



National Updates

Merry Christmas from Age Friendly Ireland!

A message from Catherine McGuigan, Chief Officer, Age Friendly Ireland

“Dear Colleagues and Friends

2021 has proven to be another very successful year for the Age Friendly Ireland Shared Service and we have seen it growing exponentially over the past 12 months. This would not have happened without all of your key contributions to meeting the vision of An Age Friendly Ireland in this Government’s Programme for Government. Some headline achievements are highlighted below in **A Year in Review**

With that in mind I am conscious that this year has been another very challenging year for us all and many of us have experienced huge difficulties in dealing with the impact of Covid-19 on our colleagues, our families & friends and ourselves. I hope that the work we do collaboratively will contribute to supporting us all as we work through the pandemic and most importantly support us as we age. Christmas is a wonderful time for reflection, spending time with family and enjoying some down time. However, we are also conscious that there are many who will be without family and loved ones this Christmas and for them the festive season can be a lonely time so it’s important that we lend support to those who may need it over the holiday season.

On behalf of the wider age friendly family, I want to thank you all most sincerely, for your support and input to the shared service and helping us to continue to deliver on our objectives to make Ireland a truly Age Friendly country. Let us hope that the worst of the pandemic is behind us and that 2022 will be a better year for us all. Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year”



-Catherine McGuigan, Chief Officer, Age Friendly Ireland

A message from Kitty Hughes, Chairperson of National Network of Older People's Councils

"Christmas is a time when we are surrounded with the love of family and the comradery of friends. It is a time, to reflect and acknowledge the many challenges and achievements of the past year.

I want to recognise and say a special thank you to all who rose to those challenges with empathy and generosity. The Community Call Volunteers who answered requests for assistance with shopping and delivering necessities to our homes. The friendly postmen and women who quietly checked that all was well as they did their rounds. The Volunteers answering helplines, the library staff who sent books and above all the valour of our Health Care Workers who day and daily battled to save lives, cared for and comforted those suffering from Covid. Thank you for your dedication to duty through it all.



I'm sure in time to come this will be known as the year of the vaccine, - the year when scientists offered solutions and older people led the queue for vaccination and with it a chance to return to normal life. The oft' quoted lines of Seamus Heaney might after all be true 'If we can winter this one out, we can summer anywhere!'

Thank you to Catherine and staff at Age Friendly Ireland for leading us with vision and empathy, listening to different perspectives and saying yes to challenging opportunities so Ireland will be a better place in which to grow old.

The voice of older people was heard and heeded once more. Being older is slowly being recognised as being able, venerable, a valuable contributor to family and community life.

Sadly, this Christmas there will be vacant chairs at the table and a pain that goes on and on. But you are among friends and thank you to those who were that friend to each of us during the past year. When we light the candle in the window on Christmas Eve, we will remember all of you.

May you have a joyful Christmas among family and friends and may the new year bring good health and new opportunities to make life better for all of us.

I'll finish with the words of Brendan Kennelly from his poem Begin.

**"Though we live in a world that dreams of ending
That always seems about to give in;
Something that will not acknowledge conclusion,
Insists that we forever begin "**

Happy Christmas everyone!"

Kitty Hughes, Chairperson of the National Network of Older People's Councils

Age Friendly Ireland: A Year in Review 2021

Age Friendly Ireland

- 28** staff in the shared service team
- 31** Local Age Friendly Programme Managers
- 31** Age Friendly Technical Advisors
- 2 out of 8** International Webinars held in partnership with the WHO
- 6** National Launches
- 17** Local Authorities/ **400** staff members received Age Friendly Ireland Housing and Public Realm Training
- 6** permanent Regional Manager posts funded
- 600** Age Friendly Business Champions
- 108** Libraries participated in Age Friendly training just this year



Healthy Age Friendly Homes

- 800** referrals received to date and **600** assessment visits carried out
- 9** Regional Sites
- 1** National Programme Manager
- 9** Local Coordinators
- 2** Administrative Support Staff
- 1150** actions being progressed over the areas of Housing, Health & Medical, Community & Social and Technology Assistive Supports
- Maynooth University** Led Evaluation Addressing **Rightsizing**, early **Long-Term Care admission** and **Hospital Avoidance**



High Level Achievements

- Development of **strategic partnership** with Maynooth University and introduction of Research Manager in a designated research office within the shared service.
- Sláintecare and Age Friendly Ireland launch the **National Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme**, that aims to enable older people to continue living in their homes or in a home more suited to their needs.
- **Health and wellbeing partnership** with the HSE to capture data on initiatives, develop a repository of programmes, build relationships with key HSE stakeholders and others, and develop a legacy document capturing models of best practice
- Age Friendly Ireland in partnership with the HSE Health and Wellbeing undertook a **consultation process** to get a true picture of how older people were coping during the pandemic, through surveys and focus group workshops
- The Age Friendly Ireland Housing and Public Realm Training module received **RIAI and Engineers Ireland CPD approval**.
- Joint Ministerial Launch of a suite of **housing resources** linked to the 'Housing Options for our Ageing Population' policy (Age Friendly Home Rating Tool, 'Ten Ways' brochure, Age Friendly Planning Guidance and others).
- Active **National Network of Older People's Councils Transport Subgroup** with very positive engagement with the National Transport Authority.



