

Ards and North Down's **Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan** 2019-2022

Creating positive outcomes for everyone



An initiative of the Big Plan for Ards and North Down



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Foreword from the Mayor of Ards and North Down



Ards and North Down is recognised as having an aging population meaning that the demographic profile will change significantly over

the next 10-20 years. These changes pose significant challenges – for our health care and pension systems, as well as our capacity to create environments in which all of us can flourish as we age, and lead healthy, active and engaged lives.

However, they also create significant opportunities and the wealth of life experience an older population has is something to be celebrated. How we grasp these opportunities depends on our ability to plan for the longer-term. We need to develop a strong public sector capable of engaging all stakeholders in bringing about changes in planning, health, housing, transport, safety and public space management. Improved collaboration amongst key agencies and communities is key to delivering a comprehensive and effective programme of this nature. Indeed, this is at the very centre of community planning.

The publication of this strategy and action plan marks the beginning of a process that will see a coordinated approach being adopted by organisations and communities to creating a more Age Friendly society. This is something I very much welcome, not only as Mayor of Ards and North Down, but also as a citizen who is conscious of the responsibility we all have for the wellbeing of all people.

I look forward to seeing how this Strategy and Action Plan enable us, through increased collaboration, to make Ards and North Down a great place to live and grow older.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Richard Smart'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cllr Richard Smart

Mayor of Ards and North Down
Borough Council

Age Friendly and the Big Plan for Ards and North Down



The Big Plan for Ards and North Down was published on 30 March 2017 as part of a process known as community planning. The purpose of community planning is to improve how public agencies work together, with local people, to plan and deliver better services. Early engagement with the public, via the Big Conversation, plus a review of statistical data, quickly identified Ards and North Down's ageing population as an important issue. It is essential that public services and infrastructure, designed and implemented today, will still be relevant to the Borough's population in future years.

Ards and North Down's Strategic Community Planning Partnership agreed to work towards the World Health Organisation's Age Friendly Status, and in doing so establish an Age Friendly Alliance.

Ards and North Down's Age Friendly Strategy provides a framework to help make our Borough a great place to grow older and an area in which everyone, regardless of age, is valued and respected. It provides the structure for cross-sector cooperation, which is essential to improve the quality of life of our older population. The Strategy is framed around the eight Age Friendly domains as prescribed by WHO (see page 8).

This Strategy and its associated Action Plan has been informed via the Big Conversation which was a consultation process used by the community planning process to develop the Big Plan. This has been further supplemented via direct engagement with older people, other stakeholders and service providers.

Planning for an Age Friendly Ards and North Down

Gaining Age Friendly status is not something that happens overnight and there are several steps, set out by the WHO, that need to be taken. The planning, implementation, evaluation and improvement aspects of 'Age Friendly' is a continuous process as shown in figure 1

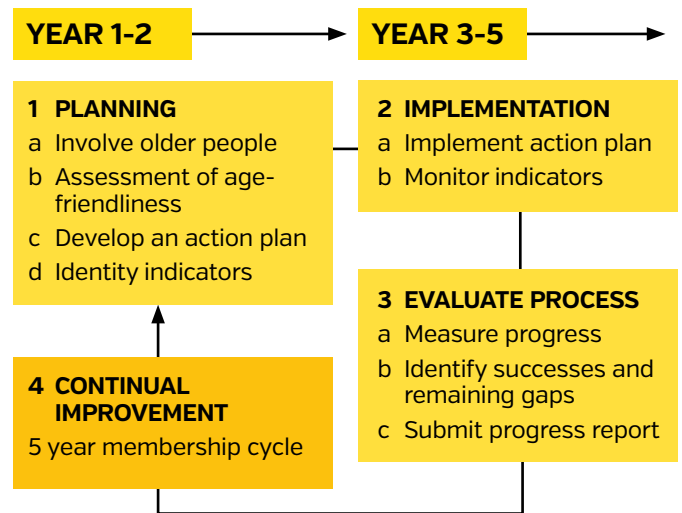


Figure 1: Age Friendly Cycle

How will Ards and North Down become Age Friendly?

An Age Friendly borough must:

- 1 Establish mechanisms to involve older people throughout the Age Friendly process
- 2 Develop a baseline assessment of the age-friendliness of the area under the eight domains
- 3 Develop a 3-year borough-wide action plan; and
- 4 Identify measurements to monitor progress against this plan.

