week of events and activities will focus on intergenerational cooperation. Members of the Older Person's Forum will be invited to participate in the organisation of the week in the future.
- South Dublin County Council provides a range of supports to older people's groups in the County, and actively encourages the establishment of new groups, particularly groups including older men. Supports are provided by the Community Development, Sports and Social Inclusion team, and includes assistance with accessing the community grants scheme.
- South Dublin Chamber is fully engaged with the business community in the County to ensure awareness of the Age Friendly Initiative.
- CPLN Partnership have been working on an initiative to develop the capacity of a group of older people in the CPLN area to act as a voice for the collective issues that older local people have. To this end it has worked to develop, train and support a new advocacy group for older people, Older Voices for Change, with representation from the four areas of the Partnership's remit. The group itself will be launched later in the year. Support will be ongoing.

*We would be only delighted to pass our skills and experience on to younger people, we want to talk if they are willing to listen.*  
Tallaght Resident







## Plans for the Future

- The South Dublin Older Person's Forum will be invited to input into the Bealtaine Festival and Social Inclusion weeks into the future.
- South Dublin Chamber are planning to establish a panel of older people to offer advice to people with questions relating to business as part of the South Dublin Business Advice Line Initiative.
- South Dublin Chamber are working to establish Learning Circles with older people who may have recently retired from business. This will be an opportunity for business people who may not have experienced a recession before to meet with people who have and learn ways to survive and make their business stronger.





## Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

### You said

- You have told us that you are very happy with the parks and open spaces in the County. However some of you have said that there are certain locations where you don't feel secure
- Many of you have said that you don't get out and about as much as you would like because of the lack of benches and public toilets available in our villages and public spaces.
- You have told us that the Community Centres in the County play an invaluable role in the lives of older people, providing information, activity and social contact.
- Some of you highlighted the importance of maintaining footpaths to enable those with reduced mobility to use them safely.
- The issue of responsible dog ownership was raised on several occasions.
- You have said that there is an issue with people parking illegally, on kerbs, double yellow lines and in disabled parking spaces.
- Pedestrian crossings do not sometimes allow enough time for older people to cross roads safely.



*Everything is geared for the young nowadays,  
which is fine, but remember the old.  
Rathfarnham Resident*

## What is happening

- South Dublin County Council and An Garda Síochána are committed to working with local communities to ensure Parks and Open spaces are secure and user friendly.
- SDCC are committed to supporting Community Centres where services to older people are provided.
- There are several very active Tidy Towns Groups in the County in areas including Lucan, Palmerstown, Clondalkin, Rathfarnham and Griffeen. Groups are involved in cleaning, litter picking and planting, mainly during the Summer months leading to well presented public spaces and greater ownership of areas.
- [www.fixmystreet.ie](http://www.fixmystreet.ie) is a publicly accessible website with associated mobile technologies on which non emergency issues such as graffiti, road defects, issues with street lighting, water leakages and dumping can be reported. South Dublin County Council is the first Local Authority to provide this service to residents and is committed to responding to all reports within 2 working days.
- Eco Week is held in April in South Dublin County and aims to spread the message 'Our Environment, let's protect it!' A range of free events take place to raise awareness of environmental issues and offer fun and practical solutions.
- A Social Credit Scheme is in operation in South Dublin County and promotes positive environmental and community action, rewarding groups with access to Council services and facilities. Several active retirement groups have successfully accessed this scheme.

## Plans for the Future

- An audit of Public buildings and spaces will be carried out by the Older Person's Forum and will look at accessibility issues, the condition of pavements, provision of parking spaces, benches, bins and lighting, and pedestrian crossings. A report will be prepared & presented to the Age Friendly Alliance to inform future planning in the County.



## Civic Participation and Employment

### You said

- You do not always feel older people are involved in making important decisions and developing policy.
- You would like to volunteer more, and would like more suitable opportunities to contribute your skills and experience.
- You would like to have more opportunities for self employment.
- There is a need to help older people prepare for retirement, including financial advice.
- You would like opportunities to train for a career change as your physical abilities change.

