



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

At **Age & Opportunity**,
our mission is to achieve the best
possible quality of life for us all as
we age. Our vision is an Ireland
where all older people can be more
active, more visible, more creative,
more connected, more confident,
more often.

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Chairperson's Statement



I am delighted to present Age & Opportunity's Annual Report for 2022, documenting our continued work on the objectives set out in our Strategic Plan 2021-2024.

We were founded in 1988 as a response to the need for the promotion of more positive attitudes to older people and ageing, and never has this need been more pressing. While health services, together with a range of agencies have responded in creative and effective ways in very challenging times, the pandemic has demonstrated that we will have some distance to travel in developing as a truly age friendly society. We continue to explore 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.

We know that positive ageing requires significant policy and programme responses in multiple areas. We continue to ensure that our work is aligned to key strategies, such as the National Positive Ageing

Strategy, Sláintecare, Healthy Ireland, the National Physical Activity Plan and the National Sports Policy, the Arts Council of Ireland's Making Great Art Work, and Culture 2025, the National Cultural Policy Framework. We also ensure that our work is aligned to international best practice and we contribute on a European level through our engagement with AGE Platform Europe.

Our work would not be possible without the strategic relationships that we have developed throughout the country, and a key focus of our future strategy will be 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.

We believe that strong governance is vital in our sector, ensuring effective decision-making and prioritisation of resources, and we will continue to work to uphold those standards within Age & Opportunity. We are fully compliant with the Charities Regulatory Authority's Governance Code and the Governance Code for Sport as a Type C organisation, and our various funders' governance requirements. This was evidenced during 2022, as we were selected for audit by the HSE and we were delighted that the audit showed that overall we are compliant with the requirements of our funding agreement. Also in 2021 we were selected for audit by Sport Ireland, another one of our core funders, and we secured 'Excellent Assurance', the highest level of assurance, in the audit report. In 2022 we also appointed internal auditors and are working to a three-year internal audit plan.

I would like to recognise the voluntary commitment of my colleagues on the Board, and across our organisational Committees and Advisory Groups, and to thank them for their support and dedication. Our ability to meet our strategic priorities has a direct impact on the day-to-day operations of Age & Opportunity.

I would also like to thank our CEO and all our employees and volunteers and our extended team for being instrumental in ensuring that Age & Opportunity continues to respond to the challenges that the pandemic has created. It is in all of our interests to promote the best possible quality of life as we age, and to challenge ageism in its many forms, as an investment for our own futures and those of younger generations. I am proud to be a part of this important work.

Ita Mangan
Chairperson, Age & Opportunity

CEO's Statement



It gives me great pleasure to report to you on Age & Opportunity's activities and achievements for 2022.

Throughout 2022, Covid-19 continued to cause uncertainty in the world, and presented a multitude of challenges for us all. In Age & Opportunity we were very conscious of responding to the detrimental impact of Covid-19 on older people in particular, from a physical, mental and emotional perspective.

Throughout our engagement with our older people across our various initiatives in 2022 we got a very strong sense of how people have been feeling and coping throughout the pandemic. Emotions have ranged from overwhelming fear, a heightened sense of anxiety, a strong feeling of anger and frustration coupled with loss and loneliness. However, the strength and resilience of our older population has been so apparent; we also witnessed a strong sense of determination, empowerment, engagement, leadership, creativity, positivity and hope for the future.

Throughout 2022, across our Active, Arts and Engage programmes, we had a significant focus on supporting and empowering older people to continue to engage, or re-engage, in our communities. We did so whilst recognising that older people do not form a

homogenous group – we are all different, we are all ageing differently and there isn't a one size fits all approach to achieving the best possible quality of life.

We have been progressing our work right across the organisation on challenging ageism and the negative stereotypes of ageing, through delivery of ageism workshops, production of guidance materials around appropriate language and imagery, and various policy submissions. We also continue to work closely with our partners in the Alliance of Age Sector NGOs in advocating for a government response to tackling ageism in line with the underpinning theme of the National Positive Ageing Strategy.

