



GALWAY CITY AND COUNTY **Age Friendly Strategy**

2026-2031



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council



Comhairle Cathrach
na Gaillimhe
Galway City Council



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Foreword from the Chief Executives

As Chief Executives of Galway City and County Councils and Joint Chairs of the Age Friendly Alliance, we welcome the publication of the second Age Friendly Strategy for Galway City and County.

It is imperative that we build on the progress made under our first Age Friendly Strategy to make our City and County “a great place to grow old in”, which is the vision of the Age Friendly Programme. This means embedding an age friendly approach into the development of our infrastructure, policies, services and programmes in the local authorities and across all partner agencies on the Age Friendly Alliance.

We would like to thank the Older People’s Councils of the City and County, and all the older individuals and groups who took time to respond to our survey and inform the priorities for this strategy. We also thank our partners on the Age Friendly Alliance who have taken part in action planning workshops and committed to delivery of actions in this strategy.

We look forward to working with you over the lifetime of this strategy and delivering actions to improve quality of life not just for older people, but across the entire life cycle.

“If you design for the young you exclude the old, but if you design for the old you include everyone”.

- Glenn Miller, Director of Education and Research, Canadian Urban Development Institute



Leonard Cleary
Chief Executive
Galway City Council

Liam Conneally
Chief Executive
Galway County Council

Welcome from the Older People's Councils

As new Chairpersons of Galway City and County Older People's Councils, it gives us great pleasure that one of our first actions is to welcome this Strategy which will be a blueprint for age friendly actions and priorities for the next 5 years.

The Older People's Councils are a central element of the Age Friendly Programme and include representatives from older people's groups and individuals interested in ensuring the development of an Age Friendly City and County. The elected Executive Committees are the representative voice for older people and influence the development of initiatives, activities and programmes delivered through the Age Friendly Programme.

The involvement of over 500 individuals and groups through responses to the public consultation survey and focus groups, gives us great hope that the needs and wishes of the older people we represent are strongly reflected in this Strategy. We thank you sincerely for reinforcing for us the characteristics of an Age Friendly City and County in which you would like to grow old.

Now it is over to us, and we assure you that we will work in partnership with the City and County Councils and all the partner organisations on the Age Friendly Alliance to develop this healthy and active physical and social environment on your behalf.

Eavan Schmidt-Bleek
Chairperson
Galway City Older People's Council

Mary Cronin
Chairperson
Galway County Older People's Council

1. Introduction

This second Age Friendly Strategy for Galway City and County will build on the progress made since 2011, continuing to work towards the vision of making Galway a great place in which to grow old. This strategy was developed in cooperation with service providers and members of the public in Galway City and County. By responding directly to the specific issues that most affect older people living in Galway, this strategy will support the continuation and expansion of Age Friendly initiatives across the county, making it a better place to live for all.

1.1 Report Structure

The findings and actions in this report have been informed by a robust research process, including a review of national, regional and local policy objectives, a comprehensive socio-economic analysis of the catchment area and consultation with both the community and key stakeholders.

The structure of the report is as follows:

1. Introduction – Outlines the purpose, scope, and structure of the strategy.
2. Age Friendly Policy Framework – Describes the National Age Friendly Shared Service, Galway Age Friendly Alliance, and the role of the Interdepartmental Team.
3. Our Methodology – Summarises the research and consultation process used to inform the strategy.

4. Key Demographic Information – Presents a detailed profile of the area's population, focusing on ageing trends and related characteristics.
5. Key Consultation Findings – Highlights insights gathered from public engagement, including barriers, challenges and suggestions for improvement.
6. Key Achievements since 2014–2019 Strategy – Reviews progress made under the previous Age Friendly Strategy.
7. Our Vision and Values – Sets out the shared vision and core values guiding the strategy.
8. Our Age Friendly Action Plans 2026–2031 – Presents specific actions across three strategic goal areas.
9. Monitoring Framework – Details the mechanisms for tracking progress, measuring impact, and ensuring accountability.

1.2 National Shared Service

Age Friendly Ireland (AFI) is a shared service of local government hosted by Meath County Council. The shared service manages the national Age Friendly Programme, affiliated to the World Health Organization's Age (WHO) Friendly Cities and Communities Network. The national programme is operated through a theme-based framework of 35 local Age Friendly Programmes hosted in local government.

The AFI Shared Service supports cities, counties and towns across Ireland to prepare for the rapid ageing of our population by paying increased attention to the environmental, economic and social factors that influence the health and well-being of older adults.

Local age friendly programmes work to provide walkable streets, housing and transportation options, access to key services and opportunities for older people to participate in community activities. By doing so, these communities are better equipped to become great places, and are appropriate lifelong homes, for people of all ages.

Derived from the WHO Global Age Friendly Framework, AFI is a Local Government led service in Ireland, working with multiple national stakeholders to prepare Ireland's infrastructure and services for the

substantial increase in older age groups is anticipated. In 2019, after a decade of work, Ireland was formally recognised by the WHO as an international leader and the first Age Friendly country in the world.

AFI works directly with older people nationwide to ensure that their voice is heard and valued when it comes to decision making at both policy and operational levels through active consultation.

The shared service centre supports the 35 local Age Friendly programmes across each local authority area in Ireland by providing networking and communication channels, advice and technical support, and supporting the scaling up and replication of Age Friendly good practice nationally.

Figure 1: National Programme Structure.



1.3 Local Age Friendly Programme

Local Age Friendly Programmes work to provide walkable streets, housing and transportation options, access to key services, and opportunities for older people to participate in community activities.

By doing so, these communities are better equipped to become great places, and lifelong homes, for people of all ages. Each local Age Friendly Programme also works to give a voice to older people in the decision-making processes that affect their ability to live full and active lives.

Each local Age Friendly Programme operates within the same structure, which relies on an active Older People's Council (OPC), Age Friendly Alliance, Age Friendly Programme Manager, Age Friendly Housing Technical Advisor and Interdepartmental Team within the Local Authority.

The OPCs are representative groups of older people, established by the Local Authority as part of the local Age Friendly Programme. Galway City and Galway County each have their own Older People's Council. The OPCs are two-tier structure with an elected Executive Committee and a wide membership base. OPCs identify priority areas of need, raise issues of importance and influence the decision-making process of the

local Age Friendly Programme, and participate in national level structures. The key purpose of the OPCs is to provide the authentic voice of older people representing the diversity that exists among our ageing population. OPC representatives are key collaborators and stakeholders who co-design the actions and objectives of the Age Friendly Strategy.

The Galway Age Friendly Alliance is a high-level cross-sector group, jointly hosted by Galway City and County Councils. The member agencies of the local Age Friendly Alliance form a strategic partnership to develop and oversee the Age Friendly Strategy. Members include the Local Authorities, the Health Service Executive (HSE), the Education and Training Board, An Garda Siochana, the Third Level education sector, and other relevant stakeholders representing the community and voluntary sector.

All of the above will be key partners in the delivery of this Age Friendly Strategy which has been developed in co-operation with service providers and members of the public in Galway City and County. It is noted that an Interdepartmental Team has not yet been established in either local authority to date. However, this will form a key element of coordinating infrastructural improvements over the term of this new strategy.

1.4 What is an 'Age Friendly' County?

Each Local Authority develops and implements an Age-Friendly Initiative specific to their city and/or county.

Age Friendly Ireland defines an Age Friendly County as one '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'. An Age Friendly Galway would be a County where...

- All older people have a say in how their communities develop
- There is good access to local transport, that takes people where they need to go
- Public spaces are clean, inviting,

and comfortable

- Everyone has access to good quality healthcare either at home or nearby
- There are opportunities to socialise and stay in touch with friends, family and neighbours
- Older adults have the opportunity to continue working, set up a business, pursue further education or volunteer
- People feel safe and secure, both at home and in public spaces
- It's easy to stay up to date with what services are available and what social activities are being held in your city/county.

Therefore, Galway Age Friendly Alliance will prepare for the increasing ageing of its population by focusing on the environmental, economic and social factors that influence the health and well-being of older adults.

Figure 2: Age Friendly Ireland Local Programme Structure.



Source: www.agefriendlyireland.ie

2. Age Friendly Policy Framework

Galway's Age-Friendly Strategy 2026–2031 is informed by a network of interlinked international, national, regional and local strategies and policy frameworks, many of which are shaped by global trends and long-term drivers of change.

2.1 National Context

Population ageing is evident in global population statistics, which show a demographic trend that signifies an increasing proportion of older people in the population in almost every country of the world. WHO's Global Age Friendly Programme, in response to population ageing at a global level the WHO's Age Friendly programme, was established in 2007. The aim of this programme is to encourage countries all over the world to become age friendly, to become places which encourage active ageing by optimising opportunities for people to live healthily, to feel secure and to have their participation in society enabled, and overall enhancing quality of life.

The WHO recognises that active ageing is dependent on "a variety of influences or determinants that surround individuals, families and nations. They include material conditions as well as social factors that affect individual types of behaviour and feelings. All of these factors, and the interaction between them, play an important role in affecting how well individuals age".

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to deliver a more sustainable, prosperous, and peaceful future for the entire world, and set out 17 SDGs which address the social, economic, and environmental requirements for a sustainable future. The Age Friendly Strategy will contribute to the implementation of many of these SDGs and in order to raise awareness of the SDGs and their importance to sustainability, we have aligned the relevant SDG number and name to our strategic priorities in section 8 of this strategy.

2.2 Local Context

The goals, objectives and actions outlined in this Age-Friendly Strategy are aligned with, and supportive of, regional and county plans.

The Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) 2020–2032 is a long-term regional planning framework to support the implementation of Project Ireland 2040 in the Northern and Western Region. It aims to strengthen the region by promoting balanced growth, economic diversification, and sustainable rural and urban development. It seeks to deliver this by supporting rural communities, addressing regional inequalities, and enhancing quality of life through inclusive placemaking.

The Galway City Development Plan 2023–2029 and Galway County

Development Plan 2022–2028 set out the spatial planning frameworks to guide sustainable development across urban and rural areas of Galway over the lifetimes of the plans. Both comply with the provisions of the RSES and implement its objectives at the Local Authority level. In response to an ageing population, both plans include specific objectives to deliver age-friendly housing, promote universal design, and support independent living through accessible community services, transport, and inclusive public spaces that encourage the participation of older people.

The Galway City and Galway County Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs) set out the integrated frameworks to promote economic development and community wellbeing at the local level. Both

plans aim to build strong, inclusive, and sustainable communities by supporting social enterprise, employment, education, health, and cultural development. In recognition of the needs of an ageing population, both LECPs include actions to support age-friendly initiatives, improve access to services and transport, and create supportive environments that enable older people to remain active, connected, and engaged in their communities.

These international, national and local strategic plans provide a broad policy framework for this Age Friendly Strategy. The goals highlighted in these plans, in conjunction with the consultation process, determine the actions identified in this Age Friendly Strategy.



