

**Tipperary Age Friendly Strategy 2018- 2022**

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**1. Introduction**

The country’s older population is increasing with people living longer and healthier lives. This is a trend that is being seen across the developed world. The Government launched the National Positive Ageing Strategy in 2013 in preparation for this demographic shift and it set out four goals:

* remove barriers to participation and provide more opportunities for the continued involvement of people as they age in all aspects of cultural, economic and social life in their communities according to their needs, preferences and capacities;
* support people as they age to maintain, improve or manage their physical and mental health and wellbeing
* enable people to age with confidence, security and dignity in their own homes and communities for as long as possible
* support and use research about people as they age to better inform policy responses to population ageing in Ireland.

This National Strategy is rolling out at local level through the local authorities where ‘Age Friendly Programmes’ are being put in place, inspired by the Age Friendly Cities and Communities movement set up by the World Health Organisation in 2006.



**What is an Age Friendly County?**

The population of County Tipperary is ageing in line with national trends and this presents challenges as well as opportunities. It is about ageing with dignity, independence and self-fulfilment with older people connected and engaged in all aspects of life. It is about nurturing the relationships between young and old and ensuring that older people feel safe, respected and valued in their communities. It is about preparing and managing retirement, pensions, social benefits and services so that older people have an adequate income and are assured of timely and quality services. It is about recognising the potential and opportunities offered by an ageing population and harnessing this potential for the betterment of the individual, the community and the county.

An Age Friendly County therefore is a county ‘that recognises the great diversity among older people and promotes their inclusion in all areas of community life. It is a county that respects their decisions and lifestyle choices and anticipates and responds to related needs and preferences’ (Age Friendly Ireland).

Tipperary County Council signalled its commitment to being an Age Friendly County by signing the Dublin Declaration in 2014.[[1]](#footnote-1) It undertook to progress actions that will improve the quality of life of older people, strengthen and sustain their systems and services and promote a culture of innovation that will foster growth and development.

**What is Involved?**

The Local Community Development Committee of Tipperary County Council is leading out on the Age Friendly County process. It is currently setting up a Health and Wellbeing Working Group which will drive the implementation of this Strategy along with the other linked and related Strategies of Healthy Tipperary and Disability. This will be further bolstered by the establishment of an Older Persons Council in the County comprising of representatives from each of the 5 Municipal Districts and this will be linked into the Tipperary Public Participation Network (the countywide network of community and voluntary groups). QUESTION: WILL THE OLDER PERSONS COUNCIL BE REPRESENTATED ON THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING WORKING GROUP?

While this Strategy is particularly focused on older people and developing a more ‘Age Friendly Tipperary’, there are a number of existing policies and strategies in place that also stress a commitment to improving life for older people. They include:

* Healthy Tipperary Strategy 2018
* Tipperary Local Economic and Community Plan 2015-2020
* County Tipperary Local Development Strategy 2014-2020
* County Tipperary Corporate Plan
* Tipperary Sports Partnership Strategy
* Tipperary Library Strategy
* Tipperary Joint Policing Strategy 2015-2021
* Tipperary Heritage Plan
* Tipperary Tourism Strategy
* Tipperary Digital Strategy
* Tipperary Arts Strategy
* RAPID Plans
* Community Action Plans

The Age Friendly Tipperary Strategy will reference and incorporate commitments in these other plans ensuring that existing commitments are supported and delivered upon. The Strategy will build on the experience of the work done to date by different organisations around the county who are involved with improving the ageing experience for older people.

**Report Overview**

The next section of the report provides the context for this Strategy setting out the current socio-economic picture of Tipperary (drawing from Census 2016 data) and where possible, highlighting the issues that affect older people and where the areas of greatest need present themselves. This assists in tighter targeting of resources and identifies particular areas or issues that require greater attention.

Section 3 is the body of the Report and starts by setting out the vision and objectives for an Age Friendly County. The remaining section is structured around eight themes that the Age Friendly Cities and Counties Programme consider to be central in building age friendly environments. They are (1) Outdoor Spaces and Buildings ((2) Transportation (3) Housing (4) Respect and Social Inclusion (5) Social Participation (6) Civic Participation and Employment (7) Communication and Information (8) Community Support and Health Services.

Each of these themes are detailed below and draw on a number of research sources (a) the Healthy and Positive Ageing Initiative (HaPAI) which is a joint programme run by the Department of Health, HSE and Atlantic Philanthropies with a subsequent research report produced for Tipperary County[[2]](#footnote-2) (b) consultation exercises that have been carried out for recent, related strategies and plans including Health Tipperary Strategy, RAPID Plans for the 3 areas in Tipperary, the Local Economic and Community Development Plan (including submissions) and the Local Development Strategy.

The suggested actions are a combination of actions already included in existing strategies and plans and new actions developed as a response to the issues identified.

The final section of the Report outlines the implementation and monitoring arrangements.

**2: The Older Population in Tipperary**

Tipperary is the 6th largest county in Ireland with a population of 159,533 (2016), one of the most populated rural counties nationally. The majority of the population (58.4%) resides in a rural setting, while the remainder (41.6%) resides in an urban setting. The County has linkages to all of the major cities, airports and ports. Three railway links traverse the county connecting Tipperary to the urban centres of Waterford, Limerick, Cork, Tralee, Galway and Dublin. The county is served by an extensive road network with the M7 crossing the northern half of the county while the M8 crosses through the southern half linking with the N24 to Waterford. The largest town in the County is Clonmel (17,140 people) followed by Nenagh (8,968), Thurles (7,940) and Cashel (4,422). There is a mix of public and private buses that operate services along the main routes, linking the towns within the county and to the main urban centres outside the county. Local Link (the rural transport bus service) currently has 29 services, operating during the week, some running multiple times per day and others running once a week. The services from rural areas to all the towns Tipperary namely Clonmel, Cashel, Tipperary, Thurles, Nenagh, Roscrea and Templemore.

**2.1 Population Structure**

The proportion of people over the age of 65 is 15.29% (0r 24,398 people), higher than the State figure of 13.39%. This has increased since the 2011 census when 13.4% of the population were 65 years of age or over in the County. The greatest number of older people live in the towns of Clonmel (2,592), Thurles (1,392), Nenagh (1,198), Carrick-on-Suir (853) and Roscrea (731). But around the rest of the County, there are some settlements such as Clogheen, Ballyporeen and Toomevara where the populations may be small compared to the larger towns but where the proportion of older people as a % of the total population is over 20% i.e. nearly one in every four people is over the age of 65.

**Table 1: Proportion of older people as a % of total population**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Area** | **2016** | **2011** |
| Clogheen | 24.24% | 20.4% |
| Ballyporeen | 22.01% | 20.8% |
| Toomevara | 21.43% | 15.4% |
| Puckaun | 21.2% | 16.8% |
| Borrisokane | 19.64% | 17.5% |
| Templemore | 19.03% | 17.6% |
| Cappawhite | 18.95% | 16.8% |
| Templetouhy | 18.79% | 14.6% |
| Littleton | 18.02% | 16.3% |
| Killenaule | 17.94% |  |

**2.2 Age Dependency**

Age dependency rates show what proportion of the population is under the age of 15 and over the age of 65 as a percentage of the working population (defined as aged 15 – 64). The higher the age dependency rate, the greater the reliance on public services in these communities e.g. education, health services, family support. It is not only about percentages and services however. A vibrant community requires a mix of all ages from the very young to the very old generating economic and social activity – local businesses, services, crèches, schools, jobs, sporting clubs, community groups, social clubs – and it is this connectedness within communities and vibrancy that has the most positive impact on people’s health and wellbeing.

The age dependency ratio is 53.9% in the County, higher than the ratio recorded in the Mid-west or South East and also higher than the national figure of 49.3%. This has particular implication for service provision in the county with essentially one in every two persons not of a working age.

Looking at the old age dependency ratio (the over 65 year old age group as a percentage of the working population), it is 24.1% across the county (higher than the State average of 20.4%). Not surprisingly, it is highest in the places where there are greater proportions of older people reflecting the population structure table above.