Age Friendly Alliance

An Age Friendly Alliance has been established within the Community Planning structure. The progress of the Age Friendly Alliance is reported to the Strategic Community Planning Partnership via Thematic Wellbeing Groups using an outcome-based performance scorecard.

The Over 50s Council, and the Service Providers Forum, feed into the Age Friendly Alliance and any relevant topic specific sub-groups that are established.

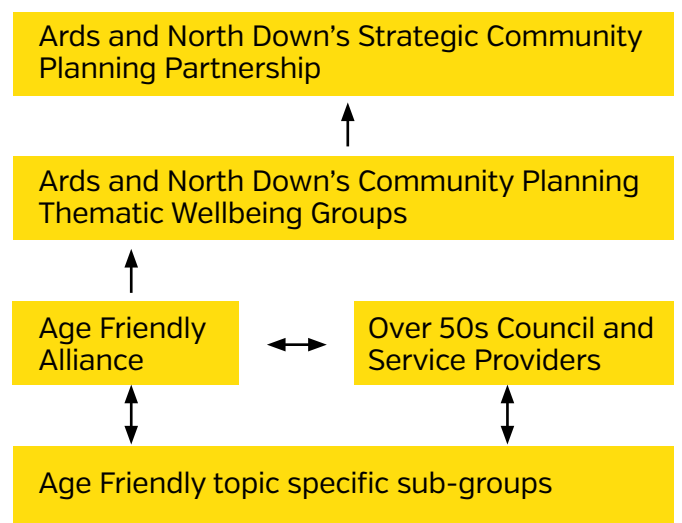


Figure 2: Age Friendly Structure

Steps taken in Ards and North Down towards becoming Age Friendly

Steps towards Age Friendly Status	What have we done in Ards and North Down
Secure approval from senior leadership	<p>In 2016, Ards and North Down's Strategic Community Planning Partnership agreed that an ageing population is a significant issue for this Borough.</p> <p>In October 2017, Ards and North Down Borough Council wrote to the World Health Organisation setting out its intentions for this area to be recognised as Age Friendly.</p>
Create an Age Friendly Alliance	<p>In 2018, Ards and North Down's Community Planning Partners established an Age Friendly Alliance to consider the evidence, develop a Strategy and agree an appropriate Action Plan.</p>
Consult with older people and establish an older people's council	<p>The Big Conversation involved direct engagement with over 1400 people, including older residents. Additional engagement has taken place with many older people's groups.</p> <p>An Over 50s Council was established in Ards and North Down in April 2015 and it was agreed that this is an appropriate mechanism to ensure the voices and experiences of older people are represented in the Strategy and Action Plan.</p>

Priority Issues

WHO identified eight separate domains that a locality should consider when developing actions that will help it in its aspiration to be 'Age Friendly' (pages 8 and 9). Ards and North Down's Age Friendly Alliance considered all eight domains and considered which ones to prioritise for action. These are marked in the action plan using the image opposite.



Age Friendly Domains



Outdoor spaces and buildings

The outside environment and public buildings have a major impact on the mobility, independence and quality of life of older people and affect their ability to “age in place”. The recurring themes are quality of life, access and safety.



Transport

Transportation, including accessibility and affordable public transport, is a key factor influencing active ageing. Being able to move about an area (urban, rural and connections) determines social and civic participation and access to community and health services.



Housing

Housing is essential to safety and well-being. There is a link between appropriate housing and access to community and social services in influencing the independence and quality of life of older people. Housing and support that allow older people to age comfortably and safely within their community are universally valued.



Social participation

Social participation and social support are strongly connected to good health and well-being throughout life. Participating in leisure, social, cultural and spiritual activities in the community, as well as with the family, allows older people to continue to exercise their independence, to enjoy respect and esteem.



Respect and inclusion

The respect and inclusion of older people can depend on culture, gender, health status and economic status. The extent to which older people participate in social, civic and economic life of where they live is closely linked to their experience of inclusion.



Civic participation

Older people do not stop contributing to their communities on retirement. Many continue to provide unpaid and voluntary work for their families and communities. Age Friendly provides options for older people to continue to contribute to their communities through paid employment or voluntary work, if they so choose, and be engaged in the political process.



Communication and information

Staying connected with events and people and getting timely, practical information to manage life and meet personal needs is vital for active aging. Age Friendly communities have relevant information that is readily accessible to older people with varying capacities and resources.



Community and health

Health and support services are essential for maintaining health and independence in the community. Civil society can provide a role in supporting the health of the community. The WHO checklist focuses on the aspects within the scope of Age Friendly.