3. Our Methodology

The following methodology was utilised for the development of the Age Friendly Strategy for Galway City and County:

Research

A comprehensive demographic analysis, policy context analysis, and public consultation process was conducted, adhering to the Department of Rural and Community Development's inclusive engagement guidelines. The consultation aimed for broad participation across public and key stakeholders, including marginalised and disadvantaged communities, through workshops, focus groups, surveys, and an online campaign. The process garnered 440 survey submissions and active participation from key community representatives

Analyse

In this phase, the data from the policy context, consultation and demographic analysis was reviewed and organised under the three strategic goals (identified below) to identify key trends and community needs.

Plan

Key Findings presentations and SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time - bound) action planning workshops were held for each of the eight WHO Age Friendly Themes under the three strategic goals. This focused and strategic approach led to the development of detailed, realistic, achievable, and measurable actions, ensuring a structured and effective approach to the planning and delivery of the strategy.

Figure 3: Strategic Priorities



Strategic Goal: Built and Public Environment

This strategic priority recognises that the physical environment is key to 'ageing in place' and aims to enable people to live independently in their own homes and communities for as long as possible.

Objective 1: Outdoor Spaces and Buildings - to ensure outdoor spaces and buildings are safe, accessible, and in compliance with age friendly principles.

Objective 2: Transport and Mobility – to provide accessible and affordable transportation options for older people and create walkable communities.

Objective 3: Housing – to ensure older people have access to safe, affordable and accessible housing to enable them remain living in their own home, or a quality appropriate alternative, and community as long as possible.

Strategic Goal: Community and Social Inclusion

This strategic priority recognises that social connectivity is key to physical and mental wellbeing and aims to foster social cohesion and a sense of belonging within our communities and neighbourhoods.

Objective 4: Social Participation – to encourage older people to participate in social activities and groups that promote social connectivity and wellbeing.

Objective 5: Respect and Social Inclusion – to ensure all older

people feel respected and have opportunities to engage in community life.

Objective 6: Civic Participation and Employment – to ensure all older people have opportunities to engage in volunteering, civic engagement, lifelong learning and employment.

Strategic Goal: Information and Wellbeing Services

This strategic priority recognises that access to information and high-quality community health services is key to good health and wellbeing and aims to develop and deliver integrated care services for older people.

Objective 7: Communication and Information – to ensure that older people have access to information and resources through a variety of communication channels.

Objective 8: Community Support and Health Services – to ensure access to healthcare, social care and other essential services that support older people's wellbeing.

4. Key Demographic Information

This section provides an overview of the socio-economic profile of County Galway, structured around the three strategic areas: Built and Public Environment, Community and Social Inclusion and Information and Wellbeing Services. It highlights key socio-economic characteristics and identifies trends at the combined county-wide level, as well as across each Local Authority Area, Municipal District (MD), and Electoral Division (ED).

County Galway, spanning approximately 6,149 km², is the second-largest county in Ireland by land area. It's two Local Authorities, Galway City and Galway County, make up part of the Northern and Western Region (Region hereafter), alongside Mayo, Roscommon, Leitrim, Sligo, Donegal, Monaghan, and Cavan. The county is well-connected by the M6 and M17/M18 motorways and a rail service to Dublin and Limerick.

Galway City functions as the primary administrative and economic hub for the Region, providing critical services, infrastructure, and employment opportunities. Surrounding the City, Galway County is divided into five Municipal Districts: Athenry, Ballinasloe, Conamara, Loughrea and Tuam, which together encompass a broad and varied geography. This includes a network of towns and villages as well as expansive rural areas, each contributing to the county's rich socio-economic diversity. The county's settlement pattern reflects a strong urban-rural

dynamic, with contrasting population densities, access to services and economic profiles across its different communities.

4.1 Population Overview

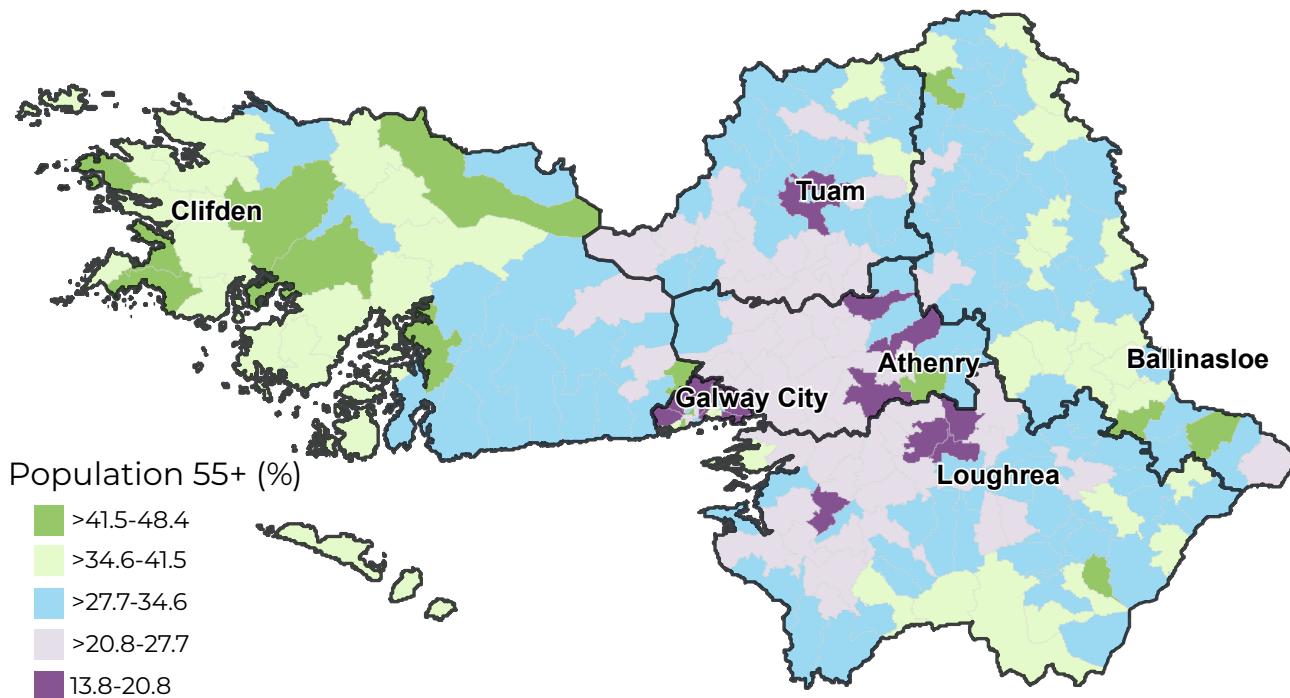
County Galway is the most populous county in the Region, with a population of 277,737 as of 2022. Between 2016 and 2022, Galway's population grew by 7.6%, slightly higher than the Region (6.8%) and just below the national average (8.1%).

In 2022, **73,985 individuals in County Galway were aged 55 and over**, representing 26% of the total population in line with the national average (26.3%). This cohort was distributed as follows: 31,099 people (11%) were aged 55–64, 24,321 (9%) were aged 65–74, 13,749 (5%) were aged 75–84, and 4,816 (2%) were aged 85 and over.

As shown in Figure 4, this was not evenly distributed across Galway, with particularly high rates of over 55s in Conamara MD (33.3%) and Ballinasloe MD (32.1%), with figures well above both the city and state averages (26.6%).

The over-55 population has grown by 17.7% between 2016 and 2022, more than twice the overall population growth rate in the County, with Figure 5 showing this growth was seen across the whole of Galway not just those areas with pre-existing older populations.

Figure 4: Proportion of total population age 55+



Source: Census 2022

4.2 Old Age Dependency ratio

The old age dependency ratio identifies the proportion of adults older than the traditional working age (65+) as a percentage of the traditional working-age population (15-64). At 24.1% in 2022, County Galway's **old age dependency ratio was higher than the national figure** of 23.1%. Between 2016 and 2022, the old age dependency ratio in County Galway increased by 3.1%, indicating an ageing population.

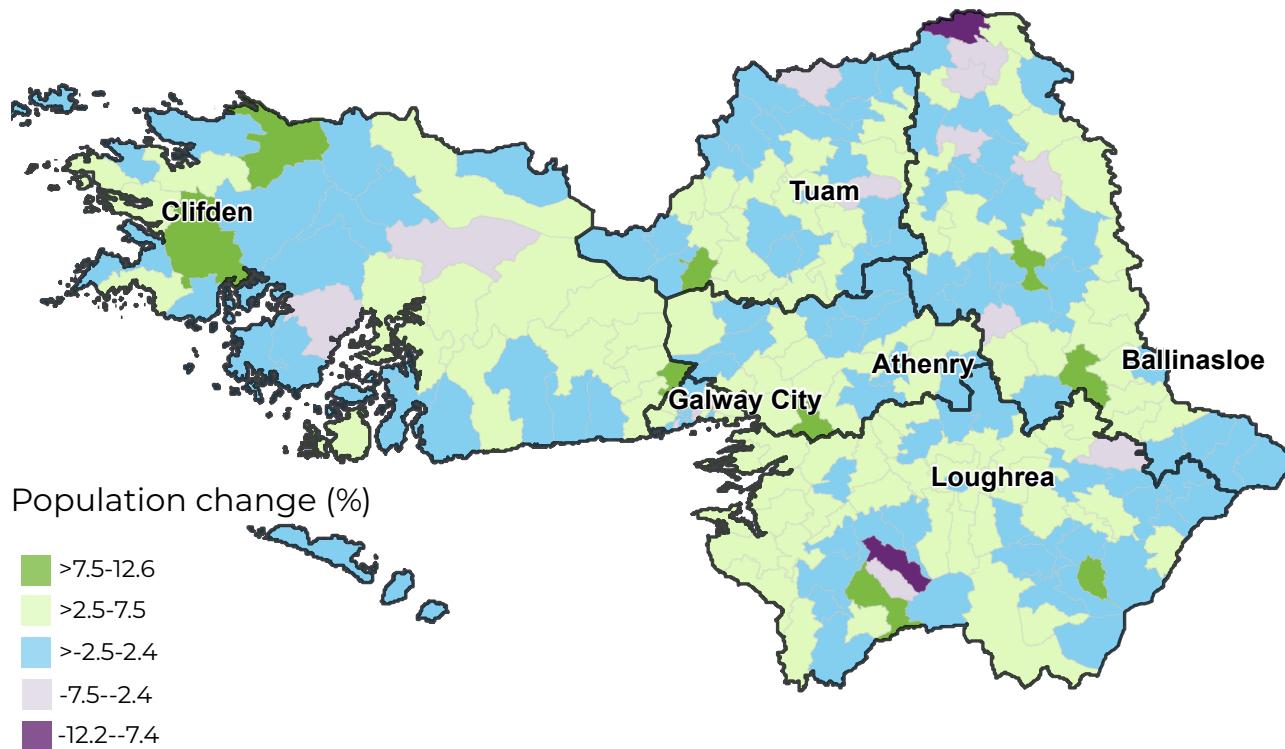
The data highlights a significant urban-rural divide, with Conamara MD (32.1%) and Ballinasloe MD (32.6%) both significantly exceeding the State average, and reflecting substantial increases between 2016 and 2022 of

5.4% and 4.4% respectively.

