



**Age &
Opportunity**

Annual Report 2018

**All older people
more active, more visible,
more creative, more
connected, more often.**



At **Age & Opportunity**,
our mission is to create the best
possible quality of life for people
aged 50 to 100+.

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Chairperson's Statement



Ita Mangan **Chair**

2018 was a significant year for Age & Opportunity, as it marked our 30th year as an organisation – we were founded as a response to the need for promotion of more positive attitudes to older people and ageing. We have established ourselves as leading thinkers on ageing in Ireland, exploring key issues such as what is older age, how we can plan for our own ageing and what positive changes we can make in our own lives to ensure that we live well for longer.

In early 2018 we reflected on the significant impact of our work to date on the landscape of ageing, where ageing now brings many possibilities and opportunities. We embarked on a consultation process around the future direction of Age & Opportunity, engaging with our participants, stakeholders, funders, Board and staff.

The outcome was a renewed focus and an enhanced mission to achieve the best possible quality of life for people aged 50 to 100 plus.

The rapid ageing of the overall population is a key factor in social change in Ireland. Life expectancy in Ireland has increased by almost 2.5 years in a little over a decade. A century ago it was about 50; today it is 81.5.

Almost one in three people in Ireland today are over the age of 50.

In the words of American writer Betty Friedan, ageing is not lost youth, but a new stage of opportunity and strength. This encapsulates the essence of Age & Opportunity and our vision of an Ireland where all older people are more active; more visible; more creative; more connected; more often.

The challenge is to ensure that people can grow older comfortably, and well. While living longer is clearly one of the great success stories of modern society, positive ageing requires significant policy and programme responses in multiple areas.

We have organised our work for 2018 to 2020 using four strategic themes which are responses to this challenge and fundamental to us achieving our vision and mission:

- Creating and Promoting Diverse Models of Ageing
- Influencing Public Policy
- Supporting and Developing our Programme Partnerships

- Optimising our Organisational Capacity
- We have reported on our work throughout 2018 under these thematic headings in each of our programme areas:
- Sport – a programme designed to get us more active, proving opportunities for us to take part in recreational sport and physical activity.
- Engage – a programme which offers a range of learning initiatives, courses and workshops for our own personal development as well as opportunities for us to play an active role in our community.
- Arts – a dedicated arts and culture programme running throughout the year in local communities around Ireland, including our annual high profile Bealtaine Festival, which takes place throughout the month of May.
- We have celebrated significant successes in 2018 including:
- In our Sport Programme, the launch of our 18th allocation of our Go for Life grants, which brings the total grants allocated over 18 years to over 14,000 and the total funds allocated to almost €5.7m.
- In our Engage Programme, the delivery of Changing Gears, our resilience programme, to hundreds of HSE staff, and to more hard to reach groups such as older prisoners, and people living with life changing illnesses such as COPD and HIV.
- In our Arts Programme, the celebration of our 24th annual Bealtaine Festival, which reached over 80,000 people across the country.
- The continued work of the alliance of age sector NGOs, which represents high level engagement of eight key national NGOs working strategically to inform and influence policy to help shape the national agenda around ageing, particularly in relation to the implementation of the National Positive Ageing Strategy.
- A refresh of our brand and logo and visual identity to ensure that our brand personality reflects our new strategy, mission, vision and values.

We are very proud of our achievements in 2018, and I would like to pay tribute to the Board of Age & Opportunity and our various Committees and Advisory Groups, which remain deeply committed to the continued growth and success of the organisation.

I would also like to thank our CEO and all our employees, and our extended team and partners across Ireland for being instrumental in helping Age & Opportunity to achieve the best possible quality of life for people aged 50 to 100 plus.

Ita Mangan
Chairperson
Age & Opportunity

CEO's Statement



Karen Smyth **CEO**

I am delighted to present Age & Opportunity's annual report for 2018, marking our 30th year anniversary as an organisation. 2018 was a year of celebration of and reflection on how far we have come as an organisation in 30 years, and a recognition of all we have achieved in developing, providing and promoting opportunities for ageing well in Ireland.

We are very passionate about implementing our new Strategic Plan for 2018 to 2020; a key focus of it will be an investment in rigorous research that will test, measure and communicate our initiatives.

We are achieving this by:

- Championing the creativity and value of older people;
- Combatting stereotypes and negative views of ageing;
- Developing inclusive and engaging experiences which respond to the interests and needs of the diverse older adult population;
- Developing, testing and measuring the impact of pioneering programmes and approaches;

- Making evidence available to policy makers and service providers;
- Working with partners and stakeholders to ensure that Ireland's policies, strategies and programmes are directly informed by the needs and experiences of older people.

With our renewed focus on those from 50 to 100 plus comes a significant challenge, as the population within this age category does not form a homogenous group – it is diverse and includes people from all walks of life. We recognise that we are all different, and therefore we are all ageing differently and there isn't a one size fits all approach to achieving the best possible quality of life.

Our ethos of putting older people first ensures that the views, opinions and experiences of diverse older people inform all that we do, and our focus on quality and inclusivity means that we work to ensure equality of participation for all older people, irrespective of background culture, identity, setting or location.

Throughout 2018, our activities were provided on a nationwide basis, in each county, in both urban and rural areas. Our focus has

been on promoting the engagement of older people in their local communities and, at times, their engagement at a national level.

In 2018, we engaged with 119,871 older people throughout the country, in every county, from a mixture of rural and urban areas, from various socio-economic backgrounds, with varying levels of experience of social exclusion and loneliness and isolation.

Some of our participants had already been engaged in our programmes and some took part for the first time. Our participants have various types of living arrangements, some independently in the community, some with supports in the community, some live in care setting environments, and some are currently incarcerated in prison. Some are members of groups such as local authority Older Peoples Councils, Irish Countrywomen's Association, Active Retirement, sports clubs, choirs, men's sheds, and some participate in our programmes on an individual basis.

Some of our participants are groups and individuals working directly with older people, for example activities co-ordinators in care settings, and various staff in the public and private sectors.

We continue to reach older individuals and groups through our model of working in partnership with other agencies and organisations including the national networks of Local Sports Partnerships and Arts Officers, HSE Health Promotion and Services for Older People Offices, libraries, active retired groups, Family Resource Centres, Day and Residential Care settings, Older Peoples Councils, Age Friendly Alliances and Community Development Programmes in every county.

Our work would not be possible without the strategic relationships that we have developed throughout the country, and a key focus of our Strategic Plan 2018 to 2020 is on continuing to support and develop our programme partnerships, so that our work continues to make a real impact. I would like to thank all of our partners around the country for their delivery of high quality outcomes for the people we serve.

I would also like to thank our funders, in particular the HSE, Sport Ireland and the Arts Council, for their continued commitment, without which our work would be impossible.

I would like to thank the Board of Trustees of Age & Opportunity for their unwavering commitment, strategic leadership, expertise, advice, support and guidance, and also our Committee and Advisory Groups for their commitment and expertise.

Many thanks also to my dynamic, energetic and passionate colleagues and extended team of committed trainers, facilitators, mentors, artists, physical activity leaders and volunteers.

Finally, thank you to all the participants of our programmes the length and breadth of the country who continue to enable us to push the boundaries in exploring diverse models for ageing, and who bring fresh thinking, bold experimentation and creativity to all aspects of our work in delivering a good quality of life for all older people.

Karen Smyth

CEO

Age & Opportunity

Strategic Plan

2018 – 2020

Our Vision

An Ireland where all older people are more active; more visible; more creative; more connected; more often.

Our Mission

Our mission is to achieve the best possible quality of life for people aged 50 to 100+

Our Values

Older people first

The views, opinions and experience of diverse older people inform all that we do.

Equality / Inclusivity

We work to ensure equality of participation for all older people, irrespective of background, culture, identity, setting or location.

Pioneering

We explore and push out the boundaries relating to opportunities for activity, creativity and visibility.

Inspiring

We celebrate and showcase inspiring stories of ageing.

Excellence

We strive to create an ethos of excellence with strong governance and clear transparency.

What we do

Age & Opportunity is the national organisation that provides a range of opportunities for older people who want to get more involved in arts and culture, sport and physical activity, civic engagement and personal development.

Our aim is to inspire people aged 50+ to live a dynamic life in which they are more active, more visible, more creative and more connected.

One of our key priorities is to truly understand what ageing in Ireland means for people today by increasing the dialogue we have with them - conducting regular research through focus groups and workshops and by generating more opportunities for their feedback across all of our programmes.

We work with local communities and organisations across the country to run a range of programmes and activities in three key areas:

Age & Opportunity Arts provides opportunities for us to engage more in arts and cultural events and initiatives.

Age & Opportunity Sport is designed to get us more active and participating in recreational sport and physical activity.