### What is happening

- An Older Person's Forum has been established in South Dublin with the first meeting taking place in July 2012. The Forum will ensure that the voices of older people will be heard when policies are being developed and decisions are being taken. The Older Person's Forum will link with existing older people's groups in the County, and will also link with neighbouring Counties and contribute to national debate relating to issues affecting Older People.
- Time Banking is currently being piloted in South Dublin County and is bringing about increased community participation and skill sharing. Time Banking also provides valuable opportunities for intergenerational contact.
- South Dublin Volunteer Centre is committed to matching older volunteers with placements that are fulfilling and will make the most of a lifetime of experience and skills. A Conference on Older People and Volunteering will take place in November 2012 and will aim to increase understanding of the supports required by Older People to enable them to volunteer.
- Dodder Valley Partnership have been working with older people and primary school pupils in Fettercairn on the development of a community garden. This initiative is a great opportunity for young and older to work together and learn from each other.
- South Dublin County Enterprise Board is committed to providing start your own business courses, senior entrepreneurship courses, mentoring and additional services to older people with business ideas.



*The reality of retirement can come as a shock and the support is not out there, an adjustment period and some sort of winding down plan should be a requirement for employers.  
Clondalkin Resident*





## Plans for the Future

- As part of the National Initiative, The Gathering, 2013, South Dublin County Tourism will recruit and train 100 retired active volunteers to become ambassadors for the County at a range of events. This will be an opportunity for older people to represent their County and become involved in something new. This group will complement the existing South Dublin Volunteer Corps.
- Pre retirement courses will be provided by Retirement Council of Ireland to older people living in South Dublin.
- South Dublin Chamber will run specific events for older workers and those employing older workers. These events will focus on specific issues such as the needs of older people in the workplace, and older people who are planning retirement and looking for someone to pass on their business to.
- A Business of Ageing Forum will be established to stimulate awareness among the business community about how best to grow their business base and deepening their understanding of older persons needs and preferences. An Age Friendly Business recognition scheme will be developed to encourage businesses to engage in the forum.

## Communication and Information

### You said

- You sometimes feel excluded as more services are being moved online.
- Some of you would like more opportunities to learn about new technology.
- You would like to see activities and events being advertised using posters and leaflets.
- You have found that the libraries and community centres are a great source of information.

### What is happening

- South Dublin has a network of Community Centres and facilities situated at the heart of communities across the County. Many older people have said that they find out about what is happening in their area when visiting these facilities. South Dublin County Council continues to provide support to these Centres to ensure this service to the community continues.
- South Dublin County Libraries have received enormous praise from members of the community who have participated in the Age Friendly County consultation process. The libraries provide information through programmes and activities and also provide many opportunities for older people to improve their knowledge of information technology through a variety of courses on offer.
- Citizen's Information Centres in Lucan Clondalkin and Tallaght provide information on public services and entitlements. Information is also available at [www.citizensinformation.ie](http://www.citizensinformation.ie).

### Plans for the Future

- South Dublin County Council is the first Local Authority in Ireland to carry out a literacy audit. The report by NALA, 'Taking Steps to be a Literacy Friendly Local Authority' has made several recommendations including improvements to signage and the use of 'Plain English' on Council forms, websites, and other material. Frontline staff will receive training to enable them to assist customers with literacy and numeracy difficulties.
- The South Dublin County Older Person's Forum was established in July 2012 and one of its most important functions will be to gather together information on issues affecting older people and on services available in the County. Information will be disseminated through public meetings, newsletters and other means.
- South Dublin Chamber are committed to communicating with older people in the County through newsletters, social media, the Chamber website and the South Dublin Chamber App. Information including special offers for older people will be highlighted on a regular basis.