An Age Friendly Baseline

The number of older people aged 65+ is projected to rise in Ards and North Down, from around 31,000 in 2014 to around 50,000 by 2030. The number of older people ages 85+ is anticipated to more than double from just under 4,000 in 2014 to about 10,000 by 2039.

Figure 3 provides an Age Friendly profile for Ards and North Down.

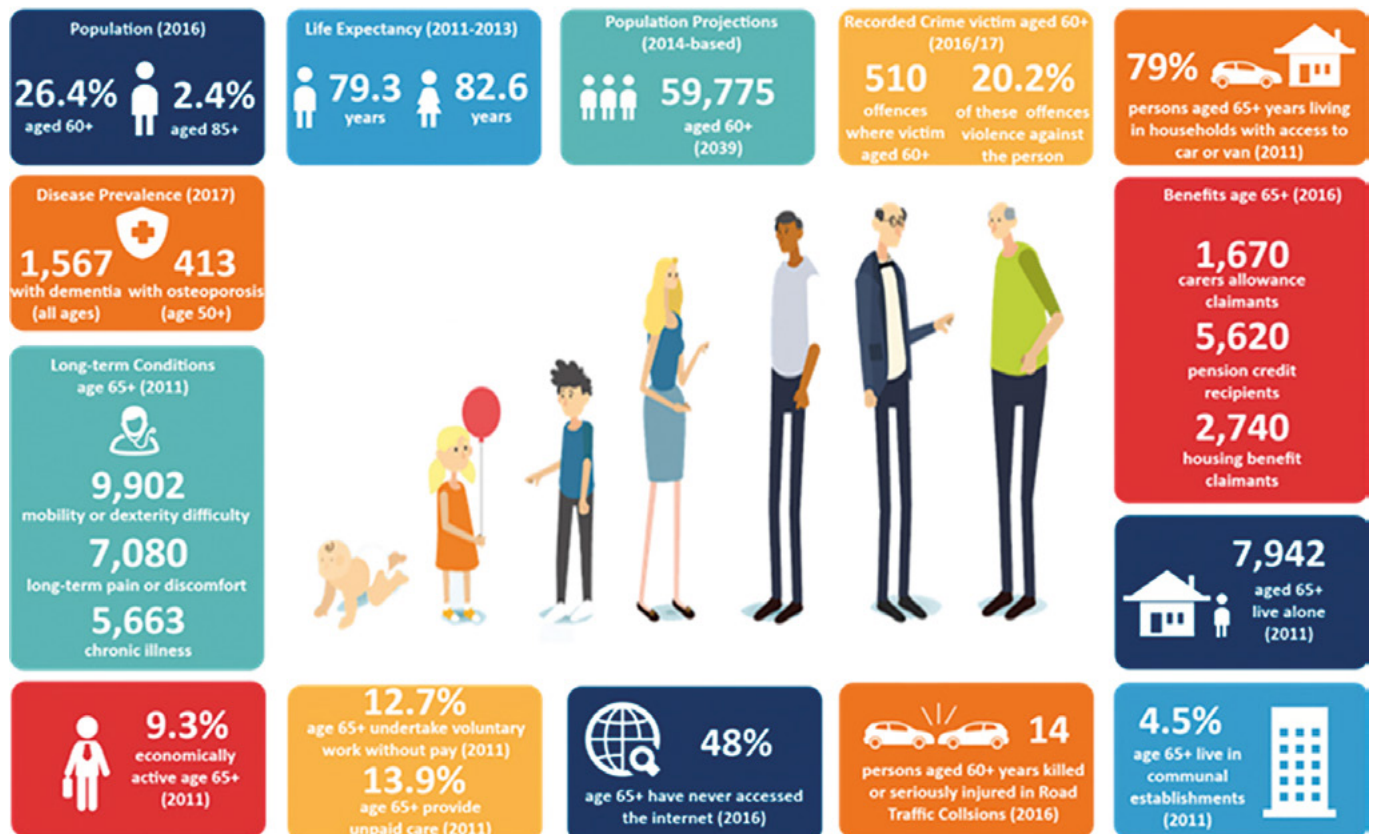


Figure 3: Statistical Evidence Baseline [Source: NISRA]

The shift in age structure, as more people live for longer, means that retirement, pensions and other social benefits, along with healthcare requirements, tend to extend over longer periods of time. In short, our society needs to plan for the needs of a much larger older population. This is not something that can wait. This is a pressing challenge that requires a thoughtful and comprehensive response.