Age & Opportunity Engage offers a range of workshops and learning initiatives for our own personal development as well as opportunities for us to play an active role in our community.

Our Work in Numbers

Programme	Number of activities / events / workshops / sessions	Number of participants
Sport	1,261	32,632
Engage	116	315
Arts	1,552	86,924
Total	2,929	119,871

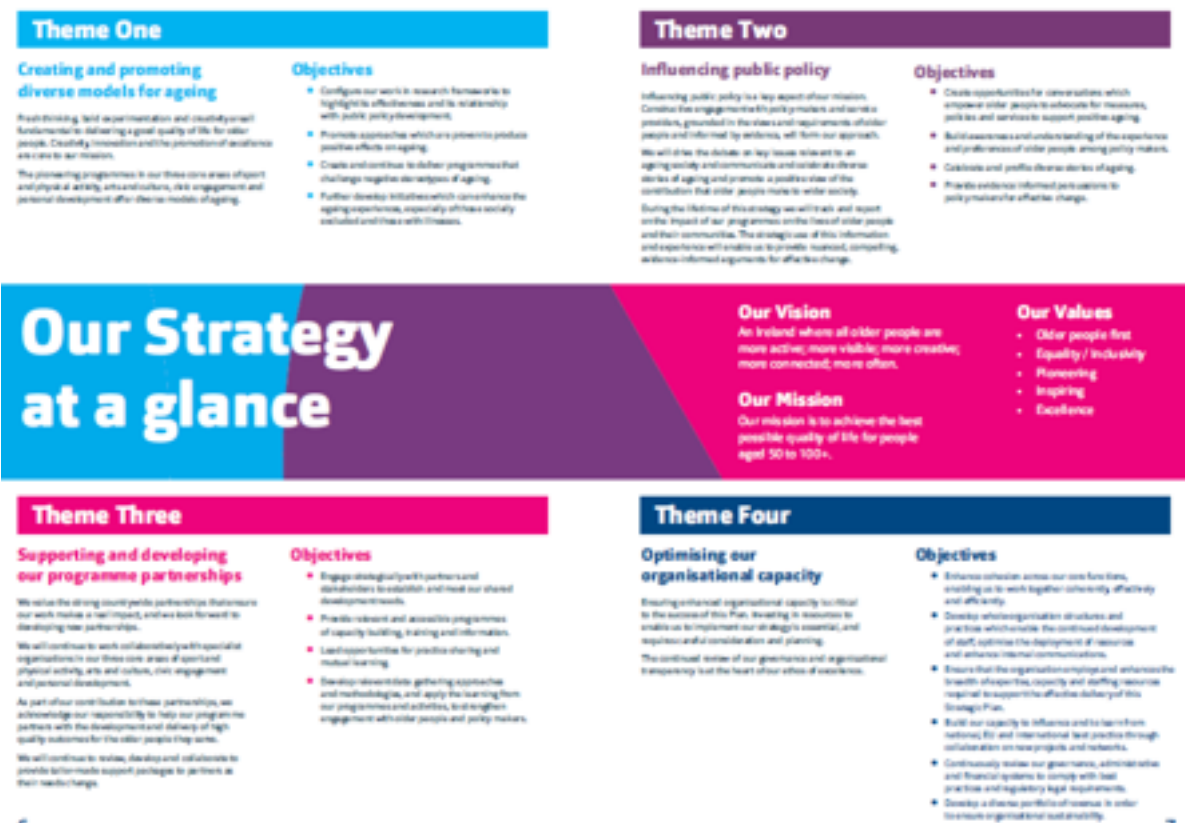
Our Strategic Themes

The strategic themes and objectives in our **Strategic Plan 2018-2020** were developed in collaboration with our staff and Board, informed by a combination of consultations with participants, stakeholder and funders, an analysis of national policy around ageing and a thorough analysis of all of our areas.

We focus on programmes that improve quality of life for older people in three core areas: sport and physical activity, arts and culture, and civic engagement and personal development. Our Strategic Plan 2018-2020 renews our focus, by stimulating meaningful change in the quality of life of older people through an enhanced strategic use and communication of our programme outcomes.

A key focus for the life of our Strategic Plan 2018-2020 is investment in rigorous action research programmes which test, measure and communicate initiatives. We aim to influence perceptions, policy and practice at international, national, regional and local levels.

We have organised our work for 2018-2020 using four strategic themes which are fundamental to helping us achieve our mission. We wish to be a catalyst for a broad range of partners and stakeholders, both established and new, for the development and delivery of high quality outcomes for the older people they serve.





Age & Opportunity **sport**

What we want to see for older people

An Ireland where all older people are more active; more visible; more creative; more connected; more often.

Age & Opportunity Sport is a programme designed to get us more active, providing opportunities for us to get take part in recreational sport and physical activity. We run a range of initiatives including Go for Life, the National Physical Activity Programme for Older People, funded by Sport Ireland and the HSE.

Why we run a sport programme

Just 30 minutes of physical activity a day can make a big difference to your health but only a quarter of us are following these guidelines. Our Go for Life initiative aims to get more older people more active, more often.

Strategic Theme One

Creating and Promoting Diverse Models for Ageing

Since 2001, our **Go for Life Programme** has been getting more older people more active more often. The initiative is funded by Sport Ireland as part of its commitment to increase participation in physical activity and recreational sport among older people. Its objectives are closely aligned with Sport Ireland's strategy as well as the National Physical Activity Plan, the National Positive Ageing Strategy and Healthy Ireland.

Our **PALs (Physical Activity Leaders)** initiative is an education and peer leadership scheme which trains older people to lead sport and physical activity programmes with their peers in their local communities.

In 2018, we held 80 Physical Activity Leaders (PALs) workshops, attended by a total of 130 new PALS. At the end of 2018 there are approximately 1,030 PALs leading or organising physical activity for their groups and communities, and getting their communities more active.

CarePALS is a two day course, adapted from the PALs workshops, which empowers staff in day and residential care settings to lead suitable physical activities with older people who live in or visit their setting. It is based on our original leadership model and means that physical activity sessions can be delivered by staff and included as part of the daily or weekly routine, without cost to the care setting.

During 2018, a total of 174 care staff attended our CarePALS workshops with 154 new CarePALS trained, and a further 20 taking part in refresher courses. The HSE National Office of Health Promotion and Improvement funded 9 of the 12 CarePALS courses. The other 3 courses were funded by HSE National lottery grants or local organisations.

2018 marked the 18th allocation of the **Go for Life Grant Scheme**, which provides funding to local groups of older people to support them in their work to get more older people more active. Local Sports Partnerships and HSE Coordinators were available to give assistance or advice to applicants and in many cases also helped distribute application forms locally, helping us reach even more communities and groups of older people.

We received a total of 1,117 applications and 1,030 grants were allocated. Over 30,000 older people will take part in physical activity funded by these grants, that's 30,000 older people getting more active, more often, every year for the past eighteen years. The 2018 allocation brings the total grants allocated (over 18 years) to over 14,000 and total funds allocated to almost €5.7 million.



Throughout our work in 2018, we enhanced our focus on providing programmes for older adults at risk of social isolation, including those who may not be members of an existing social group. **FitLine**, our volunteer-led telephone-based motivation line encourages older individuals to become more active through one on one phone support, with a schedule tailored to their own needs and agreed goals. During 2018, mentors continued to make fortnightly calls from Kilcross and Maynooth. By the end of 2018 our FitLine service had 63 participants, supported by 12 volunteer mentors.

Almost 300 finalists attended our sixth **Go for Life Games**, held in Dublin City University in June 2018. They represented 23 different counties; each county had a team of 12 people, playing 3 different sports. Many of the teams were selected locally from Sportsfests or Games Leagues around the country supported by our Go for Life Programme, the Local Sports Partnerships and the HSE.



Strategic Theme Two

Influencing Public Policy

Much of our work is run in partnership with the Local Sports Partnerships who are a central point within each county for sport and physical activity. Our PALs programme, or Go for Life Games, Programming for Older Adults and other projects focused on older adults, are all possible because of the close relationships we have developed over the years with these organisations. In the National Sports Policy 2018-2027, the government recognizes that policy cannot

be implemented in isolation and urges all agencies to work together to increase participation in sport and recreational sport to enhance the physical wellbeing for all. Our CarePALs programme, funded by HSE, like The National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland (NPAP) and the National Positive Ageing Strategy (NPAS) is focused on keeping older people as healthy as possible for as long as possible.



Strategic Theme Three

Supporting and Developing our Programme Partnerships

Partnerships with National Governing Bodies for Sport

In 2018 we set out to engage more with the National Governing Bodies for Sport so that older people were introduced to the huge variety of sports that exist in this country. Our Go for Life Games proves to us that older people can still have that competitive edge and very much enjoy being part of a team and representing their county at national games.