*I don't want to go online to pay bills, I want to go down to the post office, meet other people and have a chat. It is important for community life that we get out and about.*  
Tallaght Resident





## Older Person's Forum

The first meeting of the South Dublin Older Person's Forum took place on Thursday July 26th 2012 and the first meeting of the Forum Executive took place on September 20th 2012. Throughout the consultation process it was very clear that some older people are not fully informed about services, activities and opportunities in South Dublin. It was also clear that older people want to make a contribution to their communities and are eager for opportunities to get involved. There are also many older people's groups operating in the County who would like the opportunity to develop links with other groups. The establishment of the Older Person's Forum will create possibilities for improved contact and information sharing, between older people themselves, and between older people and service providers. Each year a number of public meetings will be held where topical issues will be raised and addressed. Members of the Older Person's Forum will form an Executive, and members of the Executive will be invited to join other groups, such as the Age Friendly County Alliance. This will ensure that the voice of older people will be heard when policies are being developed and decisions are being taken. The Older Person's forum will link with existing older people's groups in the County, and will also link with neighbouring Counties and national groups.



## Physical Activity for Older People in South Dublin

Physical activity is an essential element of a healthy lifestyle. It is particularly important that older people continue to be physically active in order to maintain their health, quality of life and level of independence. In South Dublin there are infinite opportunities for people to enjoy a health and active life, with many parks, leisure facilities, walking and cycling routes. There are also many more formal ways to stay active, as an individual or as part of a group. Here are some of the highlights:

### Exercise Equipment in Parks

Exercise Equipment, suitable for a variety of ages and activity levels, continues to be installed in Council Parks.

### Go for Life Games

Go for Life is the national programme for sports and physical activity for older people in Ireland, and is an Age and Opportunity initiative funded by the National Sports Council. South Dublin County Council is involved in coordinating the involvement of older adult groups in the County Qualifiers for these games. Involvement leads to increased physical activity levels in older people and in developing social networks between groups. Competition can be strong and local teams have qualified for national finals in recent years!

### Physical Activity Leaders in the Community (PALs)

Physical Activity Leaders in the Community or PALs, are involved in delivering the Go for Life programme to older adult groups in the County. There are currently 40 PALs in South Dublin, and plans are in place for more people to receive training .



*We know about all the services out there because we are in a group, some people think there is nothing for them because they don't get out and find what is happening.  
Tallaght Resident*



## South Dublin County Libraries

During the Age Friendly County consultation process many of you told us about your very positive experiences of the libraries in the County. The libraries offer a wide variety of services, host events and courses and provide some excellent opportunities for older people to come together with younger people to share experiences and skills. The opportunities on offer include:

### Getting Started – a simple guide to success in using computers

This training programme has been developed in association with Age Action Ireland and is a guide to using computers for people over 50 and is helping to improve digital literacy among older people.

### Keeping up the Kids

This intergenerational computer learning session has been developed by Clondalkin Library and St. Mary's Senior National School in Rowlagh. Teaching was delivered by sixth class pupils to their grandparents over a 6 week period. There are plans roll this training out to other branches in the future.