Across the Ballinasloe and Conamara MDs almost all EDs with the exception of 3 out of 89 (Mounthazel (22.9%) within Ballinasloe and Wormhole (21.8%) and Moycullen (18.5%) in Conamara) exhibited an old age dependency ratio above the State average. Several EDs in these MDs, had old age dependency ratios more than double the State average of 23.1% including Boyounagh (53.3%), Kylemore (51.3%), and Clontuskert (51.2%) and In Ballinasloe and Cloonkeen (West) 63.5%, Bunowen (60.4%) and Cong/Ross (53.9%) in Conamara.

Galway City (17.7%) and Athenry (20.3%) MDs have lower old age dependency ratios overall. However, within these areas, certain EDs had

Figure 5: Population change (55+) between 2016 and 2022



Source: Census 2022

higher ratios. In Galway City, EDs such as Shantalla (49.8%), Rockbarton (48.3%), Renmore (45.2%), Lough Atalia (43.4%), Knocknacarragh (41.9%), and Newcastle (38.1%) exhibited significantly higher ratios. Similarly, in Athenry MD, EDs including Abbey East (34.2%), Greethill (26.4%), Liscananaun (24.9%), Carrowbrowne (24.3%), Belleville (24.9%), Cappalusk (23.9%), Annaghdown (24.1%) also showed elevated ratios. These areas reflect local concentrations of older individuals despite the overall lower ratios in the MDs.

These trends indicate that, while urban areas across the county typically attract younger populations, certain pockets within these areas are experiencing notable concentrations of older dependants. This urban-rural

demographic divide highlights the **necessity for balanced development strategies that support sustainable population growth** in rural areas, while acknowledging the presence of 'hidden' older cohorts in urban centres.

Preparing for both the current and emerging ageing population is crucial. This demographic shift underscores the need for service providers to anticipate growing demand for age-related services and infrastructure. Strategic planning must account for these changes to ensure that the needs of the ageing population are met effectively and equitably.

4.3 Key trends – Built and Public Environment

Distinct Urban and Rural Divide

- All of Galway City is classed as an urban area, whereas 75.6% of Galway County's population live in areas classed as rural, more than twice the State average (36.4%).
- In County Galway, the proportion of people living in highly rural areas (13.3%) was higher than the State average (8.6%).

Steady Growth in Housing Between 2016 and 2022

- In 2022, County Galway had a total of 98,889 dwellings. Of these, 31,221 were located in Galway City, representing 31.6% of the total housing stock, and 67,668 were located in the rest of County Galway, representing 68.4% of the total.
- Between 2016 and 2022, there was a steady 7.6% growth in housing stock across County Galway, slightly below the State average (8.2%).

High Housing Growth in Loughrea, Athenry and Conamara MDs

- Growth varied widely across County Galway, Loughrea MD (9.7%), Athenry MD (8.6%), and Conamara MD (8.1%) outpaced the State, while Galway City (7.1%), Tuam MD (6.5%), and Ballinasloe MD (5.3%) showed slower growth.

Distinct Variation in Dwelling Types Between City and County Areas

- Galway City had a higher

proportion of apartments (26.4%), compared to the County (4.5%), Region (6.8%) and the State (13.0%).

- In Galway County, houses and bungalows made up the majority of the housing stock (95.1%), above Galway City (73.4%), the Region (92.9%) and the State (86.7%).

High Levels of Private Renting Among Over 55s

- Owner-occupation was more common across County Galway (78.8%) compared to both the Region (72.5%) and the State (68.9%). This was also reflected in a lower proportion of privately rented households (14.2%) than the Region (17.2%) and the State (18.8%).
- Among over 55s, the proportion of privately rented dwellings across County Galway (5.9%) was slightly above the Regional (5.5%) and State averages (5.6%), which was driven primarily by Galway City (8.8%).

Contrasting Distances to Services

- Galway County had the second longest average distance to a GP (6.8km) and a supermarket (4.6km) of any local authority in the State. Conversely, Galway City had the second shortest distance to GP (0.8km) and third shortest distance to a supermarket (0.8km) in the State.
- Long distances to services contribute to high car reliance, with only 7.9% of County households car-free, the lowest proportion in the Region.

Greater Public and Active Transport Usage in Galway City

- Active travel was significantly more common in Galway City, where 21.3% of commuters walked or cycled to work, significantly above Galway County (5.3%), the Region (8.1%) and the State (11.2%).
- Public transport use in Galway City (14.5%) was higher than in the State (8.5%), and more than six times higher than in Galway County (2.0%) and the Region (2.3%).
- Multi-car households were more common across County Galway (48.7%) compared to the Region (47.7%) but lower than the State (55.3%), in particular, Athenry (61.2%) and Loughrea (58.1%) MDs had the highest proportions.

4.4 Key Trends – Community and Social Inclusion

Emerging Diversity in Over 55s

- In 2022, 17.3% of County Galway's population self-identified their ethnicity as non-White Irish, above the Region (14.6%) but below the State (18.4%).
- Galway City was notably ethnically diverse (28.6%), with Tuam (15.5%), Athenry (13.2%), Loughrea (13.1%), Ballinasloe (12.9%), and Conamara (9.5%) MDs showing lower diversity.
- Across County Galway, 11.6% of residents were non-Irish nationals, above the Region (10.3%) but below the State (12.9%).
- Galway City (19.4%) showed much

greater national diversity than Galway County (8.4%).

- In 2022, only 5.5% of the population aged 55+ years were non-Irish nationals, lower than both the Region (6.3%) and State (5.7%), but this is likely to grow as the diverse young population ages.

High Proportions of Irish Travellers

- In 2022, the proportion of people who identified as Irish Travellers was more than twice as high in County Galway (15.6 persons per 1,000 total population), than the State average (6.5 per 1,000).
- Ballinasloe MD (27.5 per 1,000), Tuam MD (23.5 per 1,000), and Galway City (21.3 per 1,000) recorded the highest concentrations of people who identified as Irish Travellers. Athenry (11.8 per 1,000), Loughrea (8.0 per 1,000) and Conamara (1.1 per 1,000) MDs were all above the State average.
- Among those aged 55 and over, the rate of Irish Travellers across County Galway was lower than the total population (5.6 per 1,000) but was still more than double the State average (2.5 per 1,000 people).

High Employment Levels Among Over 55s

- In 2022, 56.4% of County Galway residents were in employment, above the Region (54.3%) and just below the State average (56.5%).
- Athenry (61.8%) and Loughrea (59.1%) MDs had particularly high employment rates, while Ballinasloe (52.4%) and Conamara (52.5%) MDs were comparatively lower.

- Among over 55s, however, the proportion of people at work across County Galway (34.6%) was the highest in the Region (32.5%) and above the State (33.2%).

Higher Levels of Deprivation in Ballinasloe and Conamara MDs

- The Pobal HP Deprivation Index is a measurement of the relative affluence or disadvantage of a particular geographical area, using census data. Overall County Galway had a Deprivation Index score of 2.34 which ranked as Marginally Above Average.
- Deprivation Index data showed that over half of the EDs (56.0%) in County Galway ranked as Affluent or Marginally Above Average.
- Just over a third of County Galway's EDs (39.3%) had a Marginally Below Average index score, these were most commonly seen in the eastern edge of Ballinasloe MD and the western coast of Conamara MD.
- A total of 11 EDs ranked as Disadvantaged, with nine of them being in the southwest of Conamara MD.

High Education Levels Among Over 55s

- County Galway had a high proportion of people with tertiary education (59.4%), compared to the Region (52.5%) and State (56.0%).
- The rates of tertiary education were highest in Galway City (67.8%), followed by Athenry (61.5%) and Loughrea (58.3%) MDs.
- Among the 55+ population of County Galway, 32.3% held a third-

level qualification, the highest in the Region.

Lower Levels of Education in Ballinasloe and Conamara MDs

- In 2022, County Galway had a lower proportion of people with no formal education or primary education only (10.0%), compared to both the Region (12.8%) and the State (10.5%).
- Ballinasloe (14.2%) and Conamara (13.5%) MDs showed higher proportions of people with no formal education or primary education only than both the Region (12.8%) and the State (10.5%).

4.5 Key Trends – Information and Wellbeing

Relatively High but Declining Overall Health Status

- In 2022, 89.0% of County Galway residents reported their health as good or very good, on par with the State average (88.9%) and slightly above the Region (88.1%).
- Athenry (91.1%), Loughrea (90.0%), Tuam (89.0%) MDs had the highest rates of self-reported good health, while Galway City (88.4%), Ballinasloe MD (87.9%) and Conamara MD (88.0%) trailed slightly behind.
- A gradual decline in self-reported good health was observed from 2016 to 2022, with Galway City (-1.9%) and Athenry MD (-1.1%) experiencing the most significant declines.

- Self-reported health was slightly better among men (89.2% good or very good) than women (88.8%).

Higher Proportion of Over 55s Working as Unpaid Carers

- Across County Galway, 8.7% of over 55s provided unpaid care, higher than both the Region (8.4%) and the State (8.6%).
- Among those aged 55+ providing care, one-third worked 43+ hours per week, just below the Region (35.8%) and State (34.1%) averages.

Significantly Higher Disability Rate Among Over 55s

- The overall disability rate in County Galway was 20.7%, just below both the Region (21.4%) and the State (21.5%). The disability rate among women (21.2%) was slightly higher than men (20.1%).
- Disability rates varied across County Galway: Athenry MD (18.3%) had the lowest while Galway City (22.2%) and Ballinasloe MD (21.9%) had the highest.
- In County Galway, 35.3% of people aged 55+ had a disability, slightly below the State rate (37.7%) but far higher than the rate for the total population of all ages in the County (20.7%).

High Growth in Households with People Living Alone

- In 2022, the proportion of lone person households in Galway City and County was 23.4%, which was higher than the State average (23.1%) but lower than the Region (25.8%).

- Between 2016 and 2022, Galway City and County saw a 9.8% increase in lone person households, outpacing the Region's growth of 7.9%.
- Athenry MD had 18.5% lone person households, below the State average, while Ballinasloe MD and Conamara MD had higher proportions at 25.9% and 24.9%, respectively. Loughrea MD and Tuam MD had proportions of 22.4% and 23.1%, with Galway City slightly higher at 24.3%.
- Athenry MD experienced a slight increase of 0.7% since 2016, while other areas like Ballinasloe MD, Conamara MD, Loughrea MD, Tuam MD, and Galway City saw decreases, ranging from -0.4% to -1.2%.

Highest Proportion of Irish Speakers in the Country

- Both Galway County (50.3%) and Galway City (45.0%) had higher proportions of Irish speakers than the Region (42.9%) and the State (40.4%). Galway County had the highest proportion of Irish speakers among all administrative counties.
- In Galway County Gaeltacht areas, 24,234 individuals reported speaking Irish in 2022, an increase on 23,550 in 2016. In Galway City Gaeltacht areas, 7,751 individuals reported speaking Irish in 2022, an increase on 7,020 in 2016.
- Among over 55s across County Galway, 42.1% reported that they spoke Irish, the highest in the State. Of these, 47.7% stated that they spoke Irish well or very well.