Regional High-Level Achievements

- **North Dublin MABs** became an Age Friendly Businesses and launched in Fingal on the 1st of December.
- Large volume of **Age Friendly Communications Programmes** including Chatters and Matters radio programme which was nominated for an **IMRO award** this year
- **Tri-Shaw programme launch** for those with mobility impairment as part of DCC Inclusion



Councillor **Sean Drew** (Cathaoirleach, Meath County Council) gave a welcome address to kick start the webinar. Minister **Mary Butler** (TD, Minister for State, Department of Health with responsibility for Mental Health and Older People) followed up with the Ministerial Address. **Kitty Hughes** (Chairperson, National Network of Older People's Councils) gave a warm close to the webinar with a Christmas message from the National Network of Older People's Council.

To view a recording of the webinar, [please click here](#)

To learn more about Age Friendly Sharjah, [please click here](#)

Webinar 3 Update – Social Participation

Following feedback from online delegates, we have been asked to defer January's webinar due to holidays, annual leave and planning preparation. It will be reassigned to a July session date which will be announced closer to the time.

HSE Partner Pack



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Our highlight communications updates for you from this week are:

- **COVID-19 Vaccine Booster - More ways to get your vaccine:** People aged 50 and older, healthcare workers and people aged 16 and over with a high-risk condition can now get a COVID-19 vaccine booster dose.

It is very important to get your COVID-19 vaccine booster when it is due. Without a booster, you are more at risk of serious illness if you get COVID-19. There are now even more ways to get your COVID-19 booster.

If you're over 50, a healthcare worker or over 16 with a high-risk condition you can:

1. Go to a walk-in vaccination clinic. Visit [hse.ie/covid19vaccine](https://www.hse.ie/covid19vaccine) for clinic times and locations.
 2. You'll get an appointment by text message from the HSE. If it doesn't suit you can reschedule or go to a walk-in clinic.
 3. Contact a participating pharmacy or GP. Visit [hse.ie/covid19vaccine](https://www.hse.ie/covid19vaccine) for a list of pharmacies in your area.
- For updated information on when and how to wear **face masks**, including those aged 9 and older, please find details [here](#).

- **If you have symptoms of COVID-19, self-isolate and get a PCR test.** Please do this even if you are part or fully vaccinated against COVID-19. You can find more information [here](#).
- If you're regularly in high-risk environments, and you don't have symptoms of COVID-19, the advice is to use **antigen tests** twice a week. If you do have symptoms, please don't use an antigen test. Please find more information [here](#).
- If you are a **close contact of a person that tests positive for COVID-19**, please find guidance [here](#).

Public Health Measures

You can [find the public health measures here](#).

Walk-in clinics for dose 1 and dose 2, and booster vaccines for healthcare workers and people aged 50-69

The HSE is operating some walk-in clinics for dose 1 and dose 2, and booster vaccines for healthcare workers and people aged 50-69. You must wait at least 5 months after your second vaccine dose before you can get your booster. If you had the single-dose Janssen vaccine, you must wait at least 3 months.

See times and locations of the walk-in vaccination clinics [here](#).

COVID-19 Testing - Online Booking System

Full details of [how to get tested are available here](#).

Common symptoms include high temp, dry cough and change in sense of taste or smell. If you have symptoms of COVID-19, it's very important to self-isolate and get tested as soon as possible. [#StaySafe](#) | [#ForUsAll](#)

COVID-19 Vaccination Programme

You can find the latest information on vaccines administered [here](#).

[You can read the full weekly update by clicking here](#).

RSVP Campaign



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive



Ask yourself the questions overleaf and assess your level of risk or visit gov.ie/riskaware

RISK

Am I vaccinated / have I received my booster?

Being vaccinated offers good protection against severe illness and hospitalisation and lowers the risk to you and others.

Am I more vulnerable than others?

Activities involving meeting others is higher risk so you need to take steps to protect yourself.

Will I be there longer than 2 hours?

The shorter the duration of an activity, the lower the risk.