We worked closely with Volleyball Ireland to introduce the sport to our groups through workshops and sports fests throughout the year. Swim Ireland and the Irish Underwater Council came on board with another open air swim event and will be working with us to develop a full swim programme in 2019.

The GAA showcased the game of “One Ball” (an adaptation of handball) at our National Games event and we look forward to working with them next year.

Pickleball, a new sport that is becoming very popular in Ireland, is a great fit for older people of all levels of activity and ability. We have been working closely with the promoters of the sport to introduce it to older people nationally.

During 2018 we partnered up with FAI for different events, a partnership which was established in 2017 and will

continue into the coming years. We look forward to more collaboration in 2019.

European Week of Sport

This Europe wide event takes place each September and it encourages everyone across Europe to become more active and involved in sport. This year we placed a strong emphasis on engaging with the National Governing Bodies for Sport and with local activity providers as part of the **#BEACTIVE** campaign for #EWOS2018.

Once again we contacted our network of Physical Activity Leaders (PALs) and members of their groups, asking them what sport or activity they would like to try. As well as introducing new sports to the groups it enables us to work with the National Governing Bodies for Sport who are more than happy to extend their reach to older people. **The Great Dublin Bike Ride** was the first day of the EWOS 2018 and our staff members took to the road and trained for and completed the 65km trek.

Other sports tried and enjoyed during European Week of Sport were horse-riding, pitch and putt, orienteering, sailing, chair volleyball and a variety of our own Go for Life games. Next year we plan to build on this activity with plans already in place for a cycling programme and an even bigger Age & Opportunity Great Dublin Bike Ride team with all our stakeholders invited to take part.

Strategic Theme Four

Optimising our Operational Capacity

Collaboration across Europe

We worked as an associate partner with Trinity College Dublin's IDS-TILDA and the University of Barcelona on a pilot project called **P-PALS**. The project was funded by EIT Health and was based on the same model as our existing Physical Activity Leader (PALs) programme. PPALS was developed as a course to train older people with intellectual disability to lead activities and games with people in their own centres.

In Ireland 15 participants took part in a series of training sessions where they learned the skills and confidence to lead their peers in activities. The same training took place in Barcelona and there are now 28 P-PALs across both countries. Further funding is being sought to develop the project to the next stage.



Sport Programme

Our Year in Numbers

Activity / event / workshop	Number of activities / events / workshops / sessions	Number of participants
Physical Activity Leader (PALs) Training Workshops (for new PALS)*	80	130
Local Games and Sportsfests*	8	350
Go for Life Regional Games*	1	60
Go for Life Games Final *	1	288
Programming for older adults*	1	15
EIT PPALs workshops (physical Activity Leader workshops for people with intellectual disability)	8	15
EIT PPALs Sports Day (Sports day for people with intellectual disability)	1	60
CarePALS 2 day course (training those in care settings to facilitate physical activity sessions)	10	154
CarePALS refresher course	2	20
Fitline mentoring	52	63
European Week of Sport	14	255
Older people's groups funded by our National Grant Scheme	1,030 grants	31,222
TOTAL Sport Programme	1,208	32,632

Our Go for Life Games are being played by local groups around the country on a regular basis.

Note – Since the beginning of the programme we have trained 2,376 Physical Activity Leader (PALs), of which 1,030 are active facilitating and organising physical activity sessions in their own groups. (1,030 active PALs working with an average of 10 people, so the PALs reach is approximately 10,300 people per annum).

Age & Opportunity **engage**

What we want to see for older people

An Ireland where all older people are more active; more visible; more creative; more connected; more often.

Age & Opportunity Engage is a programme which offers a range of learning initiatives, courses and workshops for our own personal development as well as opportunities for us to play an active role in our community. Our aim is to facilitate participants to develop resilience, build the skills, know-how and the foresight to achieve the best quality of life.

Why we run our engage programme

Lifelong learning results in a range of positive outcomes including improvements to quality of life and wellbeing; broadening social contacts and networks; the acquisition of new skills enabling one to retrain, adjust to new challenges, take on work or play a more active role in the community.

We believe that people who work directly with older people - or whose work affects the lives of older people - should be conscious of their needs and the value of their continuing contribution to society. Organisations that are becoming increasingly aware of the value of their older employees, customers and clients - will be able to benefit from our bespoke training and facilitation and range of national workshops and courses.

Strategic Theme One

Creating and Promoting Diverse Models for Ageing

Creating and Promoting Diverse Models for Ageing

In our Strategic Plan 2018-2020 we acknowledge that creativity is one of the fundamental aspects to delivering a good quality of life for older people. This is especially true for older people who are using care services. Thankfully there has been a significant shift in the delivery of residential and daycare services. It is no longer acceptable practice to “warehouse” older people; instead under the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) standards older people in residential care must have access to meaningful and culturally appropriate activities.

Our **Creative Exchanges** initiative was designed to enhance the skills of people working in care settings, both residential care and daycare. We know the value of participating in meaningful arts activities and the difference it can make to the quality of life of the person receiving the care service.

The programme is a QQI accredited minor award (level 6) and is delivered by a panel of highly experienced arts facilitators in movement, drama, visual arts and music. Learners often arrive saying “I can’t draw” or “I was never any good at the art in school” etc. We bring learners through a series of experiences where they acquire the skills to use a variety of art forms in their work.

While the majority of the learners are from care backgrounds we also attract numbers of artists who are interested in developing their skills in working with older people. The programme is well suited for this as we also explore concepts of person-centered care, the dignity of the person receiving care and what constitutes quality of life.

We always deliver the programme in arts settings as this enhances the learning experience and, for many learners, this is the first time they have been into an art gallery.

Our courses in Dublin are delivered in partnership with the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA). This valuable partnership has allowed us to deepen the learning experience as the learners have access to the wonderful works on display, inspiring them throughout the course.

We delivered four Creative Exchanges courses in 2018, two in IMMA in Dublin and two in Kerry, with a total of 83 graduates. We estimate that the Creative Exchanges graduates work with a minimum of 20 people, and in many cases they are working with larger numbers of people. This means that we can confidently say that:

1,660 older people in care settings are benefiting from the Creative Exchanges courses delivered in 2018.

The following are quotes from participants on the Creative Exchanges course:

“Each facilitator and presenter challenged me to come out of my comfort zone and with this I found I was able to create beyond my previous levels. I thoroughly excelled myself in these sessions”

“I learned over and beyond what I thought I would, a real personal journey”

“(It) opened my eyes to everything, work and life wise, I got great benefits and knowledge”

Azure is a partnership between Age & Opportunity, the Butler Gallery in Kilkenny, the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) and the Alzheimer’s Society Ireland (ASI), which enhances the museum and gallery experiences of people with dementia and their carers. Specifically, Azure explores how people with conditions such as Alzheimer’s, and the people who care for them, can have a deeper involvement in cultural institutions and can participate in cultural activities.

One of the key moments in our lives as we get older is often the experience of retirement. There can be significant differences in how ready and prepared we are for this particular transition. The Gulbenkian Foundation (UK) recognised that the more we prepare for later life the better our experience, and this is also supported by TILDA findings. We developed Changing Gears with support from the Gulbenkian Foundation and we have delivered it to HSE employees who were still at work and thinking about retirement. It was hugely successful and we continue to deliver this course in partnership with employers in various sectors.

In 2018 we also tested our **Changing Gears** course as a resource for people living with chronic illnesses (COPD and HIV) and it has proven to be very beneficial in promoting resilience and helping people with chronic illnesses to live better with their conditions.