High Language Diversity

- In 2022, 35,000 people in County Galway spoke a language other than English at home. This population showed a higher proportion of French (8.3%), and Polish speakers (21.3%) compared to the Region (7.3% and 20.7%) and State (6.9% and 16.5%) averages.
- Among those who spoke a language other than English at home, there was a 5.9% increase in those reporting fluent English between 2016 and 2022.

increase seen between 2016 and 2022 (14.6%).

- Ballinasloe MD (76.8%), Conamara MD (78.8%), Loughrea MD (80.4%) and Tuam MD (81.8%) were all below the State average in terms of household internet access.

Urban Rural Digital Connectivity Divide

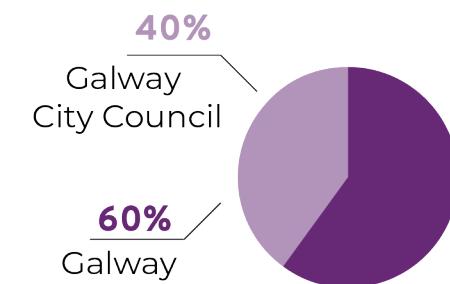
- Broadband coverage across County Galway was high (92.2%), well above the State (86.2%), with a significant



SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

277,737

TOTAL
POPULATION
2022



7.6%

POPULATION
GROWTH
2016 TO 2022

73,985

PEOPLE OVER THE AGE OF 55
representing **26%** of the total population
▲ **.3%** higher than the national average

11%
age
55-64



8%
age
65-74



7%
age
75+



17.7%

POPULATION
GROWTH WITHIN
THE 55+ AGE COHORT
2016 TO 2022

17.3%

of Galway's population
identify as not White Irish

2x

the national average
rate of Irish Travellers

35,000

people speak a language
other than English at home

34.6%

of Galway's population
aged 55+ were working

7.9%

unemployment rate was
lower than the Region (8.8%)
or State (8.3%)

32.9%

of total population
had a third level degree,
highest in the Region

99,415

TOTAL
OCCUPIED
DWELLINGS
2022

31% of dwellings are
located in Galway City

69% of dwellings are
located in Galway County

Among those aged 55+

85.5% Owner occupied

5.9% Rented from
private landlord

6.5% Social Housing

2.1% Occupied free
of rent



County Galway's social housing
share in 2022 was **6.5%**, behind the
national average of **10.3%**



7.6%

GROWTH IN DWELLINGS
(2016 TO 2022)
Behind the State average of 8.2%

5. Key Consultation Findings

Consultation for this strategy was centred on ensuring that the voices, concerns, needs, and lived experiences of older people in County Galway were actively listened to and meaningfully reflected throughout the process.

5.1 The consultation process

An extensive public consultation process was held to capture public and agency input on the Age Friendly Strategy. The consultation process was guided by the Department of Rural and Community Development – A Guide for Inclusive Community Engagement in Local Planning and Decision Making. This resource guide is aimed at ensuring that marginalised and disadvantaged communities have opportunities to engage and participate in local planning and decision-making.

To ensure an inclusive consultation process, a combination of in-person and online methods were utilised, including the following approaches:

- A dedicated information and priority planning workshop was held with the OPCs to engage directly with key representatives.
- Targeted stakeholder feedback focus group sessions were arranged with specific community groups, including approximately 60 participants across each Local Electoral Area. These sessions involved representatives from the Traveller community, new

communities, older adults living with disabilities, individuals in full-time residential care or day patients, socially isolated and those living alone, people from socio-economically deprived backgrounds, volunteers, carers.

- A poster campaign was launched alongside paper surveys, ensuring wider reach within the community, while online surveys were promoted through a social media campaign to increase engagement. The online and paper public survey was widely publicised, resulting in a total of 440 submissions.
- Age-Friendly Action planning workshops were conducted online, with over 30 agency representatives in attendance, engaging across the eight strategic themes.

For analytical purposes, the following consultation insights are organised by three overarching themes: Built and Public Environment, Community and Social inclusion, and Information and Wellbeing. This allows for a multidimensional analysis of the eight Age Friendly themes.

THE ENGAGEMENT NUMBERS



440

PUBLIC SURVEY RESPONSES



60

ATTENDEES AT FOCUS GROUPS



20

ATTENDEES AT OPC WORKSHOP

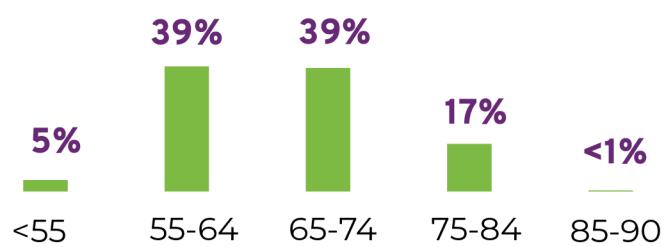


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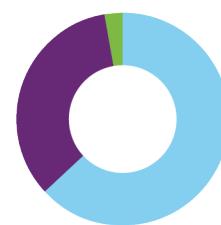
ACTION PLANNING SESSIONS

SURVEY RESPONDENTS

AGE



GENDER



70% Female
29% Male
1% Non-Binary/
Prefer not to say

LOCATION

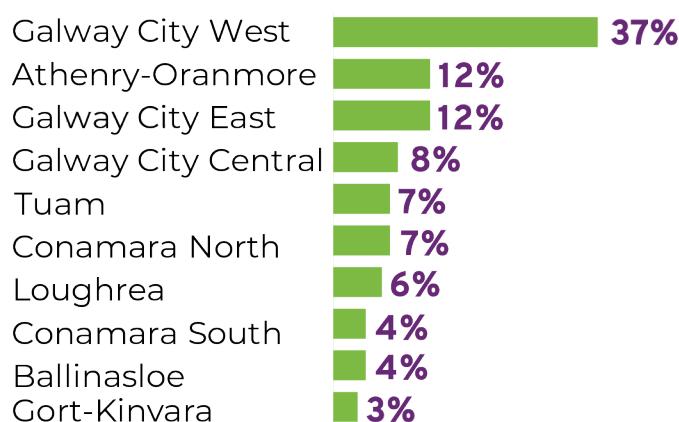
51%

GALWAY CITY COUNCIL AREA

49%

GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL AREA

LOCAL ELECTORAL AREA



PARTICIPANTS IDENTIFIED AS...

Carer
Mental Health

Galwegian

Healthy
Deaf

Irish

Catholic

Ukraine

American

Married

Atheist

Gay Disability

Independent

Roman Catholic

Widow

Member of
OPC

Cancer
survivor

5.2 Key trends – Built and Public Environment

Consultation showed that transport was the highest priority for Galway City's OPC, and the 3rd highest priority for Galway County's OPC. Both OPCs rated housing as the 5th highest priority out of the eight themes, while rating Outdoor Spaces and Buildings relatively low (6th in the County and 7th in the City).

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

1 in 2 **64%** **88%**

Stated that they have poor access to outdoor spaces and buildings

"I feel a strong **sense of belonging** to where I live"

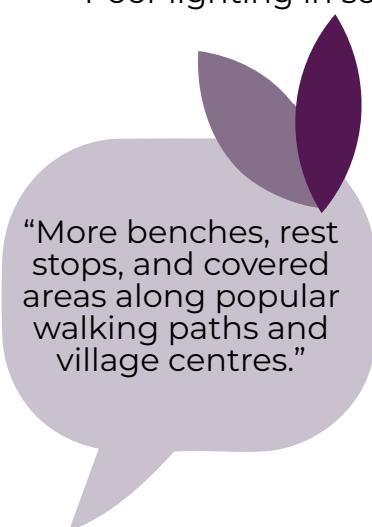
feel safe where they live

What is working well

- Green spaces, parks, and local walking routes were highly valued for exercise and mental wellbeing.
- Initiatives like Tidy Towns that help to improve and maintain outdoor spaces and buildings were highly praised.
- The survey results showed that 88% of participants from both the City and County reported feeling safe, indicating a consistent sense of safety across both areas.
- People praised Universal Design and Age Friendly Principles.

Challenges and barriers

- A lack of public seating and rest areas was noted to reduce access and engagement with public spaces.
- Areas with limited public toilets were perceived as inaccessible, and reduced usability for older adults.
- Lack of, or poor-quality, footpaths were identified as a factor that limits mobility, particularly for users of wheelchairs and walking aids.
- Poor lighting in some areas negatively impacted people's feelings of safety.



Transport and Mobility



55%

71%

Access to local transport was rated better in the City (3/5) than the County (2/5), with

"It is **easy** to get around where I live"...Galway City

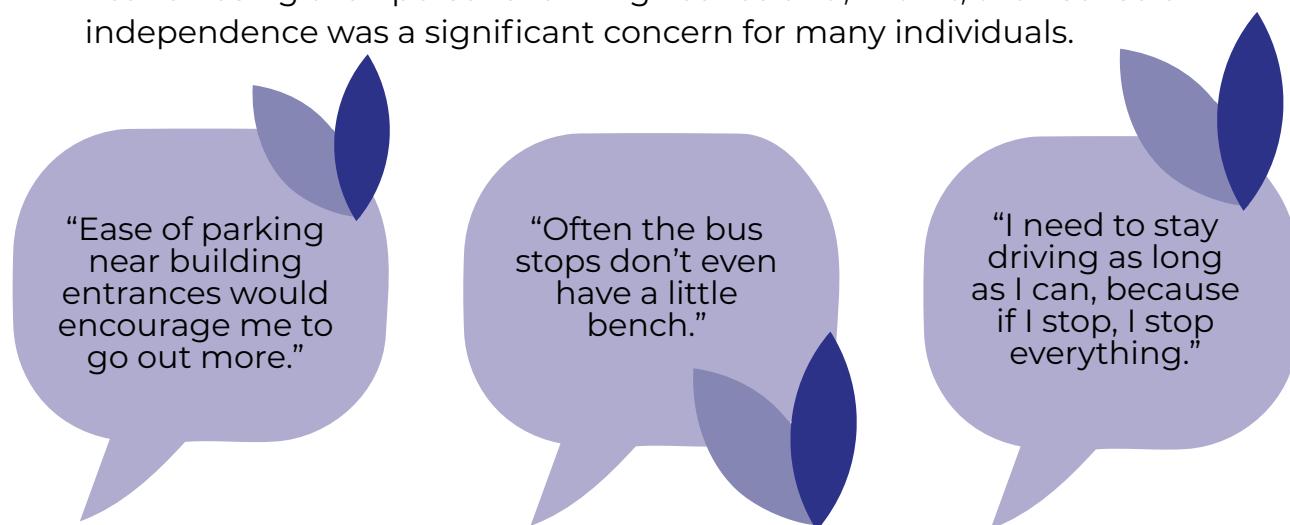
"It is **hard** to get around where I live"...Galway County

What is working well

- Where available, Local Link Services were highly valued for allowing access to appointments, shopping, and community events.
- Bus stop upgrades, including shelters and seating, were noted as very welcome, and many people indicated they hope to see more of this.
- Existing accessible active travel opportunities, including footpaths, cycle paths and greenways were highly valued, and generally participants hope to see these expanded.