**Table 1: Old Age Dependency Ratio (%)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Area** | **2016** | **2011** |
| Clogheen | 40.8% | 32.9% |
| Ballyporeen | 36.8% | 33.2% |
| Toomevara | 33.7% | 23.2% |
| Puckaun | 33.5% | 26.9% |
| Cappawhite | 32.3% | 26.5% |
| Borrisokane | 31.6% | 28.7% |
| Templemore | 30.7% | 27.2% |
| Ballynonty | 29.4% | 25.8% |
| Littleton | 28.5% | 26.4% |
| Silvermines | 28.5% | 25.7% |

The largest concentrations of older people reside in the towns across Tipperary but they have lower old age dependency ratios given the population numbers across the other age cohorts. Cashel (20.4%), Nenagh (20.7%), Roscrea (20.8%) are all in line with the national average of 20.4% but some of the other towns are slightly higher – Tipperary (25.7%), Clonmel (23.3%) and Carrick on Suir (22.8%).

**2.3 Family Structure**

Just over 10% of all families units are either ‘empty nesters’ (11.5%) or retired (11.1%) slightly higher than the state average of 10%. The areas of Rosegreen (22.2%), Dundrum (20.4%) and Clogheen (18.9%) have the highest proportions of ‘Empty Nesters’ while Puckaun (19.2%), Templetuohy (16.5%) and Templemore (15.8%) record the highest proportion of the population across the County who are retired. These numbers are relatively small however given the overall size of their population. The greatest numbers of Empty Nesters reside in the town of Clonmel (519), Thurles (212) and Nenagh (204) and those retired in Clonmel (524), Thurles (273) and Nenagh (228).

**2.4 Housing**

Nearly 30% of the households in Tipperary are owner occupied with a mortgage, slightly lower than the state average. Highest rates of home ownership were in Newport and Ballina. The rental picture shows that a total of 13.4% of the households in Tipperary were privately rented in 2016, lower than the state average of 18.2%. 9.6% of the households in Tipperary were renting from the local authority, slightly higher than the state average of 9.4%. Tipperary had the eighth highest rate of households social renting in the State and they are concentrated in main urban areas and towns – Fethard (26.9%), Templemore 26.1%, Tipperary (23.1%), Cashel (21%). (AIRO CYPSC Report)

**2.5 Deprivation**

Deprivation is essentially about the areas of the county that are deemed to be more affluent or disadvantaged.[[3]](#footnote-3) This data is derived nationally (Pobal HP Deprivation Index) and is driven by a range of variables including educational attainment, unemployment rates, demographic changes, lone parent rates and housing. The Deprivation Index score for both South Tipperary and North Tipperary was ‘marginally below the average’ (-4.4 and -2.1 respectively).

Drilling down further into the data, there are 135 ‘Small Areas’ designated as ‘disadvantaged’ and ‘very disadvantaged’. These are concentrated in the larger towns around the county. Of this 135, 21 small areas are designated as ‘very disadvantaged’ and include Littleton (-28.5), Tipperary East Urban (-26.4), Clonmel West Urban, Cashel Rural, Carrick on Suir Urban and Nenagh West Urban all record -25 on the ‘very disadvantaged’ deprivation index.

**2.6 Health & Disability**

The majority of people rated their health as either ‘good’ or ‘very good’ in the 2016 Census, similar to national averages. There is a slightly higher proportion of people with disabilities in the County (14.8%) than the national average (13.5%) but when drilling into the data, there are some areas of the county such as Clogheen and the Commons which record nearly double the County figure (see table below).

The proportion of people rating their health as ‘bad or ‘very bad’ amounted to 1.8% of the population (1.6% nationally). This was higher in some areas and corresponded in many instances to places where there are high proportions of people with a disability and also, interestingly, correspond to many of the areas where there are large proportions of older people (see Table 1).

Table X: % of people with a disability and % health rating

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Area | % of people with a disability | % of people who rate their health as ‘bad’ or ‘very bad’ |
| The Commons | 26.7 | 4 |
| Clogheen | 25.3 | 5.7 |
| Templetouhy | 23.4 | 2.5 |
| Toomevara | 23.2 | 3.6 |
| Silvermines | 22.9 | 3.8 |
| Mullinahone | 21.8 | 2.2 |
| Bansha | 21.6 | 4.5 |
| Ardfinnan | 21.2 | 2.6 |
| Killenaule | 20.1 | 4.2 |
| Rosegreen | 20.5 | 2.4 |

In South Tipperary, the trends in deaths caused by cancer, heart disease & stroke and respiratory diseases have all shown slight decreases since 2007 but deaths caused by injury and poisoning have increased slightly. Cancer rates in the south of the county have increased significantly since 2009. Female incidence of all cancers and colorectal cancers is the highest nationally. Men in South Tipperary show above average rates of prostate cancer but have low rates of colorectal cancer.

North Tipperary has a higher than average death rate for all the main causes of death (heart disease & stroke, cancer, injuries and poisonings) except deaths due to respiratory disease. Men have a higher incidence of incidence of colorectal cancer in this area than the national average but for all other cancers, the incidence is average or below the national rate.

**2.7 Mental Health & Wellbeing**

The Healthy Ireland Survey 2016 states that men report higher positive mental health scores than women on the Mental Health Index (69.8 and 65.9 respectively)[[4]](#footnote-4). Higher positive mental health was reported among younger people more so than older people and those living in Dublin report lower scores on the Mental Health Index than those living elsewhere (79.8 and 85.2 respectively). (Healthy Ireland Survey, 2016).

A recent report from the Institute of Public Health states that chronic loneliness affects approximately 10% of older people and the factors that influence loneliness include health, depressive symptoms and a range of individual factors (age, gender, education, poverty, personality) as well as environmental factors (low population density in a rural location, impoverished neighbourhoods), (Loneliness and Ageing, Ireland North and South, 2016). The groups most at risk of loneliness include members of the LGBT community, individuals living with dementia or cognitive impairment, those with a physical disability, mobility issues or intellectual disability, carers and individuals from ethnic minorities.

The Task Force on Loneliness in a recent report says:

* 37% of people aged 50 and over reported feeling lonely some of the time. This figure rises as people get older (45% of 70 year olds and older)
* loneliness was higher for divorced or separated people and lower for married and lowest for single people
* there is a clear and significant correlation between low-socio-economic status and loneliness; loneliness is less likely to occur among those on higher incomes with access to transport.

It also clearly sets out the health risks associated with loneliness and they include:

* older people experiencing high levels of loneliness are almost twice as likely to die within six years compared to those who are not lonely
* loneliness increases the risk of death by 26%, lack of social connections increases the risk of death by 29% and living along increases risk of death by 32%
* loneliness has been associated with a broad range of adverse psychological conditions including: anxiety, depression, substance abuse, social deviance, lower social skills, a more critical view of self and perfectionism
* loneliness can increase risk of heart disease and impede recover rates from stroke
* loneliness has been linked to a wide variety of mental and physical health outcomes such as depression, nursing home admission and mortality
* loneliness in older people was found to affect cardiovascular health and sleep quality negatively
* lonely people suffer disproportionately with mental health issues, cognitive decline, hypertension and are more likely to be admitted for residential or nursing care

**2.8 Connectivity**

Just over one in ten people have no motor car in the County (13.3%) which is slightly lower than the State average of 15.2%. Unfortunately, this data cannot be broken down across age groups but it is broken down across areas with a high proportion of the population (one in every four persons) with no access to a car. Looking at the other way people access services or connect with others e.g. online, a quarter of the population in the County have no broadband (25.2%) which is higher than the national figure of 18.4%. A further 11.6% access the internet through ‘other’ means e.g. There are some areas that are particularly at risk of isolation with high proportions of the population that have neither a car or access to the internet. These include Tipperary where 31.6% do not have a car and 33% have no broadband access; Toomevara where 29% have no car and nearly half the population (47.3%) have no broadband access; The Commons where 29% have no car and 40% with no broadband; Ballyporeen and Rosegreen also high percentage with no broadband.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Area** | **% with no Motor Car** | **% with no Broadband**  |
| Tipperary  | 31.6 | 33.1 |
| Toomevara | 29 | 47.3 |
| The Commons | 28.3 | 39.6 |
| Carrick on Suir  | 28 | 28.3 |
| Templemore | 27.1 | 32.6 |
| Roscrea | 23 | 25.6 |
| Cappawhite | 23 | 35.8 |
| Mullinahone | 22.5 | 29.8 |
| Clonmel | 22.1 | 22.4 |
| Killenaule | 22.1 | 39.5 |
| Littleton | 21.6 | 42 |
| Ballyporeen | 19 | 48.6 |
| Ballynonty | 20 | 36.7 |
| Templetuohy | 17.5 | 43 |
| Silvermines | 13.8 | 38.8 |
| Rosegreen | 10.8 | 41.9 |
| Clogheen | 21 | 32.7 |

While data is not available across age groups, if this table is cross-referenced with the age profile and dependency in section 2.1, the areas with the greatest proportion of older people residing are also the ones with the highest levels of no car ownership and the highest rates of no broadband: Clogheen; Ballyporeen; Toomevara; Templemore; Cappawhite; Templetouhy; Littleton and Killenaule. It could be suggested therefore, that older people living in these areas are particularly isolated from a transport/ digital connectivity point of view. It should also be mentioned that the populations in some of these settlement areas are small. The numbers of people with no car or no internet are greater in the County towns of Clonmel, Nenagh and Thurles as they have larger populations.