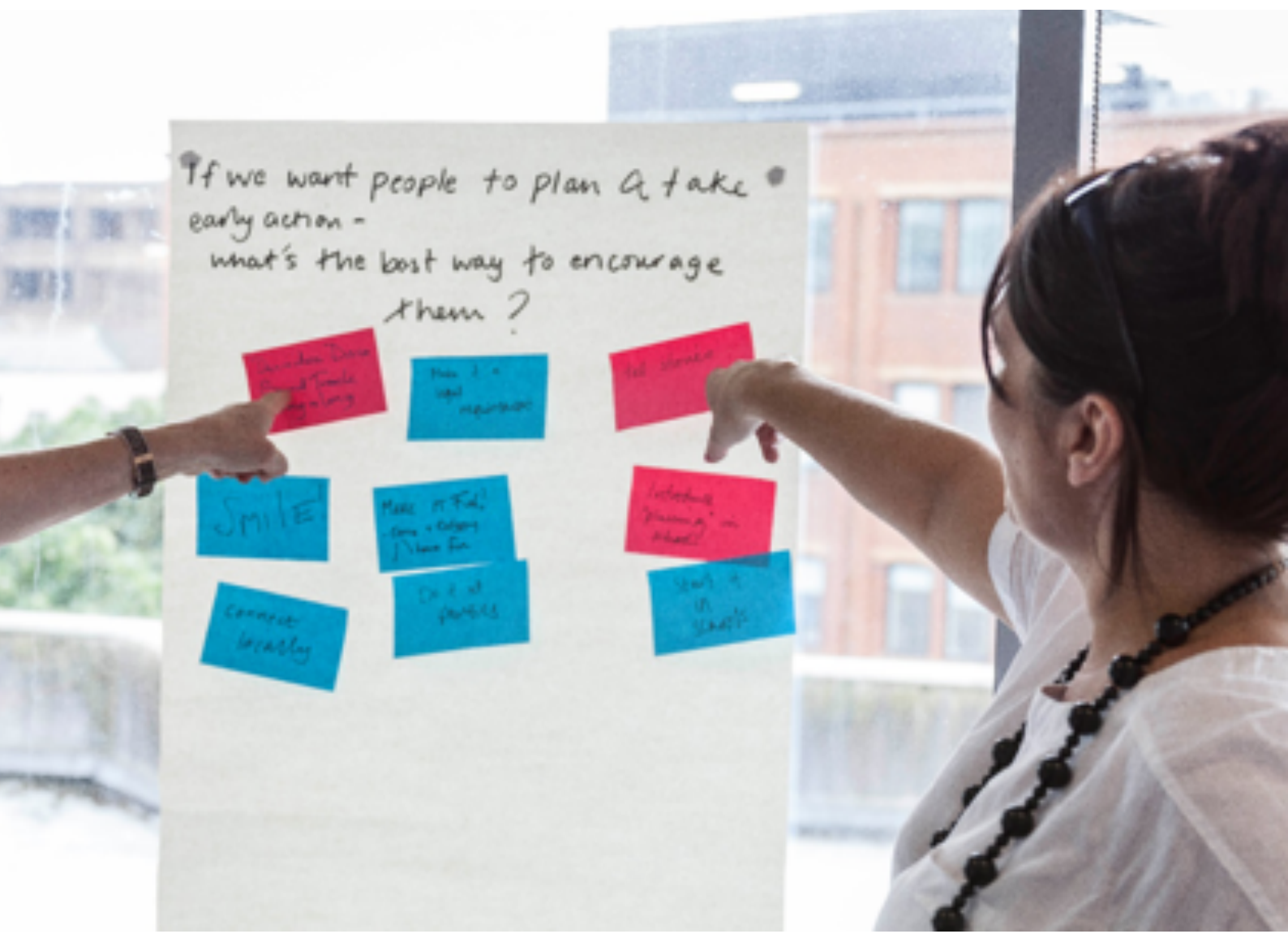
We are currently delivering our Changing Gears course to older prisoners in the Irish Prison Service, and it has proven beneficial

in enabling them to prepare for transitions such as re-integration into society. Working with people with chronic illness and people in prison is one of the ways in which we meet the objectives of Strategic Theme One.

The benefits, as noted by participants, included: increased confidence and readiness for the future; a greater sense of resourcefulness and purpose; more positive attitudes to ageing and later life; a greater appreciation of the importance of social connections in fostering wellbeing and resilience.

Quotes from Changing Gears participants:

- 'Overall course content and presentation was excellent'
- 'Group participation encouraged'
- 'Facilitators were very skilled'
- 'A very worthwhile experience'
- 'Excellent overall...good mix of presentation and discussion'
- 'The exercises were great; how to cope with change is crucial for retirement'
- 'Lots of useful ideas and things to consider'
- 'Training is applicable to a wide range of groups'
- 'Recommended for staff transitioning into new roles and retirement'



Strategic Theme Two

Influencing Public Policy

Influencing public policy is also a key aspect of our mission, and one of the principle ways we seek to achieve this is by creating opportunities for conversations that empower older people to advocate for themselves in influencing what happens in their local communities and, at times, nationally.

We have a number of initiatives that seek to help older people feel more confident and able to influence measures, policies and services that support positive ageing.

One of the underpinning factors in the National Positive Ageing Strategy is the recognition that ageism is harmful. It results in stereotypes of older people that fail to recognise the ongoing and wonderful contribution most of us as older people make in our communities.

It can also limit how we view ourselves as we age: “oh I couldn’t do that at my age” is a phrase that is often not true. We sometimes hear an older woman being described as “mutton dressed a lamb” when for all we know she is wearing her favourite outfit and feeling really good about herself.

Findings from **The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing** (TILDA) show that:

Quality of life continues to get better after 50 for almost another 30 years, and yet cultural images of older people often describe us as frail and needy.

Our **AgeWise** workshop aims to explore and raise awareness of ageism and how many of us unconsciously contribute to it. It is as instructive for the individual older person as it is for policy makers, service providers and businesses. It is a 2-3 hour workshop and we deliver it all over the country.

In a similar vein we recognised the need to work with older people in developing more confidence about ourselves as we age. Our **Ageing with Confidence** programme provides an opportunity for reflection, peer sharing, finding out more about the ageing process and how to optimise our ageing experience. We delivered 3 Ageing with Confidence courses in 2018 to community groups. In this way we promote diverse views of ageing and challenge negative stereotypes of ageing in line with Strategic Themes One and Two.

Recognising that many older people are active in their communities we also provide opportunities for people who are 50+ to develop, or in some cases, re-visit skills that enable us to be effective in bringing about change and influencing what happens in our communities.

We developed **Touchstone** a number of years ago in partnership with Active Retirement Ireland, Third Age and NUI Galway. Touchstone is an eight week programme (one half day once a week) looking at how we can research, plan and communicate to lobby

for change effectively. This programme is one of the ways in which we work with older people in influencing public policies and being agents of change in their communities.

Here is how some group participants described the personal outcomes of taking part in Touchstone:

“It validated what I do in a way. I try to encourage others to participate in volunteering as I do myself. It has given me

new ideas, new group of people with lots of different interests and experiences”

“Learning how to run an organisation properly, being aware of the pitfalls and feeling more confident about setting up one”

“Valuable experience of social networking. Opportunity to reflect on our skills. Benefits of meeting with and listening to others life experiences”



Strategic Theme Three

Supporting and Developing our Programme Partnerships

Age & Opportunity has played a strategic role in the development and roll-out of the Age Friendly Cities and Counties Programme nationally. We have focused on supporting the work of creating age friendly communities from a grass-roots perspective, working with the Age Friendly coordinators at local level and supporting the older people taking part through the delivery of training, facilitation and planning workshops.

Over the past three years it has been our privilege to work with 14 counties. We look forward to continuing this important relationship, as it transforms local communities.

It is important to note that age-friendly environments benefit the entire community. A classic example of this was depicted recently at the launch of the new partnership between TILDA and the GAA. Dr Rose-Ann Kenny spoke about how after consulting with older people about their concerns it became clear that traffic lights were not allowing sufficient time for older people to get across the road in time. The light sequences were adapted accordingly to allow for more time; a simple example of how a change for older people can also facilitate people with disabilities and people with young children and anyone else who needs more time to cross the road.

While that example is a simple one, the progress achieved by the Age Friendly

programme has resulted in changes to the built environment in many towns, greater coordination of transport services, changes to health services and a greater awareness of the needs of older people at local and county level.

We have also been working with the Irish Prison Service in delivering our Changing Gears programme in two prison sites; Mountjoy Prison and Arbour Hill. Our aim is to support the development of resilience among prisoners, and hopefully lead to better re-integration into society. We look forward to continue working with colleagues in the Irish Association for Social Inclusion Opportunities and the Irish Penal Reform Trust.

We have also been developing a strategic relationship with the UK-based Centre for Ageing Better. We share a vision of promoting optimal ageing at all ages, recognising that all of us experience ageing from the day we are born. Rather than seeing optimal ageing as something we consider at retirement we want to encourage optimal ageing throughout the life course. This follows on from our work with the Transitions in Later Life (TiLL) funded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (UK).

This programme allowed us to develop and test content for our Changing Gears programme and to share learning with the other grantees in the programme. We look forward to developing this work and continuing to work with UK partners.

Strategic Theme Four

Optimising our Organisational Capacity

European Partnerships

We continue to represent the issues of older Irish people in a European context. Our Engage Programme Manager (Ciarán McKinney) is a member of the Executive Council of AGE Platform Europe. He spoke at the Pillar of Social Rights and European Semester policy seminar in Brussels in October about the importance of life-long learning to older persons.