Our Person and Public Involvement (PPI) group, which we established in 2021, continued to be instrumental in 2022 in ensuring meaningful partnerships with older people and building our capacity to conduct and collaborate in research activities. This group is comprised of older people who are 'experts by experience' and who are involved in our research and evaluation activities and collaborative research projects with other organisations.

Throughout 2022, we significantly expanded our reach to 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. We have had a particular focus on engaging with hard to reach older people, in particular residents of care settings, family carers, men, members of the traveller community, migrants, older people with intellectual disability and LBGTQIA+ older people. We are continuing to develop organisational knowledge through new partnerships in the process. Delivering our initiatives in a hybrid model, incorporating online and telephone mechanisms and in-person delivery, is a key driver in this enhanced engagement.

I would like to thank my exceptional colleagues for their commitment and passion to ensuring that we continue to broaden our reach so that we can ensure that more older people stay connected, active and creative during these difficult times, whatever our age and wherever we call home.

I would also like to thank our funders, in particular the HSE, Sport Ireland, the Arts Council of Ireland, the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, and the Community Foundation of Ireland 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 Finance, Governance, HR, Quality, Safety and Nominations Committee, our Audit and Risk Committee and our four Advisory Groups for their commitment and expertise.

Finally, thank you to all of our programme participants the length and breadth of the country who continue to enable us to push the boundaries in exploring diverse models for ageing. Our participants have continued throughout 2022 to bring an incredible resilience, leadership, determination, humour and fresh thinking to all aspects of our work in delivering the best possible quality of life for us all as we age.

Karen Horgan
CEO, Age & Opportunity

Strategic Plan

2021 – 2024

Our Vision

An Ireland where all older people can be more active, more visible, more creative, more connected, more confident, more often.

Our Mission

Our mission is to achieve the best possible quality of life for us all as we age.

Our Values

Our values are centred around ensuring that the views, opinions and experiences of Older People inform all that we do. We seek to promote Equality and Inclusivity. We aim to be Brave, Pioneering and Inspiring and we strive for Excellence in everything we do.

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.

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 Active is designed to get us more active and participating in recreational sport and physical activity.

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

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 Year in Numbers

Programme	Number of initiatives	Number of events / workshops in each initiative	Number of engagements
Active	39	211	74,111
Arts	78	367	10,872
Engage	46	159	3,613
Total	163	737	88,596

Our Strategic Themes

Our previous strategy (2018–2020) was successful and served us well. We have enhanced our strong research orientation to ensure that when designing, developing and delivering our programmes, we are meeting the needs of participants. The rich data that we have garnered informs programme design while also providing confidence to our funders. The pandemic, of course, required a shift to new methods of programme delivery and much has been learned through this process. Throughout 2022, a mix of online, telephone and in-person engagement allowed an extension of our reach to new communities and help ensure that fewer older people are left behind.

Given the ongoing relevance of our previous Strategic Plan, we decided to ‘test and refresh’ the plan rather than ‘start again’. This strategy refresh process was led by a Strategy Committee comprised of Board and staff members. The testing and refreshing of the plan consisted of a robust process of stakeholder engagement, review and

strategy formulation. Facilitated sessions and interviews were conducted with programme participants, funders, staff and other sectoral experts. Their honest appraisal, insight and ambition has enabled and emboldened our vision of an Ireland where all older people can be more active; more visible; more creative; more connected; more confident; more often.

Throughout the lifetime of our Strategic Plan 2021-2024, the focus is on achieving ambitious goals in four areas to help society make the most of the social and economic opportunities presented by people living longer. We will measure and track progress on these aims to be sure that our programmes, and the funding which supports them, are making a real difference. In keeping with ambitions set out in the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030), by 2030 the aim is for more people in later life to be in good health, physically active, to have social connections and to continue to feel that our lives are meaningful and purposeful.