**Chapter 3 Tipperary – A Great County to Grow Old**

**3.1 Vision of the Tipperary Age Friendly Strategy**

Tipperary is an age friendly county where the inclusion of older people is promoted, valued and actively encouraged in all areas of community life, where they are supported to live independently with confidence, security and dignity in their homes for as long as possible and where they are actively encouraged to maintain, improve and manage their health and wellbeing.

**Objectives of the Tipperary Age Friendly Strategy**

* to ensure older people feel connected and engaged with their local community
* to identify opportunities for older people to engage with their County economically, culturally and socially
* to ensure greater accessibility to shops, services, amenities and buildings
* to promote positive health and wellbeing as people age
* to ensure timely, quality and accessible services are in place to support older people to live independently in their own homes
* to promote a positive attitude to ageing and address stereotypes
* to work with and within existing community structures, businesses, networks and service providers in the County to enhance communications and build awareness of the needs of older people
* to build the capacity of older people to effectively engage with the systems, services and decisions that affect them

**3.2 Themes of the Tipperary Age Friendly Strategy**

**Theme 1: Outdoor Spaces and Buildings**

**Goal:** to ensure that older people in Tipperary can access the services they need in a timely manner, that they feel connected and safe in their local community and they have the opportunity to participate in the many activities that Tipperary has to offer.

**Why is this important:**

The design and maintenance of a community’s built environment can make the difference between a healthy and active lifestyle. One of the key issues emerging from all the various consultations and plans among the people of Tipperary and particularly older people, is the decline of villages and towns leading feelings of isolation and disconnection. This was particularly reflected in the LECP consultation process with decline expressly linked to feelings of safety and security. The way an area looks and how safe it feels has a big impact on older people’s confidence (safety and security is dealt with in Theme 3 – Housing)

While people see the closure of shops, pubs, post offices as significant in this regard, the other major change is the moving of services from a physical presence in the local community to an online presence. This presents its own challenges for people in the older age bracket and for service providers. The local Community and Social Inclusion Plan that fed into the LECP notes that ‘in reality, not all services can be provided in each community or settlement but it is reasonable for all communities and citizens to expect that they have reasonable access to such services … whilst it is important that such [services] are available online, it is also important that they can be accessed where necessary by bus or other form of public transport’ (pg. 61).

**HAPAI Tipperary Survey Findings**

Many people in the survey reported that services were not available in their local area i.e. a 15 minute walk from their home.

Shops, community centres and postal services were most likely to be available while a cinema or theatre, public transport and banking services were the least likely to be available.

Where services were available in the local area, some were easier to access than others - banking (22%), Garda station (21%) and public transport (21%) were most difficult and postal services/ shops the easiest.

11% of people in Tipperary (compared to 15% in other areas) reported having great difficulty accessing one or more of the essential services such as postal, banking or health services within their area. There was a significant age difference – 17% of those aged over 70 had great difficulty compared to 9% of those aged 55-69

7% of people had great difficulty and a further 21% had some difficulty accessing social services such as cinemas, restaurants or public libraries.

The services that were least likely to be available were cinema or other entertainment (not available for 31%) and the public library (16%). The services with the most widespread availability were postal services (available for 96%) and supermarkets (available for 93%).

Banking services were reported as difficult to access by 19% compared to 25% in other areas.

89% Tipperary like living in Tipperary a lot and a further 3% like it a little.

76% are satisfied with the general appearance and upkeep

64% of people are dissatisfied with the availability of accessible toilets (many people in rural areas did not respond to this question).

Half (50%) of people in Tipperary are happy with the availability of seats and resting places

60% are satisfied with the availability or effectiveness of traffic calming measures and 30% are dissatisfied

54% are satisfied with paths and pavements.

**Key Issues from Consultations:**

* Rural isolation and loneliness is a key issue fuelled by the withdrawal of services, the decline of infrastructure and an ageing rural population.
* Access to amenities and opportunities to participate in physical activity is important for people with mobility challenges in a way that is affordable and safe (wheelchair access, walking trails, looped walks, public parks, cycle paths). In rural areas, often the only local amenity is the local sports pitch as it is too dangerous to walk or cycle on the roads.
* Safety when walking and cycling – paths are often not wide enough, surfaces are poor, lighting was poor or non-existent in many urban areas; walking on rural roads is particularly dangerous, particularly for people who do not wear high viz jackets; cycle lanes were few and far between leading to frustration for both motorist and cyclist.

**Action 1.1: Develop Village/ Town Infrastructure**

Develop the physical layout of villages and towns, in conjunction with local people, to identify requirements for footpaths, ramps, pedestrian crossings, seating, lighting, public toilets, bus shelters, convenient older people’s parking spaces, cutting back hedges etc. Undertake capital improvement works based on these reviews to ensure people feel safe when out and about. This should be undertaken in line with AFI and the National Disability Authority’s (NDA) recommendations for walk ability audits building on the work done to date by Tipperary County Council in this regard. Particular priority should be given to the towns/ villages with high deprivation levels (RAPID Towns of Tipperary, Clonmel and Carrick-on-Suir among others) and in villages with significant proportion of older people (Clogheen, Ballyporeen, Toomevara, Borrisokane among others).

Lead Partner: Tipperary County Council

Support Partners: Tipperary Age Friendly Alliance

 Older Person’s Council

 Private Sector

 PPN and Community Voluntary Organisation

 Age friendly Ireland

Link to Plans: LECP; Healthy Tipperary Strategy

**Action 1.2 Improve Accessibility in Shops and Services**

Promote the need for improved accessibility in shops, restaurants and services and encourage age friendly supports such as seating and hand rails. This should also include access to toilets in both public and private buildings and existing business and public services should be identified that will facilitate the use of their facilities to people of all ages.

Lead Partner: Tipperary Age Friendly Alliance

Support Partners: Tipperary Older Persons Council

 Private Sector

Business community including Chamber of Commerce and Local Enterprise Office

Link to Plans: LECP

**Action 1.3: Improve Access to Recreational Facilities**

Review the provision of parks, public gardens, walking tracks and recreational areas in the county to ensure they are available and accessible for older people and others with possible mobility issues (wheelchairs/ buggies). Amend promotional literature accordingly to reflect which of these are accessible. Promote the use of existing recreation and green spaces and identify areas that have potential for age friendly adult exercise equipment and tone zone to increase the activity levels among older people. Encourage participation in existing activity programmes and sporting organisations to identify areas and locations for scale up and sustainability (targeting and link in Community Facilities Audit). This should include promotion of gentle activity programmes for people in long term care facilities and day care centres.

Lead Partner: Tipperary Sports Partnership

Support Partners: Health Service Executive

 Tipperary County Council

 Community and voluntary sector

 Older Person’s Council

 LIT and ETB

 Sporting organisations

Link to Plans: Healthy Tipperary

Tipperary Sports Partnership Strategy

Tipperary County Council

Coillte

**Action 1.4: Ensure Timely Access to Services**

While it may not be possible to provide services in every community as the Local and Social Inclusion Plan notes above, it is reasonable to ensure timely access to these services. The issue of transport and links with service provision is central here (see Action proposed under Transport Theme). The sustainability of essential services and the threat of closure or withdrawal is significant concern for older people (the recent announcement of closure of post offices a case in point). Tipperary Age Friendly Alliance will work with older people to identify solutions to risk of service loss at local level and identify ways in which to channel concerns and demand for services. This could include devising local solutions such as route planning, awareness raising around service timetables and enabling older people to speak with key stakeholders around service retentions.