He commented on the Country Specific Report for Ireland that noted the low levels of lifelong learning among lower skilled workers in employment and the recommendation that

prioritises the upskilling of the adult working age population. Ciarán further stressed that while a focus on labour activation is understandable it should not be at the cost of learners who are over 65 years of age.

He referenced the 2014 report of the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) that shows that adults over 65 who engage in adult education benefit more than any other group in terms of health and mental well-being.



Engage Programme

Our Year in Numbers

Activity / event / workshop	Number of activities / events / workshops	Number of participants
Ageing with Confidence		
Breffni Community Development CLG	6	12
Breffni Community Development CLG	6	10
Taoiseach's Task Force – North East Inner City	6	8
Total Ageing with Confidence	18	30
AgeWise		
Roscommon Leader	1	30
Waterford City and Council	1	18
Total AgeWise	2	48
Creative Exchange (7 day QQI programme)		
Dublin	7	18
Kerry	7	23
Dublin	7	24
Kerry	7	18
Total Creative Exchanges	28	83
Touchstone		
Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council and UCD	8	25
Changing Gears		
HSE Cork	6	14
HSE Dublin	6	18
HSE Galway	6	13
HSE Kilkenny	6	15
HSE Limerick	6	13
Positive Now (HIV Ireland)	6	9
COPD Ballyfermot	6	10
Men's Shed Swords	6	17
Irish Prison Service	12	20
Total Changing Gears	60	129
TOTAL Engage Programme	116	315

Age & Opportunity arts

What we want to see for older people

An Ireland where all older people are more active; more visible; more creative; more connected; more often.

Age & Opportunity Arts is a dedicated arts and culture programme running throughout the year in local communities around Ireland. We host a range of different creative initiatives from our annual, high profile, Bealtaine Festival which takes place throughout the month of May through to other smaller events including workshops, training days, day trips to museum, galleries and artist in residence in care settings. One of our most popular initiatives is 'Cultural Companions' which creates local networks of like-minded people interested in arts and culture who will accompany each other to cultural events.

Why we run an arts programme

Did you know that people who participate in shared creative experiences are more likely to be happier; more socially engaged and have an increased sense of physical and mental well-being?

Creativity is a key factor in adaptation to ageing and a number of studies have shown that both health and social well-being benefits for older people who engage with the arts, and in creative activities. The evidence suggests that the arts and creativity specifically strengthens self-confidence and morale in later life, contributes to physical and cognitive health and enriches relationships through greater social connectivity.

Age & Opportunity Arts is a dedicated arts and culture programme running throughout the year in local communities around Ireland. We host a range of different creative initiatives from our annual, high profile, **Bealtaine Festival** which takes place throughout the month of May through to other smaller events including workshops, training days, day trips to museum, galleries and artist in residence in care settings. One of our most popular initiatives is 'Cultural Companions' which creates local networks of like-minded people interested in arts and culture who will accompany each other to cultural events.

Our ARTS programme aims to:

- Provide critical opportunities for the greater participation and representation of older people in the arts;
- Create arts programmes for disadvantaged older people;
- Provide professional opportunities and peer-to-peer supports for older professional artists;
- Devise opportunities for intergenerational exchange;
- Encourage debate and discourse around key cultural issues impacting on older people that seek to influence national and international policy.

We achieve this through our Bealtaine Festival (broadly addressing strategic themes One and Two) and also through development activities (broadly addressing strategic themes Two and Three), including public arts workshops, audience development initiatives, artists' residencies, artists' training, conferences, advocacy, advice and publication.

Strategic Theme One

Creating and Promoting Diverse Models for Ageing

Established in 1995, our **Bealtaine Festival** is the world's first national celebration of creativity in older age and Ireland's largest co-operative festival. The festival takes place each May. Through Bealtaine, we bring together older people and artists from all over Ireland and across generations to participate in arts and creative activities.

In 2019, we had approximately 450 Bealtaine partners around the country and reached an estimated 80,000 people (mainly through those partners) across the entire country. Bealtaine has been very successful in establishing itself as a national festival and is a central cultural programme in Irish life.

The festival has also been responsible for the development of international festivals set up using same model, including Luminate in Scotland, Gwanwyn in Wales, The Age of Creativity in England and ARMAS in Finland.

Bealtaine has continued to be ambitious and expansive with 1,409 separate events in at least 25 counties during 2018. There were 56 events developed in-house during Bealtaine Festival 2018. These included performances, exhibitions, public events (involving new commissions), participatory and special projects (Bealtaine @ Temple Bar), touring, ideas and debate. The festival worked across many art forms; the visual arts, literature, dance, theatre, and music.

In 2018, we commissioned an independent evaluation of the festival, both our in-house events and the national partner programme of events. The results showed an overwhelmingly positive response to the festival from our audiences, partners and organisers. The positive response was reflected both in the online survey and in telephone interviews, the former of which generated a Net Promoter Score (which measures satisfaction levels) Index of 48. The evaluation also pointed out the importance of participatory events (those actively involving engagement such as workshops and discussion), small events, and non-mainstream venues. It revealed that women still make up the majority of our audience and that more than 50% of the audience is over 51, and conversely, the other half is under 51 (underlining the broad intergenerational appeal of our work).

What our partners said:

Fruitful collaborations | Excellent leadership | Hard to do and done well | Broad approach is good | Great it is so ambitious | Keeping it fresh | Great reach | High quality | Challenging | Excellent Conversations | Visible Nationally | New and different way of programming for us.

What our audiences said:

It gives me Inspirational hope | plan for a better future | absolutely stunning performance | feel younger | great talk - left me very curious | nice to see diversity in gender/age group | excellent | very stimulating and a joy | really wonderful afternoon very special please keep on doing a great job| .

As with most of our festivals, Bealtaine 2018 comprised a mixture of Bealtaine favourites and a significant programme of new festival events. We reprised the Dawn Chorus in association with the Association of Irish

Choirs, but introduced a new component by commissioning Tom Lane to compose a Dawn Chorus piece of music. The premiere of the work took place as part of Bealtaine @ Temple Bar on Sunday 6th May at 6am on Grattan Bridge Dublin and was performed by The Line-Up Choir with conductor Róisín Savage. We also introduced a new Dusk Chorus (last Sunday in May) with the Forget Me Nots - an inclusive community choir. For this year's annual Bealtaine discussion we partnered with Mercer's Institute of Successful Ageing at St. James' Hospital and the National College of Art and Design, to examine whether age has a bearing on creativity, at what age artists and creative people reach their full creative potential, what reaching 'peak creativity' might mean and the impact of ageism on perceptions around this.



Strategic Theme Two and Three

Influencing public policy and Supporting and developing our programme partnerships

Supporting Older Arts Participants and Audiences

Our **Cultural Companions** programme provides increased opportunities for older people to engage with Ireland's vibrant arts and cultural scene. It does this by creating local networks of older people interested in the arts and culture who accompany each other to events.

Supporting Artists

We support and celebrate artists by providing continuing professional development and training in both the practical areas of their career (i.e., finance/pensions etc.) and by exploring more in-depth issues to do with visibility, networking and staying professionally connected.

Supporting Residents of Care Settings

The annual **Artist Care Setting Residency** creates an opportunity/opportunities for (a) publicly-funded care setting(s) and older people to engage creatively with an artist over the course of a number of months. The residency also offers an artist the opportunity to spend a sustained period of time working with older people and developing their skills in an arts and health context.

Public Arts Workshops

These **Arts Workshops** are intended to offer older people the chance to engage with literature, dance, visual art and music.

Supporting Training for Arts Organisers

Each year we organise the **Annual Gathering** which brings together Bealtaine arts organisers from all over Ireland to showcase interesting projects, give advice on PR, event management, to hear feedback on the festival and to promote networking.

Strategic Theme Three

Supporting and Developing our Programme Partnerships

We commissioned a number of new artworks including HOME, a participatory film-poem collaboration by poet Enda Wyley & visual artist Anita Groener, working with Dún Laoghaire Active Retirement Group and this work was toured nationwide. The commission was supported by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council.

Everybody Sings, a multi-participatory theatre/performance commission based on the stories and experiences of intimacy and sexuality in older age created by writer Shaun Dunne, with the film designer Luca Trufarelli and Ozanam House Dublin (supported by Dublin City Council). This project was co-produced by Mermaid Arts Centre, Bray and curated by Brokentalkers.

Our intergenerational dance and play commission, A Life of Play, involved children and grandparents and was choreographed by Emma O'Kane (with the support of Brokentalkers) in partnership with Dublin Dance Festival as a Coiscéim BROADREACH.

In one of our most ambitious new events, we worked with cultural organisations in Temple Bar to produce **Bealtaine @ Temple Bar**, a bespoke initiative delivering a range of engaging and entertaining arts experiences for older people and their families over the May bank holiday weekend. The event included outdoor screenings, workshops, choral singing and other performances, tours, exhibitions, talks, music, tea parties,

a speaker's corner and a pop up opera.