Challenges and barriers

- Shortage of public transport, particularly in more rural areas, limited people's access to critical services, including medical services.
- Shortage of accessible or Age Friendly parking limited access to amenities, supports and services.
- Digital payment systems for parking discouraged people from using some parking areas (particularly in the City).
- Limited wheelchair capacity on some public transport services.
- Day Care Centres and community support services reported significant reliance on private coaches and buses.
- Only one wheelchair user can travel on the bus at any one time.
- Older pedestrians identified significant road safety challenges, including a lack of adequate signalised crossings, rapidly changing pedestrian signals, and the speed of vehicle traffic.
- Fear of losing their personal driving licence and, with it, their sense of independence was a significant concern for many individuals.



Housing

1 in 3

Have not thought about their future housing needs

38%

want to **age in their own homes** and do not plan to move

Housing intentions:

22% plan to downsize

15% want to move closer to shops

4% want to move to assisted living

2% want to move in with family

What is working well

- The majority of survey respondents (89%) were satisfied with their current living arrangements.
- Where available, integrated housing and assisted living complexes, which allowed for independence while offering shared services and social connections were highly valued, and there was an appetite for more of these.
- Housing grants were highly valued as a support to adults to remain in their homes and age in place.

Challenges and barriers

- Adaptation grants can be hard to access due to lengthy processing times and the administrative burden associated with applying.
- Only 33% of survey respondents were actively planning for their future housing needs.
- An identified demand for more dedicated age-friendly housing stock.
- There was concern that a lack of housing options would limit opportunities for those who wanted to rightsize.
- Many respondents were concerned about having to move out of their community to find age-appropriate housing.
- Concerns around accessing tradespeople, handymen, and home help often center on availability, reliability, and cost.



5.3 Key Trends – Community and Social Inclusion

Consultation with the Galway City and County OPCs showed mixed prioritisation in terms of Social Participation. The County OPC rated it as the 2nd highest priority out of the eight themes, whereas the City OPC rated it as the 6th highest priority. However, both OPCs agreed in rating Respect and Social Inclusion 4th and Civic Participation and Employment as the lowest priority.

Social Participation



Both Galway City (3.7/5) and County (3.5/5) residents rated their access to community events as good

80%

actively take part in their local community groups and activities

Barriers to socialising:

- 14%** feel too anxious to join social groups
- 11%** of women identified caring responsibilities as a barrier
- 7%** can not afford to join a group/social activity

What is working well

- The majority of survey participants (80%) noted that they were engaging with local community groups and activities.
- Local resource centres, community centres, and library services were seen as a catalyst for community development and cohesion.
- Existing social activities and groups, including arts and crafts, cultural exchange programmes, and walking groups, were valued and participants hoped to see more of these.

Challenges and barriers

- Rural areas reported reduced access to and availability of social activities and community spaces.
- Almost one in seven participants identified anxiety or a lack of confidence as a key barrier to joining new community groups, particularly high among men (17%).
- Hosting events and activities was limited due to a lack of appropriate venues.
- Heavy reliance on social media to advertise local activities limited some older people's awareness of local groups and events.



Respect and Social Inclusion

2 in 3

Reported feeling connected to their local community

Women reported higher **barriers to social and economic participation** compared to men

20%

of participants reported experiencing age-based discrimination, with city residents being 7% more likely than county

What is working well

- The majority of respondents (66%) felt connected to their local community.
- Local social groups and activity groups were praised for fostering social inclusion.
- Intergenerational initiatives were praised for breaking down stereotypes, skill sharing and relationship building, with many participants expressing a desire to see more of these initiatives in the future.
- Participants appreciated local businesses and customer support that tailored their services for older adults along with the Age Friendly businesses programme.

Challenges and barriers

- One in five reported experiencing age-based discrimination, this rate was marginally higher in the City than the County and higher among women than men.
- Respondents from the County (34%) were more likely to feel disconnected from their community than those from the City (31%).
- Many focus group participants reported often feeling dismissed or overlooked in public, professional, and community settings.
- Participants from minority groups and new communities said language barriers and a lack of local knowledge, often limits their access to supports and services.
- Participants from the Traveller community reported cultural discrimination significantly impacting access to opportunities and quality of life.



“Acknowledgement of the roles older people play e.g. as carers, mentors and consumers.”

“Need to recognise older people are people first.”

“We want to show them the Irish Traveller culture... we're a welcoming community.”

Civic Participation and Employment



42%

68%

Galway City (2.9/5) residents rated their access to employment slightly better than in Galway County (2.6/5)

"I don't know if there is a local platform where my voice can be heard"

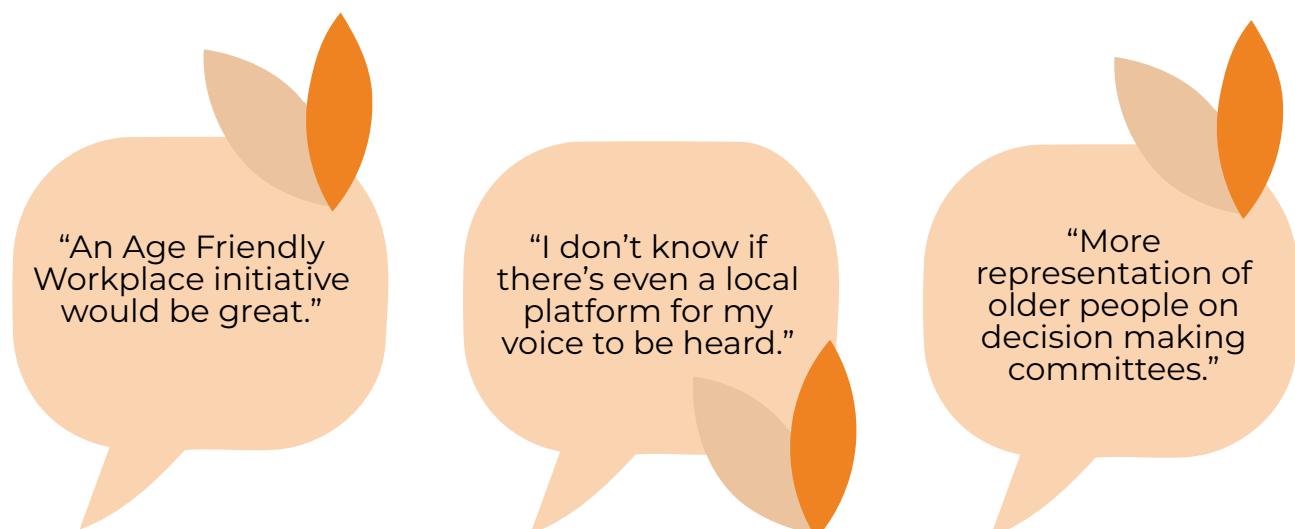
"I have been affected by the increased **cost of living** recently"

What is working well

- Many survey respondents (35%) were involved in volunteering and civic engagement activities.
- People valued opportunities to get involved in initiatives like Tidy Towns and older people's employment schemes.
- The City and County OPCs were seen as an effective tool for civic representation.

Challenges and barriers

- An increased reliance on digital skills and technologies were reported to impact confidence and significant upskilling and training requirements and barriers to older adults to remain in employment.
- Complex Garda vetting processes, lack of succession planning and volunteer burnout often impacts sustainability of volunteer led organisations.
- Lack of Age Friendly employers and employment practices.
- Some participants suggested they were intimidated by formal consultation and civic engagement processes.
- Limited availability of lifelong learning and education opportunities, particularly for in-person learning of digital skills.



5.4 Key trends – Information and Well-being Services

Consultation with the Galway City and County OPCs showed that both felt Community Support and Health Services were a high priority among the eight themes. The County OPC rated it as the highest priority, while the City OPC rated it as the 3rd highest priority. Conversely, the OPCs differed when it came to Communication and Information. The City OPC rated it as the 2nd highest priority, while the County OPC had it as the 2nd lowest.

Communication and Information

1 in 5

do not feel comfortable using digital technology.

40%

of respondents aged 75+ feel uncomfortable using digital technology

Respondents felt **access to information** on supports and services was **below average**

What is working well

- The majority of respondents (81%) were comfortable using digital technology.
- Participants valued community-level information sessions in local community centres and libraries.
- Health care providers, personal networks and traditional media outlets were the most valued methods of accessing local information.
- Participants expressed a preference for face-to-face interactions about local services, events, and activities.

Challenges and barriers

- Many respondents reported fear of being scammed while accessing technology and the internet.
- Awareness of the Directory of Services was limited, meaning many were unsure of what services were available to older people in Galway.
- Digital exclusion, digital poverty and a lack of digital skills were widely reported as areas of concern across the catchment.



“Better availability of information, more info on radio and local press.”

“There’s no central point for information, and digital poverty is real.”

“We need someone we can talk to—not just a website.”

Community Support and Health Services



46%

1 in 8

Both Galway City (3.3/5) and County (3.1/5) residents rated their access to health services as good

"I don't know who to contact for local health support"

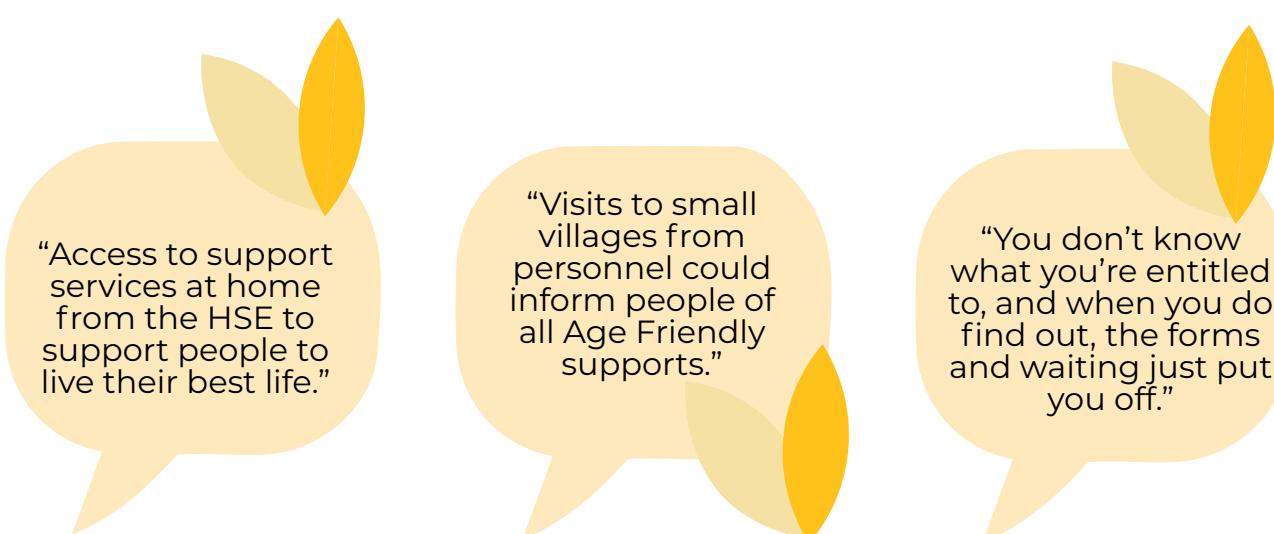
do not feel their home is currently accessible or suitable for their needs

What is working well

- Access to health services was rated above average overall (3.2 out of 5).
- Participants valued existing age-appropriate healthcare supports like the Integrated Care Programme for Older Persons, falls prevention and wellness checks.
- Primary Care Centres were highly praised across the consultation; there was clear desire to build on their success.