Will the event be indoors?

Indoor activity is riskier than outdoor activity.

If the activity is indoors, will there be adequate ventilation?

Let fresh air in to reduce the risk of COVID-19.

SYMPTOMS

Do I have symptoms that could be associated with COVID-19?

If you are displaying any symptoms, you should stay at home and arrange a PCR test – do not go out.

Does anyone I'm meeting have symptoms that could be associated with COVID-19?

Feel comfortable asking the people you are meeting if they have symptoms and if they do, advise them to stay at home and book a PCR test.

VENUE

Can I keep a safe distance from others?

By keeping your distance from others, you can reduce your risk – be aware that this maybe more difficult in some places.

Will the venue be crowded?

Avoiding crowded places will reduce the risk associated with an activity.

Will I/we wear masks?

Wearing masks reduces the risk for everyone.

Is it a well-managed premise?

If a venue is not following public health guidance, including checking your vaccine pass, there may be a higher risk. You should take your business elsewhere.

PEOPLE

How many people am I meeting?

The more people you meet, the greater the risk.

How many households are meeting up?

Getting together with your own household is lower risk. The more households you meet with, the greater the risk.

Am I meeting vulnerable people?

You should take particular care if you are meeting with vulnerable people. You should take

steps to protect them such as wearing a mask or taking an antigen test before meeting them.

Are the people I am meeting vaccinated / have they received their booster?

Being vaccinated offers good protection against severe illness and hospitalisation and lowers the risk to you and others.



Town Centre First Plans funding announced

Minister for Rural and Community Development Heather Humphreys TD has announced funding worth €2.6m to deliver the first ever Town Centre First Plans, designed to tackle dereliction and revitalise town centres. As part of the initiative, each local authority will be provided with €100,000 to support the development of its own unique master plan. It is envisaged that the plans will cover the importance of “place-making”, town centre living, the social and economic purpose of the town, and respond to emerging opportunities such as those linked to remote working, climate action and digitalisation.

To find out more, please visit either of the links below.

[Gov.ie](#) // [Irish Independent](#)



HSE Health and Wellbeing Staff Christmas Concert 2021

You can register here for the upcoming Staff Christmas Concert:
https://ims.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_OpEhBwowTGWicrvvTPGjhg
If you are sharing on Twitter please use the #Sing4HealthyIreland.

Many of you have been in touch or asked in the registration about sharing the invite with family and other colleagues outside of the HSE, everyone is welcome to this event so feel free to share to whoever you think would enjoy and appreciate some singing and festive cheer!

So, join us on the 21st of December for the HSE Health and Wellbeing, Staff Christmas Concert. All are welcome to this free online event. We would really appreciate your attendance at what promises to be a very special event, which will see performances from HSE Staff Choirs and special guests, all performing to create some festive cheer for us all.



Help combat the growing epidemic of loneliness

LAUNCH EVENTS:
 House of Lords, London 26.01.22
 Leaders Forum – online event hosted by ISO 01.02.22

A new report entitled ‘Cultivating Neighbourhoods that Care: A manifesto for change’, examines how the built environment can address loneliness in society through the creation of connected communities for residents of all ages.

Contributed to by age, health, care and design experts, policy makers and thought leaders, and drawing on perspectives and best practice from around the world, follow the link below and find out how you can get involved.

[Learn more](#)



Community Time Capsule – A message from Neighbourhood Network

“We are seeking communities in counties - Kilkenny, Longford, Cavan, Clare and Kildare to take part in a neighbourhood archive project over the next few weeks. The initiative pairs young people and older people who live in the same area. Facilitated interviews are conducted between the pair to learn about their lives and what community means to them. Their recorded responses, art works and photos create an image of how the community looks now and how it looked in the past.

This is a brilliant opportunity to reach out to older people this Christmas, such as older neighbours who might be living alone or those who might be seeking new ways to engage with their communities.



Community Time Machine

A neighbourhood archive of stories and creativity



The Community Time Machine project was developed to connect different generations of people living within a community.

This is a fun opportunity to connect local teens and seniors, for participants to learn more about the history of their area and to help build a time capsule of stories from the past- simply by having a chat and taking on a creative challenge!

All of the interviews, creative responses and portraits are then included in a unique online gallery and included in a community time capsule. Check out the Time Machine website: <https://timemachine.neighbourhoodnetwork.ie/>

We are inviting community groups and neighbourhoods all over the county to get involved so please get in touch!

GET INVOLVED!