Lead Partner: Tipperary County Council

Support Partners: Tipperary Age Friendly Alliance

Tipperary Older Persons Council

An Post

An Garda Siochana

Financial Institutions

Transport Providers

Business Community

Community and Voluntary Groups

Local Enterprise Office

HSE

Link to Plans: LECP

**Expected Outcomes:**

* Older people are supported through local community improvements and amenity development to enjoy more active and health lifestyles
* Enhanced awareness among shop owners and services providers about age friendly supports they can take advantage of
* Older people will feel safe out and about in their local community so they feel confident to engage and participate more thereby reducing loneliness and isolation
* Retention of essential services particularly in rural areas
* Ensure continued access to services by providing catalyst supports such as transport connectivity

**Theme 2: Transportation**

**Goal:**

To provide affordable and accessible transport options for older people so that they have the opportunity to engage and participate to a greater extent in economic, cultural social life in the County. This will be done through a more co-ordinated approach to the use of current transport resources, exploring alternative transport options and better promotion of the importance of transport as an essential part of older people’s lives.

**Why is it important:**

Good access to transport makes it easier to participate in community life. In Ireland, around a third of people living in rural areas have difficulty in accessing essential services because of poor transport services. People who depend on others for help with transport tend to prioritise essential outings, such as grocery shopping and medical appointments, and neglect their social and leisure needs.

The Local Link Tipperary (LLT) currently has 61 services/ routes operating during the week running to various destinations and local towns. The service covers 70% of Tipperary County with new services being looked at over the next few years in order to cover the remaining areas that are not currently served. In Tipperary, one in ten people have no motor car in the County (13.3%) with this figure rising to over 20% in some areas like Tipperary Town, The Commons, Templemore, and Roscrea. The HAPAI survey figures below show that where people do have a car, their driving reduces substantially as they get older. This constricting of participation in economic and social life as people age contributes to the feeling of loneliness and isolation. As people begin to feel more vulnerable, this affects their confidence which in turn, slowly begins to inhibit their desire or their ability to get out and about. Essential services in their community such as the shop, bank, post office, bank, library – these are all ways older people can continue to connect with their local community. But where these services are disappearing and the challenge of accessing them in larger centres looms, an alternative way for people to engage has to be found and central to this is affordable and accessible transport network.

**HAPAI Survey Findings**

The majority (61%) of people age 55 and over are current drivers. The number of current drivers among the 55-69 age group is lower than in other counties (78%).

23% of over 70s had reduced their driving in the past five years lower than the 34% in other counties who had reduced their driving.

The majority of people did not report any problems socialising because of transport issues (87% rarely or never) or doing essential tasks (88% rarely or never).

4.5% of the over 55s in Tipperary reported difficulties in socialising or essential tasks because of lack of transport and a further 7.7% had difficulty some of the time. However, this rose to 10% for over 55s who did not drive and 12% for those with walking difficulties.

3.3% of over 70s reported a difficulty attending health or social care appointments or doing essential tasks (most or all of the time) because of transport issues and a further 17% reported a difficulty some of the time.

One in five (20%) of people rated public transport in their locality as poor or very poor.

**Key Issues from Consultations:**

* Rural transport infrastructure is seen as weak across the county with poor connectivity in some areas and is cited as a barrier to accessing work, training, education and social activities
* Accessing services and urban centres for key needs can be a challenge for older people and this is particularly the case for health appointments
* Rural isolation and loneliness is a recurring concern particularly for people who live alone, with a declining infrastructure and services in rural areas compounding this feeling
* Safe walking and cycling routes are needed in villages and rural areas

**Action 2.1: Develop a Transport Plan**

The Local Transport Plan will cover the whole county and detail what the ideal transport service/connections should be in place to allow individuals access other services in the main towns and villages, what transport services/connections are currently available, and a roadmap on how to  bridge the difference include infrastructure such wheelchair accessible buses and bus stops, seating and shelter at bus stops, bike racks at bus shelters/bus stops. Services should be placed where the existing transport service/connections exist and developed in conjunction with the public transport providers with particular attention paid to vulnerable groups, such as older people, who are more reliant on public transport. While the Plan will map a way forward, the more immediate issue is that of improving the co-ordination of transport services around the county where connectivity is generally focused on larger towns and the emphasis needs to be placed on connecting people in rural areas.

Lead Agency: Tipperary County Council – C&E Section: Local Link Tipperary

Support Partners: Bus Eireann

National Transport Authority

Health Service Executive

Older Persons Council

Local Development Companies

Youth Groups

HSE

Community and Voluntary Sector

Chamber of Commerce

Private Transport Operators

SPC on Transportation and Travel

Local Enterprise Office

Link to Plans: Healthy Tipperary; LECP

**Action 2.2: Explore alternative Community Transport Provision Options**

Examine community transport models currently operating in other areas e.g. volunteer car schemes, affordable taxis, car pooling, car sharing, car buddy project and see if any can be implemented in the County, linking with Tipperary Local Link, the Volunteer Centre and other relevant organisations. Particular attention should be paid to facilitate getting people to medical appointments, shops and services and social activities. The use of HSE and school buses should also be examined to see if they could be integrated in the county wide transport network options.

Lead Agency: Tipperary County Council – C&E Section

Support Partners: Local Link Tipperary

 Tipperary Volunteer Centre

Bus Eireann

National Transport Authority

Health Service Executive

Older Persons Council

Local Development Companies

HSE

Community and Voluntary Sector

Chamber of Commerce

SPC on Transportation and Travel

Link to Plans: Healthy Tipperary; LECP

**Action 2.3: Advocating, Influencing and Promoting around Transport Issues for Older People**

Work with key stakeholders to influence planning policy and development management, linking with the Transport Plan, to enable: age friendly parking; appropriately located bus stops; adequate shelters and seating; clear timetables at stops; interconnectivity with services; scheduling of timetables and routes; a shop route to connect people to local businesses and services; urban transport loops; cognisance of transport to and from all future developments and builds. Better information and promotion is needed around the work of the Transport Co-ordination Unit and of the services and options available to people.

Lead Partner: Age Friendly Alliance

Support Partners: PPN

 Tipperary County Council – C&E section

 Local Link Tipperary

 Older Persons Council

Local Development Companies

Community and Voluntary Sector

Chamber of Commerce

Private Transport Operators

SPC on Transportation and Travel

Link to Plans: LECP

**Expected Outcomes:**

* A Tipperary Transport Plan developed with a particular focus on supporting access by older people to villages/ towns/ services
* Greater availability of transport options available throughout the county, particularly in rural areas
* A greater awareness among older people of the transport options available to them and among decision makers and programme designers about the importance of accessible transport in everyday lives.
* An increase in frequency and volume of transport options available to older people
* Increased passenger numbers
* Maximise efficiency and make use of vehicle downtime.

**Theme 3 Housing**

**Goal**: to provide a home environment which will support older people to live independently, safe and secure, and ensure they receive the necessary support and have options when independence is no longer possible.

**Why is it Important:**

As people age they spend more time in their own homes. This means that older people’s quality of life, and thus their health, can depend on the appropriateness of their home environment and the conditions in which they live e.g. better heating systems are known to lead to improved breathing and mental health for some older people. Older persons have specific housing requirements such as being in proximity to their family and social networks, the need for access to public and other essential services, recreation and amenities (links with Theme 1 & 2 above).

Across the country, there is a clear desire from people to grow old in their own home and community. This requires that, as people age, their homes are such that they can continue to live there in a manner that is safe, affordable and connected to the community where the supports and services they need are available.

Government policy is to support older people to live with dignity and independence in their own homes and communities for as long as possible. In terms of cost effectiveness, home care costs in Ireland are estimated to be consistently lower than hospitalisation. Rebuilding Ireland notes that ‘for many, living in adapted or specialists housing reduces reliance on health and social care services and can result in measurably improved health status and lower rates of hospital admissions’ (pg. 54).

The Tipperary County Development Plans (North and South) note that the elderly have certain housing requirements relating to access, medical case, security and personal safety, among other issues. In order to meet the housing demands of ageing population and to support independent living for elderly persons, the Plan notes that there will be a requirement for a combination of supported group/community housing, assisted living and residential care accommodation, and new housing to be delivered in a manner that will allow elderly persons to remain in their own homes and/or within their communities.