Challenges and barriers

- Almost half of survey respondents, particularly from the 55-64 age cohort (52%), were unsure who to contact for local health supports and services.
- Long waitlists for physical and mental health services resulted in people not getting access to the services they needed, when they needed them.
- Feeling unsafe was slightly more common among male participants (13%) compared to female (11%).
- Participants in rural areas reported more difficulty accessing health services, appointments and follow-up care than those in urban areas.
- Limited public and door to door transport resulted in people being unable to travel to and from their appointments.
- An undersupply of home care and local health services resulting in long travel distances and associated costs to access healthcare services.



6. Key Achievements 2016-2025

Before proceeding to identify priorities for a new Age Friendly Strategy, it is important to look back for two reasons:

- To identify and acknowledge achievements since our first Strategy was implemented, so that we can retain these learnings moving forward.*
- To review our first Strategy, particularly acknowledging issues to be continued and included in our new strategy.*

6.1 COVID-19

Any review of activities over the last decade must consider the effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The report “The Impact of ‘Cocooning’ measures on older people in response to COVID-19 pandemic” 2020, identified the unintended consequences and health issues of measures taken during the initial stages of COVID-19.

The report found that social isolation, and loss of social links, had a negative effect on older people’s overall health

and wellbeing. This report changed the focus of supports during the second wave of COVID-19 to support not just medical needs, but to consider the overall physical and mental wellbeing of the older person.

The negative impacts of COVID-19 have been clearly reflected across our City and County, with older people’s groups ceasing to meet, and many struggling to resume activities post-COVID, with many individuals still not re-engaged to date. This period also clearly highlighted the negative effects of the transition of information, meetings and activities to online activities, with many older people unable to make this transition, which can also heighten anxiety and social isolation. However, it is important to note that one clearly positive outcome emerged from the lockdown periods, which is our appreciation of our local amenities and green spaces. This indicates that while we need to focus on addressing the negative outcomes of COVID-19, we should not forget to accentuate the positives.



Key Achievements – Built and Public Environment



Galway County Council won the Transport Award at the **Age Friendly Recognition and Achievement Awards 2024** for its bus stops serving Cnoc Indreabhán and Casla.



‘Gort na Créige’ Claregalway was shortlisted for the **Housing Award at the National Age Friendly Recognition and Achievement Awards 2022**.



Age-Friendly Parking spaces have been provided in a number of towns and locations across the City.



Walkability Audits were undertaken in Palace Grounds Community Park Tuam and of the public realm surrounding Galway City Library, St Augustine Street to inform age-friendly improvements such as widening and levelling footpaths and the installation of benches and rest areas.



All libraries have achieved **Age-Friendly status** across Galway City and County.



Successfully piloted the **Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme**, now a country-wide initiative.

Several **integrated housing schemes** with units **designed to satisfy the requirements of elderly persons** have been developed, including An Cliathan, Garrai Caol, and Clybaun Road.



Construction of **Droichead an Dóchais**, a bridge spanning the River Corrib, with **age-friendly features** such as skid-resistant surface, accessible seating, and a signalised pedestrian crossing.



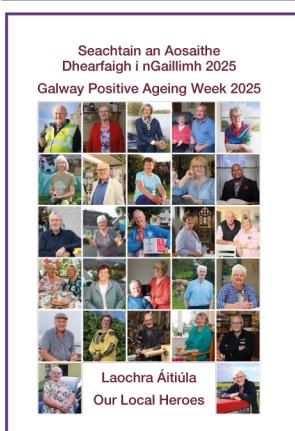
Ongoing refurbishment of **Galway Ceannt Train Station**, which Iarnród Éireann has committed to delivering as a designated ‘**Age Friendly Station**’.

Age-friendly seating and bus stops were installed in several locations across the County.

Key Achievements – Community and Social Inclusion



Galway City and County Councils have established separate **Older People's Councils** to ensure the broadest possible representation and voice of older people in their local authority areas.



Annual events for Positive Ageing Week focused on promoting active and healthy ageing to prevent age-based discrimination.



Libraries across County Galway provided a **variety of drop-in social and cultural events** aimed at older adults.



The COVID-19 Community Response Forums developed and implemented several **initiatives to help older people to stay connected**.



Social inclusion projects with COPE Galway, including theatre outings, creative workshops, and gardening for sheltered and supported accommodation residents.

Galway Sports Partnership have provided a wide range of **Active Age Programmes** such as Go for Life, Bocce, free gym membership, social dance classes, and "Come and Try" sessions across County Galway.



Healthy Galway has implemented a range of initiatives aimed at older adults such as an Active Parks initiative, Social Steps Dances, and Dementia Social Clubs.



Creative Ireland funding has supported several arts and culture initiatives aimed at older people, such as Creative Carers, the Nursing Home Heritage Project, 'Cupán Ceoil' Tea Dances, 'The Rhythm of Life' drumming programme for older people, and more.

'Platinum Picture Show' is a special film screening for older people, hosted weekly in a Galway City.



Key Achievements – Information and Wellbeing Services

The HSE Integrated Care Programme for Older People:

- Reduced hospital admissions
- Provided educational programmes
- Health promotion
- Social prescribing for community access.

HSE Mobile X-ray Service:

allowed for **95%** of patients to be treated at home, avoiding hospital transfers.

An Information Event for Older People in the City and County was held in November 2023 with:

15+ agency stands

200+ older people in attendance.



Galway County LCDC's 2022 offshore islands roadshow provided health checks and agency support to 200+ islanders. Winner of the 2023 Age Friendly Active & Healthy Ageing Award, the project is expanding to identify sustainable social and leisure opportunities for older residents.



An Garda Síochána maintained a **Register of Older and Vulnerable Persons** and carried out **welfare checks and information provision** for these individuals.



An Garda Síochána hosted **Crime Prevention Events** for older individuals, including property marking with Eircodes on machinery and community educational talks.

Galway City and County Council, the Healthy Ireland Programmes and the Age Friendly Programmes have partnered to celebrate '**Men's Health Week**'. Initiatives and events have included Wellbeing Fairs and Health Checks, the 'Gathering of the Men's Sheds', walks and sports taster sessions.



"Putting your House in Order" sessions for Galway City and County, provide important information for older people on planning legal, medical, financial, and personal affairs for the future.

Directory of Services for Older People in Galway City and County



2025

Galway City Council
Cúram Sláinte Phobail, Iarthar
Community Healthcare West
Galway County Council

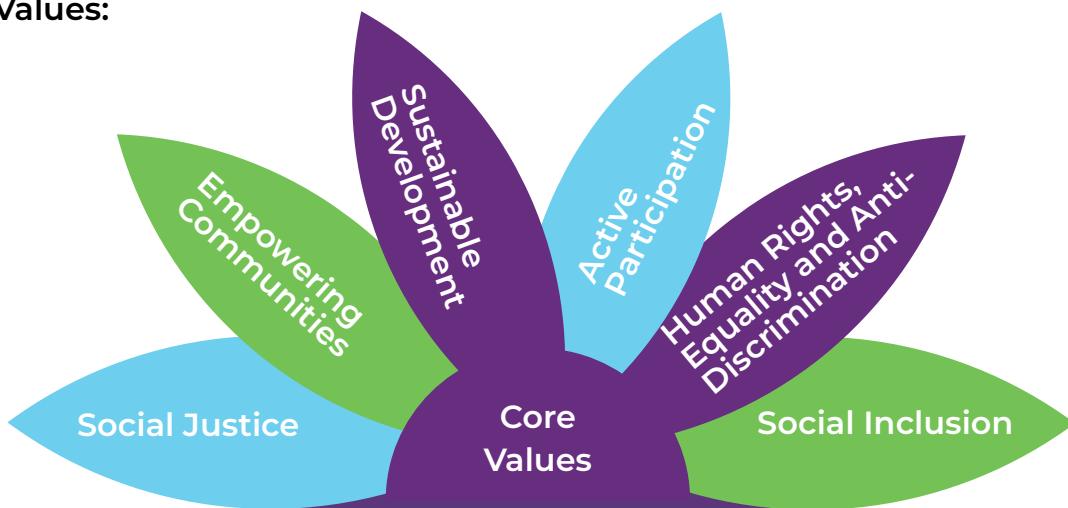
A Directory of Services for Older People was published in 2023 with an updated reprint published in 2025.

7. Our Vision and Values

Our Vision:

“To make Galway City and County a great place in which to grow old.”

Our Values:



The following set of values are identified as crucial to creating vibrant, sustainable and inclusive communities and will underpin the work of organisations delivering this *Strategy – Values and Principles for Collaboration and Partnership Working with the Community and Voluntary Sector at a Local and National Level*:

- Social Justice: we commit to ensuring everyone has equal access to economic, political and social rights and opportunities.
- Empowering Communities: we commit to building knowledge and skills of communities to become active participants in this programme, and individuals to become resilient.
- Sustainable Development: we commit to ensure the promotion of sustainable policies and practices, aimed at promoting wellbeing of our citizens now and into the future.

- Active Participation: we commit to active participation of individuals and communities in identifying their own needs.
- Human Rights, Equality and Anti-Discrimination: we commit to promoting human rights and equality in society and committing to addressing discrimination experienced by many groups.
- Social Inclusion: we commit to prioritising the needs of communities experiencing social or economic exclusion, including rural isolation.

Having regard to our Public Sector Duty to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and protect human rights, a Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment has been conducted and has been used to include actions that address identified issues in the Strategy.

8. Our Age Friendly Action Plans

The following actions reflect the collective response of the Alliance member agencies to the needs of older people in Galway. These actions are committed to for the period 2026-2031; however, as a living strategy, they will be regularly reviewed and updated by the Galway Age Friendly Alliance and the OPC's to ensure they remain responsive to emerging needs and evolving challenges.

8.1 Action Plans – Built and Public Environment

This strategic priority recognises that the physical environment is key to 'ageing in place' and aims to enable people to live independently in their own homes and communities for as long as possible. The actions under this goal are concerned with improving community and social infrastructure to cater for the needs of an ageing population. Most actions under this strategic goal will be driven by the local authority and monitored through the Interdepartmental Team. Key funding schemes will include capital schemes for regeneration and rural development, Active Travel and roads grants, Capital Schemes and Grants Schemes for housing provision and upgrades.

Our Strategic Objectives:

In order to make this goal a reality, the Galway Age Friendly Alliance, in partnership with the OPCs have identified 3 strategic priorities:

Priority 1: Outdoor Spaces and Buildings



Priority 2: Transport and Mobility



Priority 3: Housing





Priority 1: Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Aim: To ensure outdoor spaces and buildings are safe, accessible, and in compliance with age friendly principles.