Each Community Organiser guides a group of local participants through the project over a four week period, and at the end of the project receives:

- A time capsule box filled with your community's stories and creative responses
- Printed copies of the participant portraits to share with your group
- €100 to donate to a charity or local community group of your choice

To get involved visit: timemachine.neighbourhoodnetwork.ie



Clár Éire Idirnáscach
Creative Ireland
Programme
2017-2023



An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail
Department of Rural and
Community Development

We are hoping to get groups from local clubs, centers, parishes and schools involved. If you know any groups who might be interested please share or if your community would like to get involved please get in touch!

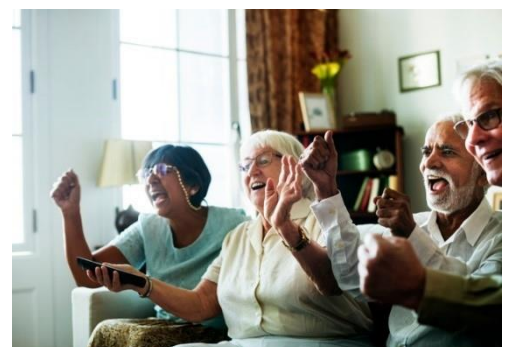
To learn more about the project or to find information to share with your local community see:

[Timemachine.neighbourhoodnetwork.ie](https://timemachine.neighbourhoodnetwork.ie)
<https://fb.watch/9MvrTlrbcl/>



Hands on SHAFE Technology Webinar

The ERASMUS+ **Hands-on SHAFE** project is developing online learning materials to facilitate independent living. Register (for free!) and join at 2pm on the 10th of January for a webinar where they show examples of the materials that they have developed so far and ask for your feedback. They would also like to get your guidance on the next round of materials which they will develop in 2022.



comhairle chontae na mí
meath county council



They are developing materials under four headings:

- **SHAFE General:** Introduces the idea of Smart Healthy Age Friendly Environments (SHAFE) and covers some general topics about active and healthy ageing.
- **Healthy:** Describes ways in which health and wellness can help us to live an active and healthy and independent life.
- **Built:** Focuses on how homes and outside environments can be adapted to make them more liveable as we age.
- **Smart:** Considers how mobile technology and smart home devices can assist with staying healthy, connected and with living independently.

You can register for the webinar using this link.

<https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/hands-on-shafe-learning-materials-review-webinar-tickets-224144049887>



A Christmas Gift to Show you Care!

Still, thinking of a perfect gift for your loved one or yourself?
Then we might have an answer for you!

Siel Bleu at Home is here with a Special Christmas Voucher for you or for someone you've been thinking of gifting something meaningful. Our 3-month online membership is now available for a limited period for €50 only!

The graphic features a red background with Christmas decorations like pine branches, red and white ornaments, and candy canes. It includes the Siel IRELAND Bleu logo, the word 'Christmas' in cursive, a '€50' tag, and a 'Special Christmas Offer' tag. A list of benefits is provided in a yellow box, and icons at the bottom represent various activities like walking, stretching, and running.

- Unlimited access to all live and recorded sessions
- Classes include Strength and Balance, Mobility and Stretch, Cardio and various Circuits
- Expert trainers
- Classes offered through Zoom and can be attended in the comfort and safety of their home

3 MONTH CHRISTMAS MEMBERSHIP VOUCHER



North Dublin MABS received their recognition of being an Age Friendly Service.



On November 25th, 2021, North Dublin MABS received their recognition of being an Age Friendly Service.

(Freephone number 0818 072000)

MABS is the Irish money advice service. They have been helping people to deal with problem debt for more than 25 years. MABS supports people who are struggling with debt and need help by offering impartial advice from MABS to help people manage their money and take control of debt. North Dublin MABS is home to the MABS National Helpline, the Abhaile Voucher Desk and six offices based in the city and county of north Dublin. Back in May of this year, following expressions of interest sought from MABS staff in North Dublin, the Age Friendly Champions came together. From that first meeting the enthusiasm, ideas and commitment to achieving Age Friendly Recognition for their service never waned.

Having selected all their Age Friendly Champions, they attended the workshop facilitated by Louise Edmonds. The workshop was run incredibly well and put them on the path to our recognition. During the workshop, they were invited to see if they were already doing an action that is age friendly and then this gave them an idea of where they would focus their efforts to maximise the impacts of their action for the older client. After completion of the workshop, the questionnaire for their older clients was completed to ensure that the actions the group agree to implement in North Dublin MABS are steered by the recommendations of their services users and potential service users.

The top three priorities from the questionnaire were:

1. Having regular check in phone calls from money advisor or helpline advisor.
2. Increasing font size on MABS forms
3. Having chairs with arm rests

These three priorities might seem simple, but they address some of the most fundamental vulnerabilities of older people isolation, visual impairment and mobility issues.