The other related issue around housing is safety and security. For many older people, the decision to age in their own community depends on whether they feel safe and secure at home and out and about (see Theme 1 above). The Tipperary Joint Policing Plan states that ‘where people face risks of violence and crime that threaten their physical safety, their quality of life is severely diminished’ and the perception of a threat and the resulting feelings of insecurity undermine a person’s quality of life and makes participation in their community difficult.

**HAPAI Survey Findings**

**Housing facilities, conditions and upkeep**

Overall, older people in Tipperary do not report many difficulties with their housing.

19% of people in Tipperary had problems with facilities[[5]](#footnote-5) – this is slightly lower than in other areas where 21% had such problems. The level of problem is slightly higher for those age over 70 (24%) in Tipperary – compared to 25% in other areas.

8.2% reported that their home does not have a downstairs toilet or bathroom facilities and 11% reported that their home was too big for their current needs. Among the over 70s this is a bigger problem (17%)

6% of people aged 55+ had difficulty keeping their house adequately warm in the last 12 months.

8% of the over 55s (compared to 10% in other areas) have problems with housing conditions. The most frequently reported problem is damp or leaks in walls or roof.

22% of people have problems with upkeep (the average in other areas was 31%). Among the over 70s it is a bigger problem with 30% experiencing problems.

28% of over 70s in both Tipperary and other counties had problems carrying out maintenance themselves and 23% had problems with the cost of maintenance.

**Housing preferences**

In general people are most positive about adapting their own homes and most negative about moving in with a relative.

42% were positive about moving into an adapted house and 44% were opposed to it. People over the age of 70 were a little more negative about moving to an adapted type of house (51%).

67% were negative about moving in with children and 17% would consider it.

33% of respondents would consider moving in with other older people but 55% were negative about this option. Again people aged over 70 were more negative – 28% were positive but 63% were against.

78% were negative about moving into a nursing home (similar to the average of 79%) and only 11% were positive about it.

**Safety and Security**

In general, the majority of people aged over 55 feel safe. The level of perception of safety ranges from 97% who feel safe (or very safe) at home during the day to 71% who feel safe out and about at night in Tipperary (64% in other areas).

There is a gender difference in the perception of safety – in Tipperary women are more than twice as likely to feel unsafe out and about at night (20% of women compared with 10.5% of men).

8.5%of respondents had an experienced that left them concerned about their personal safety - this compares to 14% in other areas.

**Key issues from Consultations:**

* Assistance is needed with garden maintenance, minor house repairs, smaller jobs like changing light bulbs, cleaning gutters etc. This is also supported by the HaPAI survey findings
* In most parts of County Tipperary there is a lack of options for older people, other than their own home or a nursing home. There is a need to provide more housing options with additional supports in local communities such as sheltered housing or modified homes.
* Anti-social behaviour arising from abuse of alcohol and drugs causes people to feel unsafe in their own homes
* Burglary, theft and drug possession are areas of priority concern for the guards and residents
* The people in Tipperary Town expressed particular concern around security for those who are living alone with the feeling that older people are particularly targeted
* Poverty, particularly hidden poverty among the elderly, with fuel poverty a particular area of concern affecting people’s ability to stay warm.
* The need to feel safe and secure in a person’s home emerged strongly during the JPC consultation process
* Safety and security is a recurring them in consultations, in particular for those living alone in isolated rural areas. Anti-social behaviour in the local community, often linked to mis-use of alcohol and drugs, cause people to feel unsafe in their own home.

**Action 3.1 Age Proof Housing in Tipperary**

The County Development Plans North and South commits to facilitate the provision of accommodation to meet the needs of the elderly, those people who wish to continue living at home with a little support (which from the HAPAI survey is the majority) and those that may wish or may need to have more support through supported housing or residential care. There are a number of specific actions that will take place in this regard (a) provide a support service to assist people with the home modifications and filling out paper work with respect to same (b) review Tipperary Housing Strategy to ensure that future builds and developments are mindful of Age Friendly principles, particularly in relation to location, proximity to amenities and health care facilities, transport and community services (c) incorporate universal design guidelines into future planning applications (d) highlight the importance of town centre location and access to services including zoning urban centres within Local Area Plans for partial provision of older persons housing (e) proactively work with Voluntary Housing Bodies to promote the development of increased social housing schemes and co-identifying suitable sites and locations.

Lead Partner: Tipperary County Council – Housing Section

Support Partners: Age Friendly Ireland

 Tipperary County Council – Planning Section

 Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government

 Centre of Excellence on Universal Design

 Private Developers

 Voluntary Housing Bodies

 Older Persons Council

Link to Existing Plans: County Development Plans – North and South

**Action 3.2: Establish a House Repairs and Trustworthy Trade Service**

Trust in trades people entering homes is particularly important for older people along with the issue of affordability. Jobs that can appear small such as changing light bulbs, fixing shelves, moving furniture etc. are important to people who can no longer easily carry out these jobs and require support. The provision of a comprehensive, affordable, trustworthy, home repair, odd job and maintenance team which has been Garda vetted will be explored generating a number of benefits - stimulating local employment opportunities in the service sector (possibly through a Social Enterprise model) while at the same time meeting these care needs. It could be linked in with the Good Morning service currently operating in Tipperary and modelled on the ‘Care and Repair’ scheme run in Tipperary Town by Muinter na Tire and Age Action in other areas (b) put together a registered list of capable and reliable contractors with guidance pricing and ensure wide circulation among the community, particularly targeting older people.

Lead Partner: Good Morning Tipperary Service

Support Partners: Local Enterprise Office

 Muintir na Tire

Tipperary County Council – C&E Section

 Volunteer Centre

 Local Development Companies

 Age Friendly Alliance

 Older Persons Council

 Local Traders & Private

 Community and voluntary organisation

 Department of Social Protection

 Local Traders and Chamber of Commerce

Link to Plan:

**Action 3.3: Implement Community Safety Initiatives**

Conduct a county audit to identify where Garda-supported programmes such as the Text Alert scheme, community Alert, Neighbourhood Watch and Community Policing Clinics exist, where there are gaps and put steps in place to address these gaps. A range of other community safety initiatives will be explored and implemented targeting older people or vulnerable people living alone including:

* Supporting the rollout of the Senior Alert Scheme to provide personal monitored alarms to vulnerable older people through the Buddy Programme or other peer-to-peer supports
* Implementing a volunteer initiative that specifically encourages neighbours to visit and look out for older vulnerable people living alone.
* Rolling out of the ‘Good Morning Tipperary’ initiative to the whole county
* In partnership with the Older Persons Council, An Garda Siochana will host a series of community clinics for older people providing face to face human contact between the Gardai and older people
* Adopt the Crime Prevention Ambassador Programme across the county which ensures that vulnerable and isolated older people are receiving crime prevention information on a peer to peer basis.

Lead Partner: An Garda Siochana

Supporting Partners: Tipperary County Council

 Joint Policing Committee

 Muintir na Tire

 Age Friendly Alliance

 Older Persons Council

 Tipperary Volunteer Centre

 Community and Voluntary Sector

Link to Plans: Joint Policing Strategy; LECP

**Expected Outcomes:**

* Older people are able to live in a safe and secure environment in their own home connected to their family and local community
* Quality housing, timely supports and residential options are available to older people once they decide they need significant support
* Older people are aware of home to make their home safer and what supports are available to them
* Planning, design and delivery of future developments will reflect an understanding of the Age Friendly principles outlined
* Effective communication links between Gardai and older people living across county Tipperary
* Increased trust and confidence and decrease in the fear of crime amongst older people
* Reduction in the number of older people being targeted by older callers
* Positive impact on social enterprise initiatives and job creation

**Theme 4: Respect and Social Inclusion**

**Goal:** to combat stereotypes, myths and negative views on ageing and prevent prejudice and discrimination against older people and to recognise ageing as a positive experience across society, regardless of gender, age, culture or ability.