### Reminiscence Therapy

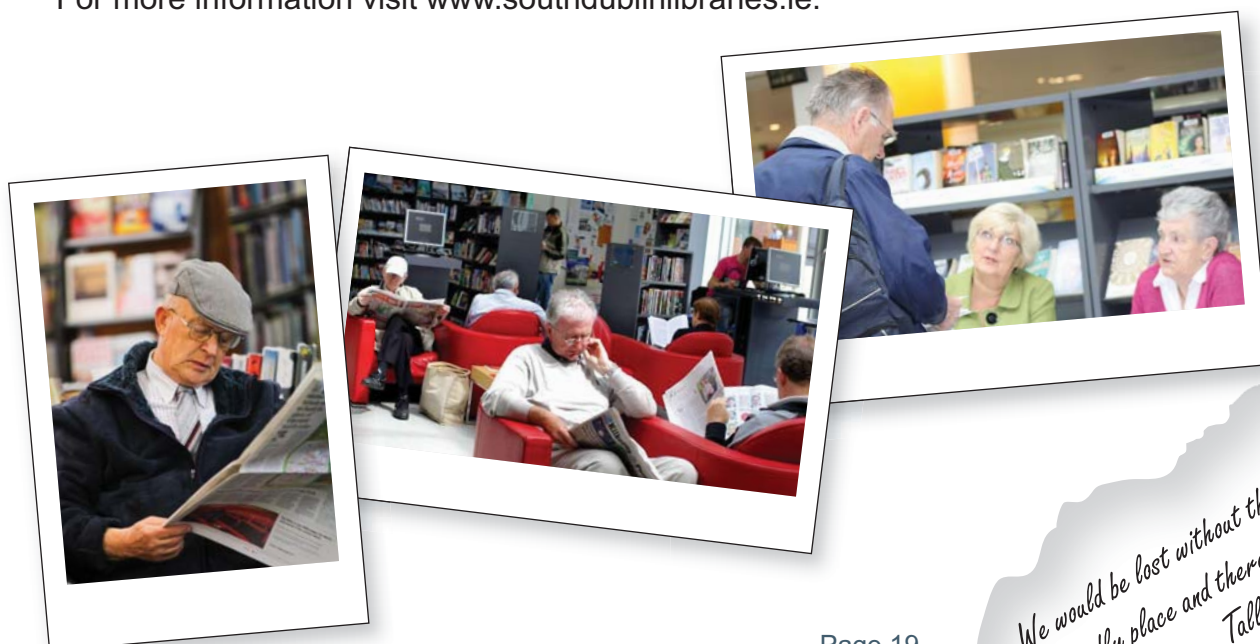
Using old photos and videos from across the County Library staff facilitate reminiscence therapy with people whose memories are compromised. This work is ongoing on an annual basis and utilises the library's online SOURCE database which contains thousands of images and pieces of video.

### The Poetry Shed

The Poetry Shed is a reading development programme to engage older men in poetry and literature. Many older men do not access library services and this outreach activity aims to create an accessible and inclusive environment. Through this project participants will be encouraged to listen to stories and poems, join in with talking and creating, or simply relax and just be.

### Other activities

Among the other activities available in the libraries there are thousands of readers across the County involved in Book Clubs, courses entitled 'The Grey Guide to Social Media' and 'Computers for the Terrified', and sessions on mindfulness, relaxation and mental well being for Carers in the County. The libraries are also central to many of the events during Social Inclusion Week and The Bealtaine Festival. For more information visit [www.southdublinlibraries.ie](http://www.southdublinlibraries.ie).



## Social Inclusion

### Social Inclusion Week

In November each year a week long programme of activities is organised by the Council's Social Inclusion Unit to celebrate Social Inclusion Week. This week aims to highlight the positive work carried out by this Council and its partner agencies to promote social inclusion and build positive and inclusive communities in our County. The week provides us with an opportunity to engender a positive inclusive spirit in our communities. It creates opportunities for the active retired to get involved in their community and learn new skills. Activities that are organised included the Annette Halpin Tea Dance, IT Classes for Beginners, Tea Drinking Workshops, Craft Classes, A Celebration of Social Inclusion through the Performing Arts, Art Workshops, Photography Classes, Dance Workshops and Green Fingers Classes.

Social Inclusion Week is an indicator of South Dublin County Council's commitment to the promotion of social inclusion at all levels in our communities.



### Bealtaine Festival

Each year in May a celebration of older people in South Dublin County takes place as part of the national Bealtaine festival. The name "Bealtaine" comes from the ancient Celtic festival of that name celebrating springtime, freshness and renewal. This month long celebration is organised by South Dublin County Council and is led by the Social Inclusion Unit and Sports Department. Activities take place across the County in libraries, community centres and the great outdoors. Each week has a different theme including learning week, activity week, arts week and green fingers week. There is an opportunity here for everybody to try out something new. Some of the activities organised include cycling, dance workshops, composting, tours of Sean Walsh Park, Computer Classes, Arts and Crafts and lots more.