In theatre touring, we supported the experimental production UNEXPLODED ORDANCES (UXO) With SPLIT BRITCHES, TAKE OFF YOUR CORNFLAKES, produced by Show in a Bag and created by Rose Henderson and Pat Nolan. We also showcased the multicultural SENDIANA, and Belonging, by the Welsh company Re-Live.

In terms of exhibitions, Hospitable Actions created a nation-wide programme for older audiences, through events that reflected ageing or the festival theme, Be Our Guest.

Finally, our conferences and discussion festival programme was extremely rich and diverse in presenting the third and final conference in the series: This is Not My Beautiful House (III), exploring how fit for purpose our communities, spaces and buildings are as we age. Artists' Lives was a new event which aimed to combine professional development for artists and a public event exploring the milestones and challenges of an artist's life with Roddy Doyle, Joanna Banks, Rhona Clarke and Abigail O'Brien chaired by Cliodhna Ni Anluain (in partnership with Contemporary Music Centre, Irish Writers Centre, and Dance Ireland). Other discursive events included Bealtaine Book Club author Jennifer Johnston being interviewed by Arminta Wallace, Standing on the Shoulders of Giants an intergenerational conversation between John Banville and

Claire Kilroy, chaired by John Boyne (both in partnership with the International Literature Festival Dublin and the Irish Writers Centre), and Sustaining Your Practice, a professional development initiative for visual artists with the Royal Hibernian Academy and Visual Artists Ireland. The Bealtaine Debate, run in partnership with Mercer's Institute of Successful Ageing and the National College of Art and Design centred on whether Age Has a Bearing on Creativity, looking at whether there is a peak age of creativity and

indeed what peak creativity might mean.

Bealtaine Ambassadors

In 2018 Bealtaine revived its ambassadors programming, inviting composer Jane O'Leary, choreographer Mary Nunan and architect Cathal O'Neill to celebrate and support the festival, the arts and older people. We plan to grow and develop this initiative.

Strategic Theme Four

Optimising our Organisational Capacity

Research Projects

Creative Enquiry - Arts and Older People is an investigative collaborative venture that creatively explores fresh approaches to arts engagement with older people and advances best practice models. The focus of the Creative Enquiry is three artist-residency and older-people-engagement projects, hosted by three distinct arts organisations: the city-based multi-disciplinary Cork Midsummer Festival; Music Alive, a county-wide arts and mental health organisation; and Sirius Arts Centre, an arts venue located in the heritage town of Cobh.

The **Creative Enquiry** - Arts and Older People programme draws on the creative inputs and specialist know-how of the different partners

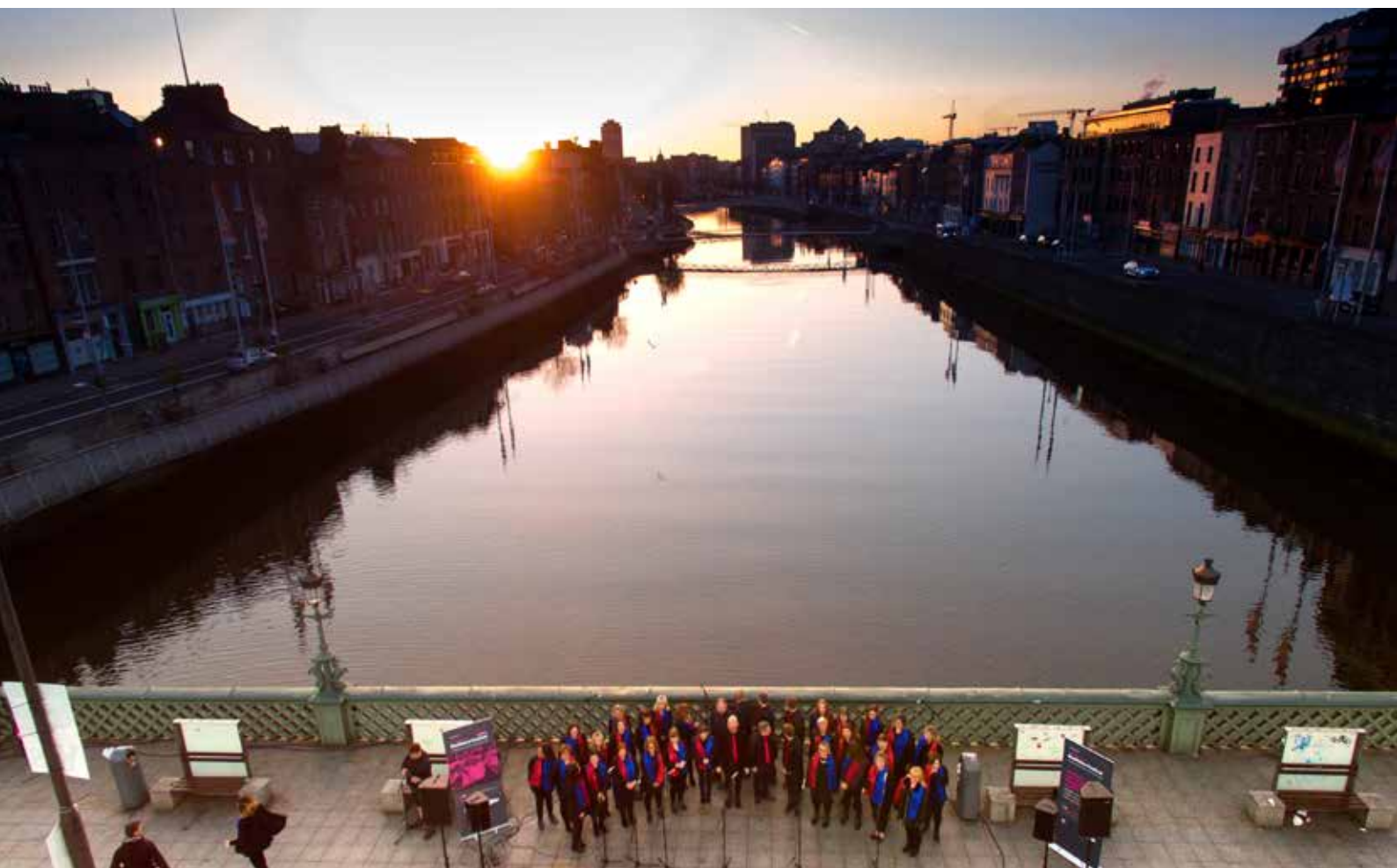
that make up the consortium. Creative Enquiry is an initiative of two Cork based local authorities, Cork City Council and Cork County Council arts offices in strategic partnership ourselves and the HSE Cork Kerry Community Healthcare-Cork South Community Work Department, facilitating community health and well-being initiatives, and the three independent partner arts organisations.

Evaluative Register is a research project exploring new modes of evaluation for socially engaged and collaborative arts practices. It is led by Create, the national organisation for collaborative arts in partnership with ourselves, IMMA, Fingal County Council Arts Office, and the Fire Station Artists' Studios.

Arts Programme

Our Year in Numbers

Activity / event / workshop	Number of activities / events / workshops	Number of participants
Bealtaine Festival		
Events curated by Age & Opportunity	56	6,400
Events curated by partners	1,409	80,189
Total Bealtaine Festival	1,465	86,589
Development activities / events		
Artist in residence in a care setting	1	60
Public Dance Workshops	8	83
The Bealtaine Gathering	1	50
Cultural Companions (curated by Age & Opportunity)	75	105
Cultural Companions Recruitment day	1	25
Age Friendly Co-ordinator Cultural Companions Toolkit Day	1	12
Total Development activities / events	87	335
Total Arts Programme	1,552	86,924



Corporate and Public Affairs

Policy, Research and Evaluation

Our Policy, Research and Evaluation work is a key pillar of our current Strategic Plan 2018-2020 and includes the development of robust evaluation models which allow us to measure and report on the impact of our programmes and the social return on investment that we are providing.

Mary Harkin, previously our Go for Life Programme Manager, commenced the role of Policy, Research and Evaluation Manager in December 2018. This role is tasked with configuring the work of Age & Opportunity in research frameworks to highlight our effectiveness and our capacity to support public policy development.

This role will also increase our sustainability and impact by making best use of the organisational experience, insight and evidence to influence how policy is created from international to local levels and how it is implemented in practice in older people's lives.

Collaborations with academic institutions

Our 2018 collaborations were as follows:

P-PALs: Trinity College Dublin and University of Barcelona

The P-PALs project, funded by EIT Health involved adapting our Go for Life PALs

(Physical Activity Leaders) training and support materials for delivery to older people with intellectual disabilities in collaboration with IDS TILDA, TCD and University of Barcelona. This project was completed in December 2018.