You can watch a recording of the launch of their Recognition here [North Dublin MABS Age Friendly Recognition Webinar](#)



Bantry Christmas Cards from Local School Children

This project originated last year when we were all in lock down. AF Bantry were thinking of ways we could connect with older people in our community and hopefully brighten their day a little by receiving a Christmas Card from local children.

CCC had delivered their lovely Care Packages which were hugely successful. We contacted the local schools about this project, they were most supportive.

We distributed these cards which were beautifully decorated and had some lovely verses in them.



This year, being a little more organised, we did the same, but slightly better. We bought and supplied the material for the cards. One of our local stationary shops cut the paper to fit a particular size envelope, which we also bought.

When the cards were complete, we collected them from the schools, and put them in the envelopes. No names were put on the cards, we left the contact person

from each organisation to put a name on the cards if they so wished.

We distributed them to a contact in each of the following groups :

- The local Nursing Home.
- Active Retired.
- Care of The Aged.
- The 4 Valleys – Local Rural Group.
- Meals on Wheels.
- Local Link.

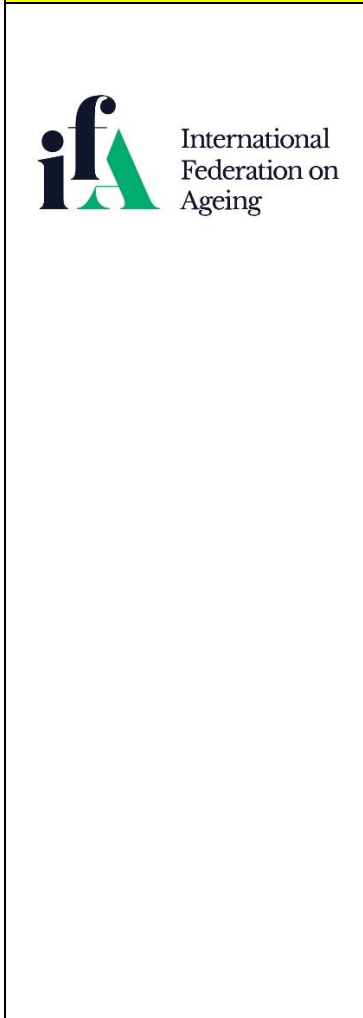
We had approx. 320 cards in total.
 We hope everyone will like and enjoy the cards.
 We gave boxes of sweets to the children in all the schools.

Your Voice



We've heard about so much good work going on all around the country, please let us know what's happening in your area so we can share those innovative ideas with everyone. Please email us your news to Rachel at rleavy@meathcoco.ie Information is one thing we can share right now!

International Updates



IFA Global Cafe | In Conversation with Mr David Stoller on "How Innovative Technologies Impact the Aging Industry".

The International Federation on Ageing held a Global Cafe event this morning called - In Conversation with Mr David Stoller, Director, Community Engagement at Rendever on "How Innovative Technologies Impact the Aging Industry".

A recording of this event will be available on the Federation's website <https://ifa.ngo/ifa-global-cafe/> and <https://drbarometer.com/community/resource-library>

Important Tips

Always have your **Eircode** close by in case of emergency. You can find your Eircode [here](#)

Perhaps keep a **daily diary** to record the people you are in contact with every day, so if you develop symptoms it will be easier to trace them

Coronavirus COVID-19



If you have fever and/or cough you should stay at home regardless of your travel or contact history.

If you have returned from an area that is subject to travel restrictions due to COVID-19 you should restrict your movement for 14 days. Check the list of affected areas on [www.hse.ie](#)

All people are advised to:

- > **Reduce** social interactions
- > **Keep a distance** of 2m between you and other people
- > **Do not** shake hands or make close contact where possible

If you have symptoms visit [hse.ie](#) or phone HSE Live: 1850 24 1850

How to Prevent



Wash
your hands well and often to avoid contamination



Cover
your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing and throw it away



Avoid
crowded public places or events with common surfaces



Clean
any surfaces frequently touched such as door handles and lift keys



Stop
spreading germs of coughing or sneezing into the air



Distance
at least 2 metres to other people

Symptoms

- > Fever (High Temperature) > A Cough > Shortness of Breath > Breathing Difficulties

For daily updates visit

www.gov.ie/health/covid-19
www.hse.ie

Healthcare and Community Services
www.hse.ie



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Useful Contacts

Age Friendly Ireland Shared Service Office Telephone: 046 9097413

Or Email: leavy@meathcoco.ie

HSE Advice Line: Callsave 1850 24 1850

Call from 8am – 8pm Monday to Friday and 10am to 5pm Saturday and Sunday