**Why is this important:**

Living a western developed society, there is an often unhealthy emphasis on youth culture, a celebration of being young and maintaining youthful looks and attitudes. The wisdom and experience amassed as people grow older is often devalued and older people themselves can face stereotyping and exclusion as a result. Assumptions are made about older people’s competencies, attitudes, beliefs and abilities that are often false and lead to a society that disempowers older people as opposed to supporting their independence and encouraging their contribution. Central to positive ageing is countering ageism and prejudice through promotion of age awareness, addressing mis-information, informing the public about the rights, needs and potential of older people and highlighting their social, economic and cultural contributions to the community. It is also about giving opportunities for people of all ages to engage and connect in their local community because nothing breaks down barriers more than personal experience and real human contact. It is at this person to person level between neighbours and communities that respect is earned and given.

**HAPAI Survey Findings**

Most people in Tipperary have never personally experienced negative attitudes or behaviour towards them as an older person.

One in every 10 people in Tipperary aged 55 and over said they experienced negative attitudes or behaviour towards compared to 13% in other counties.

The three most common sources of negative attitudes were from people in the local community (4.6%), young people (4%) and those providing services in the financial sector (3.4%).

**Key issues from Consultation:**

* Older people often need more stimulation (more than a Day Centre can offer) and more needs to be done to engage and use their skills and talents full at local level
* Older people would like more initiatives that foster integration between older and younger people
* Isolation, exclusion and loneliness is one of the greatest issues affecting older people contributing to mental and physical ill-health

**Action 4.1 Develop Intergenerational Initiatives**

Develop a range of initiatives that support community integration. This is particularly important in communities which have expanded rapidly in recent years or areas which lack community facilities or groups for older people. Examples include oral history, music, the young teaching IT skills to the older community and in return older people teaching crafts and different skills to young people. Opportunities to link with national and secondary (transition year) students to be explored.

Lead Partner: Tipperary County Council – C&E section in collaboration with Comhairle na nOg.

Support Partners: Older Persons Council

 Schools

 Youth Organisations

 HSE

 Tipperary Older Persons Alliance

 Resource Centres

Link to Plans: LECP; Healthy Tipperary.

**Action 4.2 Run a Local Communication Campaign addressing Ageism**

Develop a communication campaign to run over a number of months that aims to provide real information about ageing in Tipperary. This should include (a) addressing mis-information about dementia, alzeimhers and other ageing related conditions (b) highlighting signs of elder abuse (c) celebrating older people in the county with individual stories about local men and women (d) highlighting the issues facing older people in the county (e) showing where and how local Tipperary people are and can contribute to the local economy and the community (f) promoting supports and services for positive ageing in the county.

Lead Partner: Age Friendly Alliance

Support Partners: HSE

 Tipperary County Council – C&E Section

Older Persons Council

 Local Media Organisations

 PPN – Community/ Voluntary organisations

Link to Plans:

**Action 4.3 Research on Loneliness and Isolation in Tipperary**

Design and implement a research project specific to Tipperary and based on the recent Age Friendly Ireland study ‘Only the Lonely’, to document issues related to loneliness and isolation among older people in Tipperary. The research would also set out recommendations for solutions to be implemented by key service providers across public, private and the community and voluntary sector.

Lead Partner: Tipperary County Council – C&E Section

Support Partners: Age Friendly Alliance

 Older Persons Council

 Age Friendly Ireland

Link to Plans:

Expected Outcomes:

* Increased interaction and engagement between young and older people bringing about better understanding between the generations
* More opportunities for personal growth and community participation for older people and recognition across the wider society of the valuable contribution they make to our communities.
* The risk of loneliness and isolation substantially reduced for older people because of initiatives put in place arising from the local research on loneliness in Tipperary.

**Theme 5 – Social Participation**

**Goal:** to address the barriers to participation for older people and increase opportunities for them to participate in a range of activities which will contribute to improved health and wellbeing.

**Why is it important:**

Social connection, feeling part of a network of family, friends and community, is one of the main determinants of health and wellbeing (REF). The health risks of poor social integration are comparable with those of smoking, high blood pressure and obesity (REF FIONA?). Loneliness and social isolation increase the risk of depression and mental health difficulties and contributes to cognitive decline as evidenced by the Taskforce on Loneliness detailed above.

The importance of keeping fit and healthy as people age is recognised but there are often barriers to participation in physical activity as people age. It is not only important for health and wellbeing but also for greater community connectivity. The Healthy Tipperary Strategy outlines a number of actions around ‘Supporting Active Communities’ with particular attention focused on creating safe and attractive walking/ cycling routes that are accessible for people with mobility problems.

**HAPAI Survey Findings**

Social participation in Tipperary is lower than the national average – 38% of people socialise or participate in a community group at least once a month and 31% participate weekly. The national average for participation in a community group at least once a month is 49%.

73% people aged over 55 meet socially with friends, relatives or colleagues at least once a week and only 6.3% meet socially less frequently than once a month (or never).

The most frequently reported reason for not taking part in social activities was that ‘the social activities available in Tipperary ‘do not interest me’. This was reported by 21% of people over the age of 55.

20% of people aged 55 – 69 said they are not interested in attending social activities and this drops to 15% for the people aged 70+.

12% of people aged 55 – 69 said they could not get to the venues where social activities are happening and this increases to 18% for the aged 70+.

13% of people aged 55 – 69 believe that people have a negative attitude about older people being involved in social activities and this decreased to 11% for the people aged 70+.

7.5% of people aged 55 – 69 said that the costs involved in social activities are too high and this decreased to 6.2% of the people aged 70+.

There is a slightly lower level of participation in informal learning in Tipperary than in other areas – 6.5% in Tipperary compared to 10% of people in other areas. The vast majority (85%) said that there were no barriers preventing them from participating in learning.

**Key Issues from Consultation:**

- NEED INFO FROM CONSULTATION

**Action 5.1 Develop an Information Database**

Develop a database (building on the Community Facilities Audit) with the following information (a) what community facilities in the county are suitable for use by older people (b) what older persons groups are in the county and where do they operate and support registration with the PPN (c) find out what social activities older people would be interested in getting involved with or participating in, given that one in every 5 people in the HAPAI survey say that the current social activities do not interest them. Once this exercise is complete, it should be clear where there are gaps in facilities, in areas and in activities. This should lead to the development or a programme to support and encourage new or enhanced community hall facilities, or a ‘social connection space’ in each community (as recommended by the Healthy Tipperary Strategy) where new groups could be established and what additional range of activities need to be developed to support positive ageing.

Lead Partner: Tipperary County Council – C&E section

Support Partners: PPN

 Community/ Voluntary/ Sporting Groups

 Older Persons Alliance

 Older Persons Council

 Local Development Companies

 Resource Centres

Link with Plans: LECP

**Action 5.2 Encourage Greater Participation in Physical and Social Activities**

The Healthy Tipperary Strategy outlines the importance of physical and social activity for older people in contributing to their health and wellbeing. It recommended developing, supporting and facilitating local community events involving physical activity (walking, running, cycling, swimming), fun days (sports days, community bbq’s, family fun days, Tea Room dances) and the arts (local festivals, concerts) to improve the wellbeing and connectivity of local communities.

Older people are one of the target groups of the Sports Partnership and it is looking to encourage greater participation in physical activity through:

* Continued links with the Age and Opportunity initiative.
* Provide support and programme resources to existing groups.
* Develop links with new groups.
* Deliver an annual Event day and festival.
* Run a number of Programmes: Games for Life; Go for Life Workshops; Go for Life Festival.

Tipperary Arts Office offer opportunities for older people to access and enjoy the arts through a multidisciplinary arts programme, special project commissions and residencies in the lead up to and throughout the annual *Bealtaine* Festival held annually during the month of May.

Community initiatives, such as the ones above, will be developed and supported particularly looking at areas where (a) there is low level of community activity and (b) where there are high proportion of older people and (c) with a particular focus on activities linked to Day Centres. The co-ordination of public and rural transport services to facilitate access by older people to these activities (see Theme 2) will be incorporated into the planning for these events.