What you told us was important

AF Domains	Feedback
Outdoor spaces and Buildings	More outdoor gyms and shared access to community leisure facilities; communicate more about outdoor spaces available for recreational use; consider how people without transport can access spaces for walking; and improve the aesthetics of town and village centres.
Transport	Older people need additional transport support especially in rural areas; people living outside of town centres who rely on public transport have less access to services for health and recreation; transport provision needs to be mapped to services available; and transport needs to be provided outside of core hours.
Housing	Most older people want to stay in their own home and more consideration is needed on building homes for life; more information and advice on services and housing issues; dementia friendly housing; more social housing; and retirement villages for those over 60 who don't require a fold setting or nursing care.
Social Participation	Participation in social, recreational, creative and leisure activities are essential to good health and mental wellbeing; consider all disabilities as factors when considering the location of urban and rural services; promote intergenerational work; more social prescribing; and support to reduce fear of social media and online banking.
Respect and Inclusion	We need an "its ok to grow older" campaign to remove the stigma of ageing; lots of opportunities to support and promote active and positive ageing; look at the barriers to why older people feel isolated; and research how social exclusion impacts on mental health and wellbeing.
Civic Participation	Volunteers are important but the infrastructure around volunteering needs properly resourced; support services are needed to provide older people with opportunities to train, acquire skills, develop interview skills and consider reasons for economic inactivity; and need to celebrate and recognise people for the contributions they make.
Communication and Information	Personal interaction with service providers is important as only using digital communication and information leaflets can increase isolation; service providers need to work together to share how they provide public information; and people need to feel motivated by what is being communicated.
Community and Health	Cookery classes and community drop-in sessions can be used to help build community capacity; care in the community sessions improve the value, dignity and respect of those who require help and support; and community service providers need to work more closely with health providers to develop initiatives that address health and wellbeing.



Action Plan

The Age Friendly Action Plan 2019-2022 contains actions that will enable Age Friendly Alliance members to work towards the aspirations set out within this Strategy. The actions with this document are constantly under review, including proposed leads and potential support organisations, and will be updated and added to over the lifespan of the Strategy.



Actions	Proposed Action Lead	Potential Action Support	Link to the Big Plan
1 Accessibility and walkability audits of public spaces e.g. Green Flag Parks, Town Centres and Village Centres	Ards and North Down Borough Council	Belfast Health Cities NI Housing Executive Guide Dogs for the Blind Dementia NI Disability NI AGEnda National Trust	C 5.1.2
2 Review provision of public toilets and accessible toilets for older people, people with disabilities and for families	Ards and North Down Borough Council	SEHSCT National Trust	C 1.2.2
3 Address concerns raised by older people in the development of public realm schemes in relation to the provision of drop kerbs, resurfacing of footpaths, seating and lighting	Department for Infrastructure and Department for Communities	Ards and North Down Borough Council	F 5.3.3 F 5.3.4
4 Survey public buildings using Age Friendly check list and undertake works to make them more Age Friendly	Ards and North Down Borough Council	SEHSCT Libraries NI PSNI NI Housing Executive	C 1.2.2
5 Increase opportunities for outdoor recreation through increase walking routes (linear and circular)	Ards and North Down Borough Council	Peninsula Healthy Living Outdoor Recreation NI	B 5.1.1



Actions	Proposed Action Lead	Potential Action Support	Link to the Big Plan
1 Collaborate to ensure actions related to transport infrastructure are integrated and cohesive	Translink	DfI Down Community Transport Disability Action Travel	F 5.2.4
2 Dementia friendly training for bus drivers (and front-line staff in partner organisations)	Translink	PSNI Ards and North Down Borough Council Ards and North Down Borough Council	C 1.2.2
3 Lobbying by community transport organisations to ensure transport is accessible and helps address social isolation	Community Transport Association	Ards and North Down Borough Council Down Community Transport Disability Action	F 5.2.4
4 Improve the experience of disabled and older passengers through improvements to fleet standards, infrastructure and staff training	Translink	Down Rural Community Transport Disability Transport DfI	F 5.2.4