Move for Life: University of Limerick

Age & Opportunity is an active collaborator on the University of Limerick led Move for Life project designing a Community Intervention to Increase Physical Activity Levels in Adults Over 50 Years of Age in Ireland.

This research award is co-funded by the HSE Health and Wellbeing and The Atlantic Philanthropies and the research team includes the University of Limerick, the National University of Ireland Galway, Limerick and Clare Local Sports Partnerships, Limerick City and County Council, Healthy Limerick and the Health Service Executive.

The study commenced in January 2018 and is due to be completed at the end of September 2019.

Go for Life Games: Dublin City University

We hold our annual Go for Life Games event on the DCU campus every year. Whilst not strictly an academic collaboration, it's a very visible event on this Age Friendly Campus.

PPI Ignite: Trinity College Dublin

The Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) Ignite initiatives aim to promote public and patient involvement in health research in Ireland.

We are a member of the Partner Council and Working Group of PPI and are currently collaborating with Trinity College on their PPI Ignite Programme, specifically developing a project to co-design our Changing Gears programme so that it is suitable for people with chronic illness.

Touchstone: University College Dublin

In spring 2018 we collaborated with UCD in the Community, the outreach department at UCD, to deliver Touchstone to residents in their catchment area. This project was funded by the Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council Community Grant.

All Ireland Physical Activity and Ageing Group (AIPAAG)

Age & Opportunity are a member of this North/South research, policy and practice knowledge exchange group on the theme of physical activity and ageing comprised of academics, practitioners and public servants across the island of Ireland.

In October 2018 Mary Harkin sat on the discussion panel for the seminar 'Physical activity and older people: What works?' organised by the Institute of Public Health (IPH).



The Alliance of Age Sector NGOs

Our original NGO alliance, Active Ageing Partnership, which was a collaboration of **Active Retirement Ireland, Age & Opportunity** and **Third Age Ireland** from 2013 to 2017, has now grown and expanded into the alliance of age sector NGOs.

This alliance brings together the main NGOs making a difference for older people in Ireland:

Age & Opportunity, Active Retirement Ireland, Third Age, Alone, The Irish Senior Citizens' Parliament, Age Action, the Irish Hospice Foundation and the Alzheimer Society of Ireland.

The alliance membership is comprised of the CEOs of each of the NGOs listed above, and is co-ordinated by Maurice O'Connell, previous co-ordinator of Active Ageing Partnership. Age & Opportunity were the fiscal agent for Active Ageing Partnership, and we continue that function for the alliance of age sector NGOs also.

The alliance of age sector NGOs represents high level engagement of eight key national NGOs working strategically to inform and influence policy to help shape the national agenda around ageing, particularly in relation to the implementation of the National Positive Ageing Strategy. Each of the members of the alliance brings a wealth of insight, knowledge and experience to the table, informed through our engagement

with older people. For Age & Opportunity, our membership of the alliance of age sector NGOs helps us to achieve our vision of an Ireland where all older people are more active; more visible; more creative; more connected; more often.

The funding which drove Active Ageing Partnership originally and then the alliance came from the Atlantic Philanthropies, and further funding has been secured from the Community Foundation for Ireland.

The alliance of age sector NGOs has established a robust infrastructure and has enhanced support systems amongst the eight organisations. It has developed strong charismatic leaders to drive the sector forward and to win support in key areas. It is ambitious and has built and expanded its capacity and skills in a number of key areas such as communications, change management, policy formulation, media and PR, organising and building grassroots engagement, networking, relationship management, advocacy, etc. It has structures and protocols in place to ensure effective collaboration and complementarity between organisations and avoids unnecessary duplication. It allows NGOs to focus on their principal areas of interest while still coming together to pool resources and co-ordinate work on key policy issues.

We are establishing a Policy sub group and a Communications subgroup of the alliance, comprised of relevant staff in each of the member organisations, to further enhance the work of the alliance and to ensure that the work of the alliance is informed by best practice, and also to strengthen the combined voice of the alliance.

Communications

Communications activity is core to the operation and continued existence of the organisation and underpins all four key strategic themes in our Strategic Plan (2018-2020) by:

- building understanding and awareness of our work, to engage and grow support for our services,
- creating opportunities for conversations which empower older people to advocate for measures, policies and services to support positive ageing,
- developing our dialogue with stakeholders by generating feedback across all of our programmes through implementation and development of our database
- building awareness and understanding of the experience and preferences of older people among policy makers
- creating messages to motivate our audiences and position ourselves in order to achieve the change we want to see in terms of attitudes and public policies on ageing.
- celebrating and profiling diverse stories of ageing.

All these activities are crucial in terms of our engagement with and reporting to funders, partners and all our stakeholders which in turn increases the sustainability and continued existence of the organisation.

Throughout 2018 we have continued to build on our profile across print, broadcast and online media as the voice of positive ageing in Ireland. We ensured the positive side of ageing was highlighted with good coverage of Bealtaine on IrelandAM, RTE and regional print and broadcast media. This year we increased the coverage value by over 200%.

We also engaged in a media partnership with the Irish Times for Bealtaine and this was one of the factors contributing to an increase in visitors to the festival website Bealtaine.ie.

In 2018 we had:

- 64% increase in number of visits to the site
- 122% increase in page views
- people were also spending longer on the site, with an increase in average session duration of 27%

Brand Refresh

Age & Opportunity has multiple and diverse audiences and in engaging with them we have developed a large number of different offerings or initiatives in our three core areas of arts and culture, sport and physical activity, civic engagement and lifelong learning. In 2018 we conducted a brand audit in order to ensure that we were communicating these programmes and their many benefits in a clear and consistent way to people both inside of and outside of the organisation.

What became clear was that while our Go for Life and Bealtaine initiative brands were very well known, we needed to do some work to improve the awareness of Age & Opportunity as the organisation which is responsible for making these initiatives the success they are.

This brand audit process took place in parallel to the development of our new Strategic Plan the period 2018 – 2020. The development of the new strategy directly contributed to the desire to create a compelling brand to fit the future direction, armed with the analysis which clearly demonstrated the need for a new brand structure which gave more prominence to Age & Opportunity.

Following this strategic brand audit and review, we have taken the opportunity to refresh the Age & Opportunity logos and visual identity to ensure that our brand personality reflects our new strategy, mission, vision and values.

We chose to move to the use of stronger colours, with a more dynamic and abstract visual identifier symbol accompanying the existing typographic element with the words Age & Opportunity.

We hope that the use of strong colours and a refresh of the brand will help to act as a compliment to shift audiences' perceptions of the organisation, and of groups representing older people, which is directly linked to our strategic aims.

We took the decision to replace the existing long and jargon based programme names with more descriptive umbrella names. The focus was on developing content from an external rather than an internal point of view.

The new brand hierarchy was designed to help us to structure the way in which the organisation presents its activities in a coherent way to the outside world, and to

our partners in particular. It expresses the mutually beneficial relationship between the core brand, sub brands and initiatives while allowing us flexibility to create new initiatives under the three main programme areas:

- Age & Opportunity **Sport**
- Age & Opportunity **Arts**
- Age & Opportunity **Engage**

These headlines (Sport /Arts /Engage / Bealtaine /Fitline /Go for Life etc.) are always supported by a short narrative, explaining their context and expanding the description of what the organisation does, making it clearer to our partners and to older people the impact of our programmes, the benefits for those of all ages, and how they can find a programme that works for them.

Website Redesign

The focus of our Strategic Plan 2018-2020 is on continuing to improve our understanding of the needs and views of older people, and building our communication and feedback processes with them. We continue to work to provide and develop critical programmes and initiatives addressing the ever-growing challenges and opportunities presented by ageing.

We communicate with our stakeholders across many channels and touchpoints and our website is a growing area for those who want to find out more about us, and access a programme which may benefit them or someone they know.

As this technology changes we continually review our site, the content, visited pages and seek to improve and build on the information provided and the most user

friendly and accessible way to present it.

Running parallel with our brand refresh we also undertook a redesign of our website in order to:

- Customise functionality to simplify the process of finding a programme or initiative that suits you (whoever you may be - individual, care setting, employer, community group)
- Expand storytelling content to build engagement and achieve our key objective of profiling positive and challenging stories of ageing
- Create a bold and dynamic design update to better match our new brand assets
- Refine our website architecture to provide a more cohesive and user-friendly experience.

Our website design work included:

- Website architecture strategy
- Modern, responsive website design
- Web development (HTML and CSS build)
- Content editing
- Integration with our Salesforce CRM system
- Content management system training

The new site will be launched in early 2019 and we will continue to monitor and view analytics in order to see what is working and what content our users want to see more of.