Lead Partner: Tipperary Age Friendly Alliance

Support Partners: Tipperary Sports Partnership

 Tipperary Arts Office

 Tipperary County Council – C&E section

PPN

 Community and Voluntary Organisations

 Local Link Tipperary

Link to Plans: Healthy Tipperary Strategy; Tipperary Arts Strategy; Tipperary Sports Partnership Strategy

Expected Outcomes:

* Increased participation of older person in community activities
* Older people will be accessing social activities which they have identified as being of interest to them
* Feelings of loneliness and isolation are reduced

**Theme 6: Civic Participation and Employment**

**Goal:** to create and support an environment that facilitates an increase in employment, volunteering and civic participation among older people

**Why is it important:**

Civic participation is all about the contribution and responsibility people feel towards their community and their society. Many older people are ready for retirement but still want to contribute to their communities through volunteering and other means. Other older people may not be ready for retirement from working life and are seeking opportunities to continue to participate in education, business and employment. Being actively involved in either paid or unpaid work through volunteering or otherwise generates many benefits including continued connection within a community, a feeling of purpose and self worth and supporting positive health and wellbeing. It also helps reduce isolation and loneliness.

**HAPAI Survey Findings**

One in every four people aged between 55 – 69 volunteer at least once a month and this decreases to 13% in the 70+ age group. 11% of people aged 55 – 69 volunteer once a week.

Of those who volunteer, 91% are satisfied with the amount of time they spend volunteering. 3.2% would like to increase the amount of time they spend, while 2.1% would like to decrease the time they spend.

The majority of respondents are satisfied with the range of volunteering options (77%).

16% of respondents volunteer with community and social services, x number with educational, cultural or sporting organisations, 13% with social movements.

Very few people in the 70+ age bracket are involved in political activities with less than 2% of them offering their views publicly as an older person, attending a political protects or attending a political meeting. A significant proportion however (7.5%) have contacted a politician or public office.

12% of people in the 55 – 69 age bracket have contacted a politician or public official, 5% have attended a political meeting, 3% have attended a political demonstration or protest and 2.8% offer their views publicly as an older person.

More than one in seven (x %) aged 55 and over experienced a barrier to participation in lifelong learning in the previous 12 months.

**Key issues from Consultations:**

* the volume of paper work and red tape can be off-putting for people looking to volunteer
* older people who are grandparents are playing a key role in child-rearing now and support is required for them via family support
* While there are a number of voluntary and well supported older people networks (such as active retirement groups, day care centres etc.) there is no older persons forum in the county where issues can be raised
* OTHER ISSUES

**Action 6.1 Supporting and Connecting to Volunteering**

Investigate innovative approaches to encourage volunteering (engaging with Volunteer Ireland and Age Friendly Ireland), particularly targeting people over the age of 65. Part of this would involve looking to address current barriers to volunteering experienced by older people (linking in with Healthy Tipperary Strategy proposal around same).

Lead Agency: Tipperary Volunteer Centre

Support Partners: Age Friendly Alliance

 Tipperary County Council – C&E section

 Local Development Companies

 PPN

 Community and Voluntary Organisations

 Department of Social Protection

Link to Existing Plan: Healthy Tipperary Strategy; LECP

**Action 6.2 Encourage Employment & Enterprise among Older People**

The skills, experience and knowledge of older people will be harnessed through encouraging senior entrepreneurship and enterprise. A survey will be undertaken to identify the skills that already exist and to identify any further learning/ training needs of older people. This could be particularly valuable for social economy and community enterprises who often lack the business skills to reach their full potential (as evidenced by the C&E audit of Community Facilities) and could benefit from a mentoring panel of senior advisors or other peer-to-peer mentoring methods. Opportunities for retired people to engage with the workplace will be explored looking to transfer skills and create positive role models. This could be initiative between the Local Enterprise Office and the Volunteer Centre. Finally, people who may be interested in starting their own business will be supported through the Local Enterprise Office to research their ideas and supported to realise the potential through ‘Start Your Own Business’ courses and other means.

Lead Partner: Local Enterprise Office

Support Partners: Tipperary County Council – C&E section

 Older persons organisations

 HSE

 Chamber of Commerce

 Private sector

 Limerick Institute of Technology

 ETB

 Volunteer Centre

Link to Existing Plan: LECP

**Action 6.3 Establish an Older People’s Council**

Support the development of an all County Older Persons Council, through the PPN, to assist in developing appropriate policy initiatives for the older cohort of the population. This should be truly representative of the geography of County Tipperary and all of its diverse groups. This model will aim to facilitate two-way communication between the Alliance and older people in the community.

Lead Partner: Tipperary County Council C&E section and the PPN

Support Partners: Age Friendly Alliance

 HSE

 Community and voluntary organisations

 Local Development Companies

 Resource Centres

Link to Plans: LECP

**Expected Outcomes:**

* Create opportunities for older people to engage more easily in volunteering activities
* Opportunities are available for retired people to engage with the workplace, leading to skills transfer and the creation of positive role models
* Older people are more confident and capable of articulating the issues of concern to them, are engaged with the organisations that make decisions that affect their lives and are active participants in addressing these issues.
* A more positive culture around ageing and participation
* Learning programmes are customised specific to the needs of older people

**Theme 7 Communication and Information**

**Goal:** to ensure that older people can access timely, practice information about what is happening in their communities

**Why is it important:**

Communication and information is all about people being able to access and understand what they need to know, when they need to know it. Disseminating information is always a challenge for organisations and service providers as they have to be conscious of what medium to use, how it is phrased, who is the target audience. For information dissemination to be truly effective, the end user has to be looking for it or attuned to it and actively seeking it. This makes the issue of communication and information an ongoing challenge yet one that needs to be constantly addressed and highlighted as it is so important.

Lack of awareness of what is on offer, or how to access it, can prevent older people from accessing useful services or resources. A reliable flow of clear information about services, community news, activities and opportunities keeps older people active and involved and is critical for those who have few formal or informal networks to call on.

The additional challenge for older people is the move to online platforms or automated customer service by many of service providers. We know from the socio-economic profile in Chapter 2 above that a quarter of the people had no broadband in 2016 with some areas particularly isolated in this regard including Toomevara, Ballyporeen, The Commons, Tipperary town and Littleton. Even in those areas that have access to good quality broadband, the capacity of older people to engage effectively with this communication method may be limited as is evidenced in the HaPAI survey below. Many older people feel a sense of exclusion because of the quick changing pace of the digital age.

**HAPAI Survey Findings**

The main information sources for people over the age of 55 in Tipperary are local radio (81%), national TV (80%), national radio (66%)

36% of people of people aged 55 and over get their information from the Internet

74% or three quarters of people aged 70+ did not use the internet in the past 3 months and this drops to a third or 33% for the 55 – 69 year olds.

More than 1 in 10 people aged 55 and over have difficult accessing information about health or social care (15% of people aged 70+ and 8.8% of people aged 55 – 69)

4% of people aged 55 and over had difficulty getting information about local events and activities.

**Key Issues from Consultations:**

* with the focus now switching to people taking more personal responsibility for their own health, then this needs to be supported by service providers through education and information supports that are accessible and widely available e.g. around healthy eating, mental health, physical activity
* there needs to be greater promotion about what is going on in local communities. Word of mouth is the preferred means of communication for older people through informal contacts with family or friends, clubs or community centres.
* More accessible information for older people around health services and entitlements is needed e.g. eligibility for Home Care, the Fair Deal scheme etc.

**Action 7.1 Develop a Central Information Hub**

Develop a Central Information Hub that would be updated weekly featuring promotion and information on Healthy Tipperary and Community events (with links to other relevant sites) and updated information on entitlements and grants. While this would primarily be social media driven given the ease of updating and informing people via this platform, there would also need to cognisance taken of older people and how/where they access their information. The local radio appears to be a central information source according to the HAPAI survey above and greater links with this medium should be developed to see how they can engage more meaningfully on topics that interest their older audience e.g. health issues. Other most common forms of information sharing and access to information need to be explored further with steps put in place to actively make these links be it through be made to the local radio/print media, churches, community centres on a regular basis to avoid excluding them.

Lead Partner: Tipperary County Council – C&E section & Tipperary Data Hub

Support Partner: Tipperary County Council (Library; Arts Section; Festivals Section)

 Age Friendly Alliance

 Older Persons Council

 PPN

Local Media

Local Community Organisations

Tipperary Sports Partnership

Link to Plans: Healthy Tipperary

**Action 7.2 Raise Awareness of Age Friendly Agenda**

Promotion of the Age Friendly Strategy will take place and an agreed programme of public meetings, consultations and ongoing dialogue will be put in place with key stakeholders to continue to update the Strategy and get feedback on future priorities. As part of this awareness raising, training will be provided to older people around technology use, social media platforms and accessing e services.