Theme One	Theme Two	Theme Three	Theme Four
Enhancing the ageing experience Strategic objectives • Develop and deliver programmes which promote community development and enhance the ageing experience; • Challenge ageism and negative stereotypes of ageing; • Conduct and collaborate on research with programme participants and older people and apply findings gathered through consultation and programme delivery.	Influencing public policy Strategic objectives • Strengthen engagement and communication with politicians and national-level policymakers; • Shape informed, compelling and targeted goals for relevant policy and decision makers; • Create opportunities for older people to have their voices heard by relevant policy and decision makers.	Delivering value for our funders and programme participants Strategic objectives • Engage strategically with partners, programme participants and older people to advance our stated vision and mission in a sustainable and effective way; • Ensure stronger collaboration across our three programme areas.	Working with partners Strategic objectives • Promote an innovative and learning working environment that motivates, challenges and develops the organisation; • Facilitate the continued development of staff and optimise the effective deployment of available resources.

Age & Opportunity active

What we want to see for older people

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

Age & Opportunity’s Active programme is the national sport and physical activity programme for older people funded by Sport Ireland and the HSE. The programme is designed to get us more active, providing opportunities for us to take part in recreational sport and physical activity.

Why We Run Our Active Programme

Physical inactivity is recognised as one of the leading risk factors for overweight, obesity, non-communicable diseases and chronic conditions. The national guidelines tell us that older people should be active for 150 minutes a week of moderate intensity activity with a focus on aerobic activity, muscle strengthening and balance. In Ireland currently 55% of those between the ages of 65 and 74 and 37% of those aged over 75 are meeting these guidelines. Science has proven that staying active keeps our body younger and our mind happier, no matter what it says on our birth cert.

Since 2001, our Active Programme has been getting more older people more active more often. We are funded by Sport Ireland as part of its commitment to increase participation in physical activity and recreational sport among older people. The objectives of our Active Programme are closely aligned with Sport Ireland’s strategy, as well as the The National Sports Policy 2018-2027, Healthy Ireland Strategic Action Plan 2021-2025, the National Physical Activity Plan and Healthy Ireland.



Kayaking in Offaly

Physical Activity Leaders (PALs)

PALs is an education and peer leadership initiative that trains older people as physical activity leaders to lead sport and physical activity programmes with older people in their local communities. In 2022 we were able to resume delivery of PALs workshops in face-to-face settings. Workshops took place in Dublin, Galway, Laois and Louth with 79 participants.

Active PALs Re-Engagement Stakeholder Group

We established this stakeholder group to help us ascertain the extent of active PALs, what we can do to support this network of leaders and to reinvigorate the PALs initiative nationally.

With input from the stakeholder group we designed a survey to gather as much information as possible from our PALs. The survey was carried out by a team of nine people consisting of existing PALs and past trainers with vast experience of the PALs initiative (see page 47). They phoned all the

PALs on our database. By the end of 2022 we are able to say that we have 342 active PALs who are still leading or organising physical activity with their groups. The majority of PALs are over the age of 70 and are female. We are planning to employ a person in the role of Active programme PALs Coordinator in order to build stronger connections between Age & Opportunity and our network of leaders.

Physical Activity Leaders for people with an intellectual disability (PPALs)

People with intellectual disability were particularly affected by Covid-19. We have not delivered PPALs training since Covid-19 restrictions came into place in 2020. However, we held discussions at the end of 2022 with Down Syndrome Ireland about delivering PPALs to their members. Workshops are scheduled for 2023 and we look forward to further collaboration between our two organisations.

CarePALs

Our CarePALs initiative, like the National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland and the National Positive Ageing Strategy, is focused on keeping older people as healthy as possible for as long as possible.

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 settings. It is based on our original PALs 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.

In 2022 we delivered our CarePALs initiative online and in person, training a total of 244 care staff. Since we began in 2016 we have trained 1,335 CarePALs around the country.

Active National Grant Scheme

Since 2001, our Active National Grant Scheme has been providing funding to groups and organisations to help them engage older participants and peers in more physical activities and sport, by purchasing equipment and/or encouraging further participation through programmes and activities. Local Sports Partnerships, HSE Coordinators and other local agencies work closely with the groups when they are applying for funding, giving assistance and advice to applicants.