Actions	Proposed Action Lead	Potential Action Support	Link to the Big Plan
1 Deliver affordable, quality homes to meet the needs of people as they age	NIHE	Clanmill Radius	F 5.2.6
2 Put in place measures to heighten older people’s awareness of housing options, and potential housing solutions available through promotion of the availability of Disabled Facilities Grants for private home owners to make sure they can stay in their own homes for as long as is feasible	NIHE	Clanmill Radius	F 5.2.6
3 Promote digital inclusion to support older persons to sustainable tenancies and reduce social isolation	NIHE	Clanmill Radius	F 5.2.6
4 Invest in social housing stock to reduce fuel poverty and increase energy efficiency, and promote warm homes scheme	NIHE	Clanmill Radius Ards and North Down Borough Council	F 5.2.6
5 Implement measure to minimise injuries and deaths caused by home accidents, including fires, particularly for those most at risk	Ards and North Down Borough Council	NIFRS PHA SEHSCT	D 3.2.5





Actions	Proposed Action Lead	Potential Action Support	Link to the Big Plan
1 Ensure events are applicable to a wide age profile and consideration is given on location, cost and time of day	Ards and North Down Borough Council	Agenda National Trust	C 1.2.2
2 Prioritise social isolation within the community planning process and identify exemplar initiatives	Strategic Community Planning Partnership	SEHSCT Libraries NI Churches Enabling Seniors	C 1.2.3
3 Develop programmes that support people and encourage them to adopt more active lifestyles resulting in better health outcomes	South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust	Ards and North Down Borough Council	B 2.2.2
4 Improve access to the natural and historic environment	Ards and North Down Borough Council	National Trust	C 5.1.2
5 Run a social prescribing pilot that will benefit from the development of a community directory	Peninsula Healthy Living		B 2.1.1
6 Provide opportunities for arts participation and recognise the contribution arts makes to wellbeing	Ards and North Down Borough Council	SEHSCT	C 1.2.5
7 Audit of existing older people's toolkit	SEHSCT		C 1.2.3
8 Participate in national days celebrating older people	AGenda	Ards and North Down Borough Council PHA SEHSCT	C 1.2.2





Actions	Proposed Action Lead	Potential Action Support	Link to the Big Plan
1 Implement programmes that will ensure Ards and North Down is a friendly and welcoming place for everyone – Age Friendly, dementia friendly, disability friendly and autism friendly	Ards and North Down Borough Council	Libraries NI Linking Generations Agenda Alzheimer's Society Dementia NI	C 1.2.2
2 Increase number of places accredited and people trained as Dementia friendly, Autism friendly, Disability friendly, etc	Alzheimer's Society	Dementia NI Ards and North Down Borough Council Disability Action Autism NI Equality Commission for NI	C 1.2.2
3 Increase awareness of JAM cards, Brain Injury cards, etc; promote and distribute	Dementia NI	Alzheimer's Society Headway	C 1.2.2
4 Promote a positive image of growing older	AGEnda	Ards and North Down Borough Council Age NI	C 1.2.2
5 Support work on intergenerational practice in schools, community youth groups, etc	Linking Generations	Education Authority Ards and North Down Borough Council	A 1.1.2
6 Protect vulnerable people by implementing initiatives to reduce crime against older people and to reduce the fear of crime	PSNI	Ards and North Down Borough Council Linking Generations AGEnda PCSP	D 3.2.2





Civic participation

Actions	Proposed Action Lead	Potential Action Support	Link to the Big Plan
1 Increase civic involvement and inspire communities to take ownership of their local environment including local management and delivery arrangements	Ards and North Down Borough Council	Department for Communities Keep NI Beautiful	C 5.2.1
2 Continue to give older people a voice through support of the Pensioners Parliament and the Over 50s Council	Agenda	Commissioner for Older People Ards and North Down Borough Council	C 1.2.2
3 Ensure people of all ages are represented on consultative panels such as Disability Forum, Arts and Heritage panel, Sports Forum, etc	Ards and North Down Borough Council		C 1.2.2





Communication and information

Actions	Proposed Action Lead	Potential Action Support	Link to the Big Plan
1 Use POP NI to signpost older people to services (regional approach) and Age Friendly Alliance members to regularly update with their information to ensure it remains relevant	SEHSCT	All Alliance Members	C 1.2.2
2 Consider how a localised directory could help communicate what is happening for older people	Ards and North Down Borough Council	SEHSCT Peninsula Healthy Living	C 1.2.2
3 Regularly review Borough Magazine and website content to consider accessibility of information for everyone	Ards and North Down Borough Council		C 1.2.2
4 Make information available in hard copy and where possible easy read and audible versions	Ards and North Down Borough Council	SEHSCT	C 1.2.2