Stakeholder Communication

We continue the phased implementation of our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. The CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system will work across the organisation and all departments and to help give us a better picture of how, and where, our programmes are being used by older people, and to use the feedback we receive to continue to develop pioneering programmes that meet the evolving needs of those 50+.

We undertook a review of all our mailing lists and data collection methods in order to ensure our compliance with GDPR, and we updated our privacy policy to reflect the changes in the information we collect and to make it clear how we use this information, and how much we value the privacy of our stakeholders.

Digital Communications

We continue to develop our digital communications raising issues concerning contemporary ageing and ensuring older people are visible and their voices heard in today's crowded media environment.

We are very grateful to all those who assisted the communications team over the year in doing media work – the best way to ensure the voice of older people is heard is to share our stories and without your stories we cannot help raise the visibility of older people in our media.

Governance and Structure

Governance

Age & Opportunity is governed by a Constitution.

Our Board and CEO are committed to maintaining the highest standards of corporate governance. Trustees, all of who are non-executive and independent, are drawn from diverse backgrounds and bring a broad range of experience and skills to the Board's deliberations.

There are clear distinctions between the roles of the Board and the executive management team. The Board is responsible for providing leadership, setting overall strategy and monitoring budgets and outcomes of the organisation. The Board is also responsible for identifying the risks affecting the organisation and ensuring procedures are in place to reduce and manage the major risks identified. The Board is committed to working effectively, behaving with integrity and being transparent and accountable. There are currently 10 Trustees. The Trustees bring to the Board their significant policy, financial, business and decision making skills gained in their respective fields together with a broad range of experience and views.

The day to day management is delegated to the CEO. The CEO leads the Senior Management Team in implanting our vision, mission and strategic plan, and prepares

and presents policies, business plans and annual financial budgets and management accounts for consideration and approval to the Board. There is a schedule of matters reserved to the Board for decision and a schedule of matters delegated to the CEO.

We held five Board Meetings in 2018. We also held six meetings of the Finance, Governance, HR, Quality and Safety Committee and three meetings of the Audit Committee.

We are fully compliant with the 'The Governance Code: a Code of Practice for Good Governance of Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations in Ireland' as a Type C organisation, and our various funders' governance requirements, and we are compliant with the Charities Regulatory Authority's Governance Code.

A range of significant risks facing Age & Opportunity have been identified. These risks are detailed in our formal Risk Register. We continued, at our Audit Committee meetings, Finance, Governance, HR, Quality and Safety Committee meetings and Board meetings throughout 2018, to evaluate these risks and will ensure that all actions and initiatives undertaken manage these challenges proactively, with risk mitigation actions being identified and implemented without delay, so that our mandate to our participants can be pursued and effectively delivered.

Board, Committees and Advisory Groups

Board

Our Trustees are:

- Ita Mangan (Chair)
- Sarah Bowman
- Mairead Egan
- Claire Kelly
- Fionnuala Hanrahan
- Mary Kelly
- Catherine Marshall
- Tony McCarthy
- Paul Murray
- Helen O'Donoghue

Board Committees

Finance, Governance, HR, Quality and Safety Committee

The primary responsibility of this Committee is to assist the Board in fulfilling its responsibilities for ensuring proper accounting and corporate governance procedures in the organisation. The Committee carries out its responsibilities

mainly through regular contact with the CEO, the Financial Controller and with other members of the Senior Management Team. The Committee may investigate any matter falling within its terms of reference, calling on whatever resources (including outside professional advice) and information necessary to do so.

Its members are:

- Ita Mangan
- Mary Kelly (Chair)
- Claire Kelly

Audit Committee

The primary responsibility of this Committee is to assist the Board in fulfilling its responsibilities for ensuring proper accounting, financial reporting, proper internal controls and procedures in the organisation. The Committee carries out its responsibilities mainly through regular contact with the CEO and Financial Controller and the external auditors.

The Committee is responsible for recommending the appointment of auditors for approval by the Board.

Its members are:

- Ita Mangan
- Catherine Rogers (Independent Chair)
- Tony McCarthy

Board meetings

Trustee:	29/01/08	16/04/18	16/07/18	02/10/18	26/11/18
Ita Mangan (Chair)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sarah Bowman	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mairead Egan	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
Fionnuala Hanrahan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mary Kelly	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
Catherine Marshall	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tony McCarthy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Paul Murray	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Helen O'Donoghue	✓	X	✓	X	✓
Claire Kelly	✓	✓	X	✓	✓

Finance, Governance and HR Committee Meetings

Trustee:	29/01/18	26/02/18	16/04/18	28/05/18	02/10/18	22/10/18
Ita Mangan	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X
Mary Kelly (Chair)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Claire Kelly	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Audit Committee Meetings

Member:	26/03/18	13/08/18	12/11/18
Ita Mangan	X	✓	✓
Catherine Rogers (Chair)	✓	✓	✓
Tony McCarthy	✓	✓	✓

Organisational Advisory Groups

We have three organisational Advisory Groups:

- **Sport Programme Advisory Group**
- **Arts Programme Advisory Group**
- **Engage Programme Advisory Group**

They are comprised of a wide range of stakeholders with an interest in encouraging the active participation of older people in sport and physical activity, arts, civic engagement, and policy, research and evaluation. Their role is to provide expert advice on our strategic themes and objectives, guidance on innovative approaches to encouraging participation of older people in our programme areas, guidance on innovative approaches to encouraging participation of younger older people (from 50+) and marginalised older people in our programme areas, guidance and support in the further development of partnerships, guidance and advice regarding European funded projects, funding and sustainability generally and guidance on action based research opportunities and health and wellbeing.

Go for Life (Sport) Programme Advisory Group

- Robert Grier (Chair)
- Tony McCarthy, Age & Opportunity Trustee, PAL Representative
- John Kerrane, Former Lecturer in the School of Health and Human Performance, DCU
- Michelle Hardi Murphy, Health Promotion, Health Service Executive
- Frank Quaid, Active Retirement Ireland
- Emma Jane Clarke, Partnerships & Governance Manager, Sport Ireland

Arts Programme Advisory Group

- Catherine Marshall, (Chair) Age & Opportunity Trustee and Curator and Art Historian
- Lorraine Comer, Head of Education, National Museum of Ireland
- Anne McCarthy, Arts Officer, Mayo County Council Arts Office

- Ailbhe Murphy, Director, Create
- Helen O'Donoghue, Head of Education & Community Engagement & Learning Programmes, Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA)

Engage Programme Advisory Group

- Fionnuala Hanrahan, (Chair) Age & Opportunity Trustee and Retired County Librarian
- Mairead Egan, Age & Opportunity Trustee and Retired School Principal
- Sarah Bowman, Age & Opportunity Trustee and Director of Strategic Engagement for the Trinity Centre of Ageing and Intellectual Disability, and Director of the Health Research Board – Irish Research Council IGNITE Programme at Trinity College, Dublin
- Colm Kilgannon, Lecturer and Strand Leader, ALBA Programme, DCU - All Hallows Campus

The process was underway at the end of 2018 for the establishment of a Policy, Research and Evaluation Advisory Group.

We will report on this in the Annual Report for 2019.

Staff Members:

- Karen Smyth, CEO

Operations and Programme Support:

- Nollaig Fahy, Funding and Sponsorship Manager (from May 2018)
- Mary Harkin, Policy, Research and Evaluation Manager (from December 2018)
- Anne Kearney, PR, Communications and Marketing Manager
- Lasarine O'Carroll, Financial Controller
- Margaret Roe, Office Manager/HR Manager
- Anne Carroll, Information Assistant (from January 2018)

Arts Programme Team

- Tara Byrne, Arts Programme Manager
- Karen Hennessy, Arts Programme Coordinator (to July 2018)
- Bridget Deevy, Arts Programme Assistant Manager (Started August 2018)
- Kim Chew, Arts Programme Administrator

**Sport Programme team (responsible
for Go for Life – the National Physical
Activity Programme for Older People)**

- Mary Harkin, Go for Life Programme Manager (until December 2018)
- Sue Guildea, Go for Life Programme Assistant Manager (until December 2018)
- Sue Guildea, Go for Life Programme Manager (from December 2018)
- Paul Gallier, Go for Life Programme Assistant Manager (from January 2019)
- Ciara Dawson: Go for Life Programme Administrator

Engage Programme Team

- Ciarán McKinney: Engage Programme Manager
- Brian Dooney: Engage Training and Development Facilitator
- Fiona Holohan: Engage Programme Co-ordinator



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A company limited by guarantee, not having
a share capital. Registered in Ireland
No: 284318. Charity No: CHY 12365.
Registered Charity No: RCN 20036010.