Outcomes:

- Enhanced awareness of the accessibility needs of older people.
- Outdoor spaces and buildings are future-proofed.
- Older people are enabled to stay independent for longer.

	Action	Indicator / Timescale	Lead Partner
1.1	Establish an Interdepartmental Team to coordinate progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Minimum four meetings per annum.	- Local Authority's (LA's) - Community
1.2	Promote awareness of Universal Design principles and "Being Age Friendly in the Public Realm" Guidelines and Toolkits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No. of training sessions to staff, Elected Members and Public Participation Network (PPN).	- LA's – HR / Community - PPN
1.3	Ensure all public realm improvement projects incorporate universal design and age friendly practices and principles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Age Friendly assessment criteria applied to rural/urban funding schemes.	- LA's – Regeneration Team/Capital Delivery Team / Planning/ Recreation and Amenity/ - OPCs - Access for All
1.4	Ensure upgrades of public and community buildings are carried out in compliance with Universal Design principles and in compliance with safety, access and energy audits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No. of projects addressing public amenities and accessibility, including public seating, toilets, age-friendly and safe parking, pedestrian crossings, street furniture, signage, footpaths, ramps, dog control measures (e.g. fouling and beach access), overgrown vegetation, and kerb visibility.No. of proposals underpinned by Walkability Audits conducted with OPC Members.	- LA's – Regeneration / Rural and Community Department, Libraries, Planning, Climate Change and Sustainability, Corporate Services Department - Environment

	Action	Indicator / Timescale	Lead Partner
1.5	Identify funding opportunities to understand the existing gaps and increase the provision of benches, public toilets, rest areas, and bus shelters in built-up areas, beaches and green spaces and trails.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritisation of seating and bus shelters under all available funding schemes. Undertake audits of existing public realm amenities. No. of projects funded. 	- LA's – Regeneration Team and Capital Delivery Team / Planning / Roads and Transport / Outdoor Recreation / Libraries
1.6	Utilise Walkability Audits and 'Make Way Day' campaigns to audit popular community walking loops/routes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of access and safety improvements for funding through community and rural funding schemes. 	- LA's – Community/ Road and Transportation - OPC - Access for All - PPN
1.7	Maximise the use of green spaces for active and passive recreation and improve access to beaches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit gaps in provision. No. of inclusive initiatives such as outdoor gyms, pickleball, boules and lawn bowls activator poles, cycling without age, beach wheelchairs, etc. Enforcement of dog control measures on beaches and in green spaces. 	- LA's – Community, Environment/ Parks, Recreation and Amenity Department, - Galway Sports Partnership (GSP) - Access for All - LDCs
1.8	Assess feasibility for flagship projects according to Age Friendly Ireland designations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a designation such as Age Friendly Town/ Village, Housing Estate, Park, Shopping Centre, Primary Care Centre, Hospital, Train Station, University, etc. 	- LA's – Community/ Housing/ Libraries/ - OPC - Access for All

1 <https://id.urn:aaid:sc:eu:dbf9c080-fbed-4bf4-95a6-a2f00411c286>





Priority 2: Transport and Mobility

Aim: To provide accessible, connected and affordable transportation options for older people and create walkable communities.

Outcomes:

- People of all ages and abilities have walkable access to essential services.
- People are fully informed about transport options, routes and accessibility.
- Road users are aware and respectful of older people.

	Action	Indicator / Timescale	Lead Partner
2.1	Promote active travel through new and improved footpaths and pedestrian crossings connecting services in built-up areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No. of footpath improvement and pedestrian crossing projects, including safe and visible kerbs and ramps.• No. of Active Travel projects underpinned by Walkability Audits.• Annual 'Programme of Works' outlining remedial measures for repair of footpaths with action dates.	- LA's – Roads/ Transportation/ Active Travel - OPC - Access for All
2.2	Ensure cycle paths and greenways are constructed according to age friendly principles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accessible and safe parking facilities nearby, accessible picnic and rest areas, with level and accessible surfaces.	- LA's - Roads, Transportation/ Active Travel/ Community/ Regeneration
2.3	Increase the provision of age friendly and disabled parking spaces in suitable locations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No. of Age Friendly and disabled parking spaces provided at libraries, community facilities, town/village centres etc.• Utilise OPC and Access for All as consultative mechanism around location and suitability of parking spaces.• Enforcement of existing parking guidelines.• Increased visibility of Age Friendly parking spaces included as part of design.• Submission of formal requests to supermarkets to introduce designated Age-Friendly and disabled parking spaces.	-LA's – Roads / Transportation/ Community/ Regeneration/ Traffic Wardens - OPC - Age Friendly Alliance

	Action	Indicator / Timescale	Lead Partner
2.4	Develop a programme for improved bus stops and bus shelters at locations which connect users to services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of bus stops with shelter, seating, signage and public lighting to built-up areas. 	- LA's – Roads/ Transportation/ Active Travel
2.5	Establish a Transport Forum to identify improvements to rural and urban transport services and related infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Route realignments for improved access to services and public transport linkages. Identified upgrades to bus stop locations. Identified needs for new and accessible rural transport services. Increased bus services in areas of densely populated urban areas. Interconnected transport services. Adherence to bus schedules without spontaneous cancellation. No. of additional services such as Community Car / Local Area Hackney services. 	- LA's – Roads/ City Direct - Transport for Ireland (TFI) Local Link - NTA - Volunteer Centre - PPN - LDCs
2.6	Build awareness of TFI Local Link services through a variety of platforms and promotional activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of promotional initiatives. 	- TFI Local Link
2.7	Deliver road safety talks and inter-generational initiatives to improve road safety for all.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of initiatives and people engaged. 	- LA's – Road Safety Together Committee - CSP (Community Safety Partnership)
2.8	Incorporate community-based training and supports to help older adults confidently use parking and transport applications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate training sessions as part of Digital Training initiatives and events. Promotion of parking and transport applications in libraries and community spaces. 	- LA's – Libraries/ Active Travel - OPC's



Priority 3: Housing

Aim: To ensure older people have access to safe, affordable, and accessible housing to enable them to remain living in their own home, or a quality appropriate alternative, and community as long as possible.

Outcomes:

- Older people are supported to age comfortably in their own homes, or a quality appropriate alternative, and community as long as possible.
- Older people are aware of housing supports and housing options.
- Housing design and choices address a broader range of identified needs.

	Action	Indicator / Timescale	Lead Partner
3.1	Ensure appropriate benchmarks for Age Friendly Housing are included in City and County Development Plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Target for Age Friendly Housing development adopted.	- LA's - Planning
3.2	Promote awareness of Age Friendly Housing standards and recommended Universal Design features for Age Friendly Housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No. of Age Friendly Housing training sessions on national guidelines.	- LA's - Housing / Housing Technical Advisor / Planning - AFI
3.3	Promote awareness of housing adaptation grants, energy saving initiatives, and home safety initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incorporate information stands on housing grants, Warmer Homes Scheme, and Seniors Alert Scheme as part of Age Friendly Events.	- LA's – Housing / Community / Climate/ Libraries - Healthy Age Friendly Homes
3.4	Provide one-to-one assistance to older people to access supports and services to remain living in their own homes as long as possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No. of individuals supported through Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme.	- Healthy Age Friendly Homes
3.5	Identify social housing units designated for older people and include in Housing Retrofit Programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No. of social housing units designated for older people.• No. of units retrofitted.	LA's – Housing
3.6	Deliver Age Friendly Housing options in accordance with the Housing Delivery Action Plan for social and affordable housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No. of single units/estates provided according to housing demand and profiling.• No. of Voluntary Housing Projects supported under Capital Assistance Scheme.	LA's – Housing

	Action	Indicator / Timescale	Lead Partner
3.7	Develop a Rightsizing Policy to support older people to remain within their communities in homes that meet the needs of an ageing population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of applications. • To deliver quality alternative infill housing within existing communities to enable older people to move from social homes. 	- LA's – Housing



8.2 Action Plans – Community and Social Inclusion

This strategic priority recognises that social connectivity is key to physical and mental wellbeing and aims to foster social cohesion and a sense of belonging within our communities and neighbourhoods. Actions under this strategic goal will be delivered by a range of partners and funding programmes including the LCDC (Local Community Development Committee), Healthy Galway, Creative Ireland, Galway Libraries, Galway Sports Partnership, Local Authority Integration Team, Community Education Grants from GRETB, and business supports through the Local Enterprise Office (LEO).

Our Strategic Objectives:

In order to make this goal a reality, the Galway Age Friendly Alliance, in partnership with the OPCs have identified 3 strategic priorities:

Priority 4: Social Participation



Priority 5: Respect and Social Inclusion



Priority 6: Civic Participation and Employment





Priority 4: Social Participation

Aim: To encourage older people to participate in social activities and groups that promote social connectivity and wellbeing.

Outcomes:

- Older people are aware of local hubs offering social and leisure opportunities.
- Older people can access a range of events and activities.
- Social Isolation is reduced among older people.

	Action	Indicator / Timescale	Lead Partner
4.1	Map the network of community centres and other Hubs which host activities for older people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online database of social and leisure activities for older people. • Pilot programmes of additional activities at these venues. • Notice boards in libraries, community centres, family resource centres, churches, sports halls, community hubs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LA's – Community/ Libraries/GIS/ communications /Digital Officer - PPNs - GSP - LDCs
4.2	Continue to support the development of Men's and Women's Sheds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of Sheds established and supported. • No. of social initiatives introduced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LA's – Community - LDCs
4.3	Continue to promote access to a range of local library events and activities to encourage older people to interact informally in a social setting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of events for Bealtaine, Positive Ageing Week. • No. of social initiatives introduced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LA's – Libraries - LDCs
4.4	Continue to roll out participant and trainer programmes for older people's physical activity programmes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of programmes/ participants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Galway Sports Partnership - COPE Galway - LDCs
4.5	Develop a programme of arts and creative activities which caters for older people in the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of funded initiatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LA - Arts Office / Regeneration / Libraries - Creative Ireland - COPE Galway

	Action	Indicator / Timescale	Lead Partner
4.6	Pilot the delivery of informal social initiatives at relevant businesses through the Age Friendly Business Recognition Programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of businesses participating. 	- LA's – Age Friendly Programme Manager - Local Enterprise Office (LEO) - COPE Galway
4.7	Provide guidance and support to new older people's groups and establish groups in areas where gaps exist.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance document and template developed. Constitution for new groups in place. 	- LA's – Community - PPNs - LDCs
4.8	Support the delivery of sustainable social and leisure activities at the community level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of grants awarded towards equipment and upgrades / maintenance to support social and leisure activities, e.g. Age Friendly GAA, etc. 	- LA's – Community/ Libraries Arts office - Healthy Ireland - LCDC - HSE - LDCs - GSP





Priority 5: Respect and Social Inclusion

Aim: To ensure all older people feel respected and have opportunities to engage in community life.

Outcomes:

- Older people feel valued and respected in their local communities.
- Social cohesion is enhanced through inclusive events.
- Older people have positive experiences in accessing local services.