Lead Partner: Tipperary County Council

Support Partners: Tipperary Age Friendly Alliance

 Older Persons Council

 Private Sector

 PPN

 Community and Voluntary organisations

 Age Friendly Ireland

 ETB

 Local Development Companies

Link to Plans:

Expected Outcomes:

* Older people can easily access information about events and issues and services in the local community
* Increased engagement by older people in events
* Reduced risk of isolation and loneliness
* Greater awareness of Age Friendly agenda

**Theme 8 Community Support and Health Services**

**Goal**: to provide older people with easily accessible health and community services and access to high quality support, when needed, to enable them to live independently in their homes for as long as requested.

**Why is this important:**

Older people want to stay healthy and independent for as long as possible. Investment in quality community-based health services - including preventative screening, mental health services and advice on healthy eating - can keep older people healthy and reduce their use of in-patient and out-patient hospital services. Home support services and, at the end of life, compassionate outreach services, make it possible for older people to stay in their own homes. This is something that is evidenced in the HaPAI survey and in consultations – people want to remain in their own homes and their own communities for as long as possible but often need supports to do so. It is this connectivity with family, with community, with friends and neighbours that contributes to positive mental and physical health and while it is not possible to provide health services and supports in every settlement in Tipperary, it should be possible to ensure access to the necessary services and supports.

**HAPAI Survey Findings**

71% of people aged 55-69 and 55% of people over the age of 70 in Tipperary say their health is good or very good.

17% of people over the age of 55 are smokers.

45% of people aged 55 – 69 have a long standing illness or health problem. This rises to 60% in people aged over 70. One in five of these respondents are severely limited in their everyday activities because of this health problem.

The most common health conditions affecting people in Tipperary are: arthritis (23% of 55 – 69 and 26% of 70+); high blood pressure or hypertension (19% of 55 – 69 year olds and 36% of 70+ year olds); high cholesterol (16% of 55 – 69 year olds and 40% of 70+ year olds; diabetes (6.9% of 55 – 69 year olds and 7.6% of 70+ year olds).

45% of the over 70s in Tipperary reported being diagnosed with more than one condition (multi-morbidity)

12% of the over 70s in Tipperary need help with mobility (2.6% of people aged 55 – 69).

20% of over 70s need help with housekeeping (7.3% of people aged between 55 – 69)

 11% of people over the age of 70 in Tipperary need help with personal care (5.3% of people aged 55 – 69)

10% of people aged 55 and over are currently on a waiting list in Tipperary and 95% of these have been waiting for more than 1 month.

The over 55 year olds availed of a number of preventative health services over the past year – 65% received the flu vaccination, 88% received blood test for cholesterol, 81% had a blood pressure check and 64% received a mammogram or breast x-ray (for women aged 55 – 64).

18% of people aged 70+ care for children or grandchildren every day or weekly. One in five of these people experience some level of caregiver strain.

20% of people aged between 55 – 69 care for children or grandchild every day or weekly and one in six of these people experience some level of care giver strain.

4.3% of people aged over 55 in Tipperary report feeling lonely ‘often’ and 18% say they feel lonely some of the time. Slightly more people aged 70+ (5.8%) compared with people aged 55-69 (3.1%) report feeling lonely often.

**Key Issues from Consultations:**

* lack of transport options and suitable times makes it difficult for people to attend appointments; co-ordination of medical appointments need to happen linking in with the local Primary Care Team.
* supports for grandparents needed in rearing children and family support
* more supports are needed for older people to living on their own in their own communities
* Home help is not enough to help people stay at home, more wrap around supports are needed
* Better promotion and information needed around mental health supports and how they can be accessed
* Poor provision of mental health supports. Older people who are retired and whose families may be living elsewhere, often struggle with the issue of identity. The labels that defined them for most of their lives – bread winner, carer, home maker – are now redundant and many struggle with finding purpose and meaning in their lives.
* Advocacy support is needed for patients in hospitals, particularly for more vulnerable older people
* greater stimulation and positive activity needed in Day Care Centres
* increased funding for home care packages and supports for elderly to stay in their homes for as long as possible. There is a the need to expand the range of services that are available to them including: Home care (washing, dressing, meals etc.); and Health (e.g. discharge support from hospital, dressing wounds etc.). Ensure there is clear information on what is available and who is eligible.

**Action 8.1 Supports to Facilitate Living in your Own Home**

Provision of community supports that assist people to stay at home safely and comfortably and in their community need to be explored either through Social Economy projects or other ways. The current Home Help service only allows personal care but, as is evidenced from the HaPAI survey data above, it is the smaller jobs – the gardening jobs, housekeeping jobs, repair jobs, meals-on-wheels – that give that little bit of extra, but much needed, help and support (links with Theme 3 Housing). Housing adaptations are also important (see Theme 2 Housing) and the community connectivity is central given that this is key to addressing the issues of isolation and loneliness with initiatives such as local events (transport being key – see Theme 2), access to essential services (see Theme 1 above) and tailor made initiatives such as befriending (see below).

Lead Partner: Tipperary County Council

Support Partners: HSE

 Local Link Tipperary

 Age Friendly Alliance

 Older Persons Council

 Local Development Companies

 Local Enterprise office

Link to Plans: County Development Plans (North and South); LECP.

**Action 8.2 Good Morning Service & Befriending Initiatives**

Extend the Good Morning Service county-wide and explore the establishment of befriending visits to more isolated, frail and vulnerable older people by examining existing projects in other counties and look to develop a locally appropriate model in Tipperary.

Lead Partner: Age Friendly Alliance

Support Partners: Tipperary County Council – C&E Section

Active Retirement Groups

Joint Policing Committee

 Muintir na Tire

 Age Friendly Alliance

 Older Persons Council

 Tipperary Volunteer Centre

 Community and Voluntary Sector

 Resource Centres

 Local Development Companies

Link with Plans: LECP; Joint Policing Committee Strategy; Healthy Tipperary

**Action 8.3 Mental Health Education and Information Campaign**

Develop a county wide mental health education and information campaign with a particular targeted approach for older people over the age of 55. Older people should be assisted to identify any mental health issues they may be experiencing and link with services necessary to enhance their mental well-being.

Lead Partner: HSE Health and Wellbeing

Support Partners: Age Friendly Alliance

 Primary Care Teams

 Media outlets

 Older Persons Council

 Mental Health Voluntary Groups

 Community and Voluntary Associations

 Resource Centres

Link to Plans: Connecting for Life (MW and SE); Healthy Tipperary.

**Expected Outcomes**

* Improved health for older persons and awareness raised of the wider mental health and wellbeing issues for older persons
* Combating rural isolation and supporting older persons to remain at home
* Promotion of independent living and peer support
* More information on services and greater access to information

**4. Implementation and Monitoring**

Local health services were reported to be very easily available for 41% although this varied between age groups, 48% of the 55-69 age group compared to 30% of the over 70s. Almost one in 4 (24%) of those aged over 70 said that health services were either difficult or very difficult to access.

One in 5 (20%) reported that transport was very difficult or difficult to access and a further 20% said that they did not use public transport. This compares to 12% in other areas surveyed. For those aged over 70 the number who said that transport was very difficult or difficult to access increased to 29% compared to 23% in other areas.

1. Dublin Declaration … [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. One of the aspects of the HaPAI initiative is carrying out research on ageing in Ireland at national and local authority level. In 2016, a research report on ageing in Tipperary was published, the content of which is summarized in this report. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The scale runs from areas that are deemed ‘extremely disadvantaged’ to ‘very disadvantaged’ to ‘disadvantaged’ to ‘marginally below the average’ to ‘marginally above the average’, ‘affluent’, ‘very affluent’ and ‘extremely affluent’. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Positive mental health was measured using the Energy and Vitality Index (0-100), and involved respondents indicating the extent to which they felt ‘full of life’, ‘calm and peaceful’, had ‘lots of energy’ and had ‘been a happy person’ over the past four weeks. The resulting scores, which range from 0 to 100, give an indication of an individual’s level of positive mental health, with higher scores indicating greater wellbeing. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Facilities include shortage of space or too big for current need, lack of indoor flushing toilet, lack of bath or shower, lack of downstairs toilet/bathroom facilities, and lack of a place sit outside (e.g. garden, balcony, or terrace). Conditions include rot in windows, door or floors and damp or leaks in walls or roofs. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)