Actions	Proposed Action Lead	Potential Action Support	Link to the Big Plan
1 Develop programmes and support people to encourage them to make better health choices	PHA	SEHSCT Community organisations	B 2.1.3
2 Work with service providers to ensure that older people are prepared for emergency events	Red Cross	SEHSCT Ards and North Down Borough Council	C 1.2.3
3 Create a community of lifesavers by strengthening the chain of survival	NI Ambulance Service	Ards and North Down Borough Council Education Authority Businesses Sport NI	B 2.1.4
4 Support service providers to deliver practical help to those experiencing poverty – food, fuel and income	AND Poverty Forum	Ards and North Down Borough Council	I 4.1.3
5 Relaunch the Message in a Bottle campaign to ensure important medical and contact information is readily available	Ards and North Down Borough Council	NIAS	C 1.2.2
6 Engage with Frailty Network to improve outcomes for prevention and for those living with frailty	PHA	SEHSCT Ards and North Down Borough Council AGEnda	C 1.2.2



Measuring the impact of the Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan

How are we going to measure the impact of the Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan? The actions set out in the plans across pages 10 – 17 contain a link to a Performance Scorecard used to measure the impact of Community Planning. Formal reporting of the implementation of this Strategy and Action Plan will take place via these existing mechanisms.

Age Friendly Alliance members will review the Age Friendly actions alongside the community planning actions to avoid duplication and achieve more collaborative outcomes.

During Age Friendly Alliance meetings, a record will be kept of the specific Age Friendly actions being undertaken by members using the template below.

Alliance Member	Activity (summary of progress)	WHO Theme	Link to the Big Plan
eg Ards and North Down Borough Council	Inclusive beach being developed at Groomsport – funding secured, and facilities to be developed by 31 March 2019 Outdoor spaces and buildings	Outdoor spaces and buildings	C 5.1.2 B 5.1.1

This record will be used to communicate to stakeholders on activities that are taking place to make Ards and North Down a welcoming place for everyone

Ongoing consultation and feedback

Age Friendly and community Planning engagement will continue to be linked to avoid consultation fatigue. Groups, such as the Over 50s Council, will be offered opportunities to provide feedback and practical engagement on individual actions within the plan.

Members of the Age Friendly Alliance who contributed to the development of this Strategy and Action Plan

AGEnda

Alzheimer's Society

Ards and North Down Borough Council (ANDBC)

Dementia NI

Department of Finance

Enabling Seniors

Guide Dogs NI

Libraries NI

Linking Generations NI

National Trust

Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE)

Policing and Community Safety (PCSP)

Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)

Public Health Agency (PHA)

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT)

Sport NI

Translink

Glossary of terms

Strategic Community Planning Partnership

Strategy leaders from public sector organisation who are working together to deliver the Big Plan for Ards and North Down.

The Big Plan for Ards and North Down

Also known as the Big Plan or the Community Plan. A document setting out a 15-year vision for Ards and North Down that all members of Strategic Community Planning Partnership are working towards achieving.

The Big Conversation

A survey associated with the Big Plan to gather feedback from the public on issues that are important to them.

Age Friendly Alliance

A group of specialist organisations who are collectively working together to make sure Ards and North Down is a great place to live and grow older.

Age Friendly Domains

Thematic domains agreed by the World Health Organisation that should be considered as part of the application to be designated 'Age Friendly'

World Health Organisation

The World Health Organisation (WHO) is a specialised agency of the United Nations that is concerned with international public health. The WHO Global Network for Age Friendly Cities and Communities was established to foster the exchange of experience and mutual learning between cities and communities worldwide.

Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA)

A performance measurement tool considered with the impact of actions rather than just that they have taken place.

Performance Scorecard

A method for recording and reporting on actions using OBA

Thematic Wellbeing Groups

Community planning groups used to review the progress of community planning actions and agree reports on progress to be presented to the Strategic Community Planning Partnership.



Age Friendly
**Ards and
North Down**

A great place to live and grow older



Age Friendly
**Ards and
North Down**



**Community
and health**



**Communication
and information**



**Civic
participation**



**Respect and
inclusion**



**Social
participation**



Housing



Transport



**Outdoor spaces
and buildings**

The Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan is being led by Ards and North Down Borough Council with funding from the Public Health Agency



**Public Health
Agency**

Project Supported by the PHA



**Ards and
North Down**
Borough Council