	Action	Indicator / Timescale	Lead Partner
5.1	Provide age friendly and dementia friendly training to staff and communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No. of training sessions provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- LA's - Age Friendly Programme Manager/HR- PPNs- COPE Galway
5.2	Promote social inclusion and combat ageism through targeted intercultural and intergenerational skills-sharing events, e.g. digital skills, storytelling, crafting, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No. of intercultural or intergenerational events organised through Positive Ageing Week, Social Inclusion Week, Men's Health Week, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- LA's – Community/ Libraries/Arts- GSP- LDCs- COPE Galway
5.3	Celebrate active and healthy ageing through promoting Bealtaine and Positive Ageing Week events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promotion of flagship initiatives and events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- LA's – Libraries / Arts Office- Healthy Ireland- OPC - LDCs- AFA Members- Age Friendly Ambassador
5.4	Collaborate with Age Friendly Ireland to promote the Age Friendly Business Recognition Programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase the no. of Age Friendly Businesses and tailored customer service solutions for older people identified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- LA's – Age Friendly Programme Manager- AFI- OPCs
5.5	Deliver initiatives which support individuals who require additional social care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No. of people engaging with Social Prescribing Programme, Befriending Initiatives, Care and Repair Programmes, Trusted Tradespersons Registers, etc. ¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- ALONE- Advocacy Groups- LDCs- COPE Galway

	Action	Indicator / Timescale	Lead Partner
5.6	Deliver targeted social engagement initiatives to groups who may find it harder to engage in social activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of initiatives delivered for Disadvantaged Areas, Farmers, Carers, older individuals who are LGBTQI+, Travellers, New Communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LDC's - Libraries/ Integration Team/ Community - Healthy Galway - GSP - COPE Galway
5.7	Deliver targeted creative arts and physical activity programmes for healthcare settings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of targeted initiatives to support health and wellbeing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HSE - Arts - Healthy Ireland - Creative Ireland - GSP
5.8	Expand the range of sensory and assistance aids for older people at our libraries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of initiatives. 	- LA's - Libraries



¹'Social prescribing recognises that health is heavily determined by social factors such as poverty, isolation and loneliness. Social prescribing offers GPs and other health professionals a means of referring people to a range of non-clinical community supports which can have significant benefits for their overall health and wellbeing'

'A befriending service provides companionship and social support to individuals who may be experiencing loneliness or isolation, often through regular visits or calls from a trained volunteer.'

'Age Action's Care and Repair does small DIY jobs, free of charge, for older people to help them maintain their homes and their independence.'



Priority 6: Civic Participation and Employment

Aim: To ensure all older people have opportunities to engage in volunteering, civic engagement, lifelong learning and employment.

Outcomes:

- Older people are consulted via the Older People's Council structures.
- Older people know how to access civic engagement opportunities.
- Older people have access to lifelong learning and education opportunities.

	Action	Indicator / Timescale	Lead Partner
6.1	Support the continued development of the OPCs as the representative voice of older people in Galway City and County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No. of meetings held.• No. of initiatives designed for older people by older people.• AFA Members utilise OPC's as a consultative mechanism.• Increased awareness of the role of the PPN.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- LA's – Community- AFA- PPNs- COPE Galway
6.2	Deliver targeted informal and formal initiatives to combat digital exclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No. of digital skills support initiatives provided.• No. of Acorn Tablets loaned through libraries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- LA's – Community/ Libraries- GSP- LDCs- COPE Galway
6.3	Deliver targeted lifelong learning and upskilling opportunities to older people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identification of needs and delivery of community education programmes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- LA's – Libraries- GRETB- LDCs- LEO- COPE Galway
6.4	Improve the job readiness of older people facing barriers to employment and self-employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No. of courses and educational activities held.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- GRETB- LDCs- LEO- COPE Galway
6.5	Promote volunteering opportunities available to older people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased no. of older volunteers, particularly in opportunities with social benefits such as Tidy Towns, Community Ambassadors.• Support offered for older volunteers regarding Garda Vetting process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- PPNs- Galway Volunteer Centre- COPE Galway- LDCs

	Action	Indicator / Timescale	Lead Partner
6.6	Collaborate with Age Friendly Ireland to promote Age Friendly Workplace Initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of protocols and guidelines for Age Friendly Workplaces and transition to retirement. 	-LA's - Age Friendly Programme Managers - AFI



8.3 Action Plans –Information and Well-being Services

This strategic priority recognises that access to information and high-quality community support services is key to good health and wellbeing and aims to develop and deliver integrated care services for older people. Actions under this strategic goal centre around the wraparound supports needed to maintain and promote individual and community wellbeing and will include a range of disciplines within the HSE, An Garda Síochána, the Local Community Safety Partnership, the Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme, and age friendly advocacy groups.

Our Strategic Objectives:

In order to make this goal a reality, the Galway Age Friendly Alliance, in partnership with the OPCs have identified 2 strategic priorities:

Priority 7: Communication and Information



Priority 8: Community Support and Health Services





Priority 7: Communication and Information

Aim: To ensure that older people have access to information and resources through a variety of communications channels.

Outcomes:

- Older people have access to information on services relevant to them.
- Older people can access information in a variety of ways.
- Targeted initiatives are delivered to address information gaps.

	Action	Indicator / Timescale	Lead Partner
7.1	Update and circulate the Directory of Services for Older People.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure the Directory is updated every two years and distribution through a wide variety of channels.	- LAs – Community / Healthy Age Friendly Homes - AFA - HSE - LDCs
7.2	Update older people on developments under the Age Friendly Programme through a variety of methods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No. of local and national newsletters published.• No. of press releases published.• No. of radio announcements.• Annual reports published.• PPN Calendar of Events kept up to date.	- LAs – Community - AFA - PPN - HSE
7.3	Deliver multi-agency roadshows and information events to maximise delivery of information to older people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No. of roadshow / AGM events.• No. of agencies taking part.• Resources distributed including fridge magnet emergency contact list with Eircode, 'Message in a Bottle' containing basic personal and medical details.	- LAs – Community / Libraries - AFA - LDCs - HSE
7.4	Promote age friendly initiatives and projects through the Age Friendly Ambassador.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No. of initiatives launched and attended by Age Friendly Ambassador.	- AFA
7.5	Galway Libraries and Healthy Ireland to host a range of talks and information sessions for older people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No. of information events.	- LA's - Galway Libraries - AFA - HI - HSE

	Action	Indicator / Timescale	Lead Partner
7.6	Deliver targeted information events and initiatives to our island communities to improve health and wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of Information Events / Site Visits to deliver initiatives. • Coordination of infrastructural access upgrades through Islands Committee. 	- LAs – Community / Island Committee - Healthy Galway - GSP - Age Friendly Homes - HSE
7.7	Promote and enable digital connectivity through programmes such as National Broadband Scheme to increase broadband coverage and improve ICT infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. of digital infrastructure programmes and initiatives. 	- LAs – Digital Broadband Officer/ICT



Priority 8: Community Support and Health Services

Aim: To ensure access to healthcare, social care and other essential services that support older people's wellbeing.

Outcomes:

- Health and social care supports are coordinated at community level.
- Increased awareness of healthy lifestyle choices and behaviours.
- Older people feel safe in their home and community.

	Action	Indicator / Timescale	Lead Partner
8.1	Support and aid delivery of an Age Friendly Hospital in Galway City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Utilise OPC and Access for All as consultative mechanism.• No. of new or upgraded hospital facilities created or maintained to meet the needs of older adults.	- OPC - AFA - HSE
8.2	Continue delivery of the Integrated Care Programme for Older People (ICPOP) to enhance health and social care services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No. of patients.• No. of people diverted from acute hospital care.	- HSE
8.3	Enhance pathways to wraparound services to enable people to live well at home for as long as possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information on wraparound services such as home help, meals on wheels, etc., readily available.• Utilise OPC as consultative mechanism on expansion of services.	- HSE - Healthy Age Friendly Homes - OPC
8.4	Develop targeted health promotion initiatives to support health and wellbeing in community settings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No. of community initiatives.• No. of targeted initiatives for people with dementia, carers, older Travellers, older migrants etc.	- HSE - Healthy Galway - LDCs
8.5	Improve and promote access to Day Care Centres across the City and County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No. of sites available to meet demand• Accessible transport options provided.	- HSE
8.6	Deliver presentations in the community on fire safety in the home and associated initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No. of Information Events.• Community Smoke Alarm Scheme delivered for vulnerable individuals.	- LA – Fire Station / Community / Housing /

	Action	Indicator / Timescale	Lead Partner
			Tenant Liaison Officers - Community Safety Partnership - An Garda Síochána
8.7	Register maintained to enhance the safety and security of persons and enable older persons to feel secure at home and out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of targeted information initiatives. 	- An Garda Síochána
8.8	Link with the Ageing Well Research Centre in University of Galway to explore research on positive ageing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of projects presented and promoted. 	- AFA - University of Galway



9. Monitoring Framework

The Galway Age Friendly Strategy will be routinely monitored and evaluated, to ensure activities are implemented as planned, the strategy is meeting older people's needs, and that resources are being used efficiently and effectively. The framework for this monitoring is as follows:

- Lead partner agencies will give regular reports of their action progress to the Age Friendly Alliance.
- The Age Friendly Alliance will assess progress against the objectives, actions and indicators set out in the action plan.
- Progress on the actions will be reported to the OPCs at their AGMs.
- The OPCs and the Age Friendly Alliance will collaborate on annual reports to formally review the strategy's progress against its stated actions and objectives.
- Additional consultation may be undertaken to gather older people's views of the strategy, as needed.
- The City and County OPCs will review their governance policies and procedures as required.



10. Appendices

Appendix 1: Acronyms

AFA	Age Friendly Alliance
AFI	Age Friendly Ireland
AFHA	Age Friendly Homes Advisor
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AFU	Age Friendly University
CE	Community Employment
CDP	County Development Plan
COPE	(formerly) Care of the Older People in the West (now known as COPE Galway)
ED	Electoral District
FRC	Family Resource Centre
GAA	Gaelic Athletic Association
GRETB	Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board
GSP	Galway Sports Partnership
GP	General Practitioner
HSE	Health Service Executive
ICPOP	Integrated Care Programme for Older Persons
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LA	Local Authority
LDCs	Local Development Companies
LCDC	Local Community Development Committee
LCSP	Local Community Safety Partnership
LDC	Local Development Company
LDS	Local Development Services
LECP	Local Economic and Community Plan
LEO	Local Enterprise Office
LENS	Likely intended as Local Environmental Network or Local Engagement Network (not explicitly defined)
LT	Long Term
MABS	Money Advice and Budgeting Service
MD	Municipal District
MECC	Making Every Contact Count
MT	Medium Term
NL	Not Listed / Not Labelled (used as placeholder in tables)

NTA	National Transport Authority
OPC	Older Persons Council
PPN	Public Participation Network
RIAI	Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland
RSES	Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy
ST	Short Term
SICAP	Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme
SPC	Strategic Policy Committee
TFI	Transport for Ireland
WHO	World Health Organization