*Everything is geared for the young nowadays,  
which is fine, but remember the old.  
Ratofarnam Resident*

# Volunteering in South Dublin County

It is clear from the information gathered during the Age Friendly consultation process that strong communities, active volunteers and good neighbours are essential to ensuring older people can remain living in their homes for as long as possible. As the age profile in our County changes more and more members of the community will be needed to take a role in supporting their older neighbours.

There is a strong volunteering tradition in South Dublin County. In fact Ireland's first Volunteer Bureau was established in Tallaght. The Volunteer Bureau has since become South Dublin County Volunteer Centre and a total of over 9000 people have registered with the centre to date.

The Volunteer Centre encourages and supports volunteering by and with older people. Many of those registering with the centre are aged over 55. At the same time there are many groups registered with Volunteer Centre, looking to source volunteers for projects that provide services to older people.

## Volunteer Corps

The South Dublin county volunteer corps is a specific project that encourages people to take part in once off, time limited events in the county. The corps is particularly suited to older people as they can pick and choose which volunteering events suit their own needs. The volunteer centre is anxious to encourage and support older people in joining the Corps.

## Training

South Dublin County Volunteer Centre provides basic volunteer management training to all groups in the county but also offers bespoke training on various issues. One of the topics that we deliver a module on is "involving older people as volunteers". We highlight the skills and experience that older people bring to volunteering. As part of this module we also highlight the benefits that volunteer brings to the health and wellbeing of those older volunteers who get involved in their community. For more information please visit [www.volunteersouthdublin.ie](http://www.volunteersouthdublin.ie).



*Some people don't want to accept help, but the community should still keep an eye out for them.  
Rathfarnham Resident*



## Tallaght Hospital

Tallaght Hospital provides acute general and psychiatric services for a population of around 500,000 and includes an acute general hospital for children. The hospital has in-patient, out-patient, day surgery and emergency departments. The adult general hospital service has around 15000 admissions per year. 36% of these are for people over the age of 65 and half of those – 18% of total admissions – are for people over the age of 75.

In addition to the specialist medical service for older people (Age Related Healthcare) there are also specialist services dealing with mental health issues (Psychiatry for Later Life). Medical and psychiatric services are provided across a range of settings, including Peamount Hospital and Sheaf House as well as the Age Related Day Hospital, in-patient, out-patient, stroke and falls services in Tallaght Hospital itself.

In the future it is hoped that there will be a development for geriatric medicine outreach services to nursing homes and early supported discharge for stroke patients.

A key focus the hospital is to ensure that older people receive urgent care that is tailored to their needs when they attend with sudden illness. The new Acute Medical Admissions Unit (AMAU) helps significantly in achieving this aim. Most emergency attendances by older people are due to problems arising from chronic heart or lung conditions, suddenly worsening confusion, strokes or falls (with or without injury). Long waits for treatment can lead to these conditions getting worse, leading to even greater distress for patients and their families.

Suitable patients who attend the Emergency Department are now sent directly to the AMAU. The AMAU is staffed by medical consultants, including a geriatrician. Adults of all ages come into the AMAU but the sensitive and effective care of older people is a key priority. Specially trained nurses and therapists are also part of the team.

An important part of this care is to ensure that patients can go home promptly with community services, perhaps supported by attendance at the Age Related Day Hospital. Where this is not suitable a decision to admit to a longer term bed is made promptly by a senior doctor.



*When you get older you don't have as much time to wait for things like appointments in the hospital, older people should go to the top of the queue.  
Rathcoole Resident*

## Community Safety

In order to enjoy living and working in our communities it is important that we feel safe and secure. The Community Police Units of An Garda Síochána pay close attention to older people and are tasked with specific responsibility for this group based on the following principals:

1. Developing and maintaining effective communications links between Gardaí and older people
2. Delivering a timely and effective proactive response by Gardaí to older people
3. Increasing trust and confidence by lessening the fear of crime amongst older people:
4. Determining and responding to the needs and expectations of older people on an ongoing basis

This commitment is reflected in the Garda Strategy for Older People produced in 2010. The purpose of the Strategy is to ensure that the policing needs of older people in Ireland are met to the highest possible standard.

Gardaí engage with older people using a community-focused approach to provide solutions that reduce the fear of crime amongst the elderly members of our society.

In South Dublin County there are wide range of projects and activities taking place to improve community safety and reduce levels of fear. These include:

- Neighbourhood Watch Committees - supported by An Garda Síochána there are now 110 committees across the County
- Local Policing Fora - supported by An Garda Síochána and South Dublin County Council there are now 3 operating in the County
- Involvement with agencies such as Age Action Ireland.
- Information talks are given by the Crime Prevention Officer and local Community Gardaí focussing on crime trends affecting older people including bogus callers and suspicious trades people
- Gardaí are in attendance at the local Post Offices each Friday morning and there is high visibility in the vicinity of places of worship on Sunday mornings
- Designated Garda and Council clinics take place in community facilities across the County, allowing older people to raise concerns in a safe and neutral environment
- Community Police are actively involved in raising awareness with young people of the impacts of anti social behaviour on older neighbours.

The establishment of the Older Person's Service Provider's Forum will increase opportunities for the Gardaí, the HSE, South Dublin County Council to work together to ensure older people living in the County feel safe and secure in their homes and out and about in their communities.



*I have had wonderful support from the community Gardaí, but I think lots of people are unaware of the help they can offer.  
Lucan Resident*

# Acknowledgements

The South Dublin Age Friendly County Alliance would like to acknowledge the contributions of the many groups, service providers, NGOs and individuals who participated in the consultation process that took place as part of the development of this strategy. The Programme was launched on February 29th 2012 and was followed by the first consultation session with over 140 representatives of older people in the County taking part.

As part of the County wide consultation process 8 public sessions took place in Rathcoole, Tallaght, Palmerstown, Perrystown, Ballyroan, Clondalkin, Jobstown and Lucan. Meetings were also held with many groups working in the County including Jobstown Senior Citizen's, the RAMs (Retired Active Men in Newcastle), St. Mark's Silver Surfers, Castle Park Residents and the Clondalkin Active Retired Association.

People were asked 'what is working well', 'what could be improved', and 'how could improvements be made' under the 8 theme headings of the Age Friendly County Programme. In total approximately 500 people participated in this process.

Meetings were also held with many of the service providers working in the County. We spoke with many members of the staff of the Alliance Partners, South Dublin County Council, An Garda Síochána, the HSE, South Dublin County Volunteer Centre, South Dublin Chamber, Dodder Valley Partnership, and CPLN Partnership. We are also grateful to the many others for their time and commitment to the development of the Strategy including:

- Tallaght Hospital Voluntary Services
- Tallaght Hospital Director of Nursing
- Peamount Care, Newcastle
- Stewarts Care, Palmerston
- The GP representatives of the Irish Medical Organisation
- Trustus
- Dublin Bus
- Veolia Transport Ltd.
- Care Local and Cross Care
- South Dublin County Enterprise Board
- The Carers Association

During the public consultation sessions support was received from 4 students on the Tallaght IT Social Care degree programme. The students, Colm, Martha, Stella and Karen were involved with facilitation of groups and were of great assistance throughout the process. We would like to thank them sincerely for their participation and wish them well with their studies.

This strategy is a living document. The South Dublin Age Friendly County Alliance are committed to including new actions as they are developed. If you have any ideas and suggestions that you would like to include please contact us.







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