We did not run the Grant Scheme in 2021 because groups were unable to spend their funding during the Covid-19 years. As a result, in 2022 we were able to combine both the 2021 and 2022 grant funds, giving us a total of €600,000 to allocate. We took this opportunity to expand our reach to all care settings and to sports clubs around the country who were struggling to get older adults back to physical activity and sport.

We rolled out the grant scheme in February 2022 and had 1,214 applicants, of which 996 were successful. We had over 200 sports clubs apply, but only a small number of care settings. We decided to run the grant again, later in the year, exclusively for care settings. With help from the HSE and Nursing Homes Ireland this round of funding attracted 167 applications, of which 94 were successful. We estimate that we are reaching an additional 13,000 older people in care settings due to our grant scheme expansion in 2022. (See Showcasing on page 16.)

Go for Life Games

Our Go for Life National Games event has not taken place since 2019 due to the impact of Covid-19. However, the games are still being played by groups around the country in their own communities. We plan to schedule games events regionally in 2023.

Walking Football Initiative

Our Active team had been looking at ways to reach out to men's groups as they were identified as being severely impacted by Covid-19. Following our pilot Walking Football initiative in 2021 we were successful in securing funding from Sport Ireland's Covid-19 Fund to roll it out to 16 men's sheds in the Leinster region.

Our Walking Football Initiative was shortlisted for an Age Friendly Ireland award in October, making the last 20 of 220 award applications. (See Showcasing on page 18.)

FitLine

FitLine is a volunteer-led telephone-based motivation line to encourage older individuals to become more active. FitLine is an important initiative for Age & Opportunity as it is very accessible and it reaches out to older people who may be marginalised and vulnerable, and

particularly those who may not have access to online initiatives. We secured funding towards the end of 2020 from Sport Ireland, through its Keep Well Campaign, to expand FitLine on a nationwide basis.

FitLine has continued to grow. The age demographic of participants ranges from 51 to 91, and 14% of participants are male, which represents a growth in male participation as per our ambition. In order to boost participant recruitment, we continued to forge links with relevant organisations and professionals, including social prescribers.

As part of our nationwide expansion of FitLine, we also committed to delivering our Engage Programme's Changing Gears course to our volunteer mentors and our participants, with encouraging levels of participation to date (see page 35). Further deliveries will be scheduled for participants when the numbers grow further. We commissioned an external evaluation of FitLine, which has been completed.

The evaluation showed that 33% of participants reported an improvement in their physical activity levels as a result of participating in FitLine. There was a 20% increase in those understanding the benefits of physical activity and the evaluation results also suggest that FitLine participants on average are achieving the recommended national physical activity guidelines of 150 minutes per week. Participants described the calls as motivating or encouraging and commented that it was beneficial to have someone checking up on their physical activity levels.

"They ring you every so often and they're motivating you to be active. At the time I was very sedentary. I was minding my mother at the time, so I was sitting a lot. It certainly motivated me to get moving again and I

suppose for me it lifted my mood as well."
Participant Feedback

"I would become a recluse if FitLine wasn't available. Before FitLine I never left the house". Participant Feedback

"The physical activity has helped my knees stop hurting; they don't bother me anymore. My physical activity has increased and I'm now doing half an hour a day."
Participant Feedback

"It gives me a lift because someone is thinking about you. The phone call can fill the gap in social connections. The days can be very long and lonely." Participant Feedback

Online Activities

Our Active programme online activities continue through Age & Opportunity's YouTube and social media channels. With the lifting of the main Covid-19 restrictions in early 2022 it was decided to wind down the 'live' Movement Minutes sessions on our Facebook page at the end of March. Previously recorded sessions continued to be shown weekly on our Facebook page for the remainder of the year.

A dance video was developed and offered online to accompany a 'Let's Dance' resource document, available in hard and soft copy, that teaches ballet and Charleston moves suitable for older people.

Offline Resources

Our Active programme continued throughout 2022 to provide our 'Active DVD' and our fact sheets teaching balance, strength and posture, and encouraging people to remain active. Our 'Steady Sevens' booklet is still popular. It offers practical and simple movements which help with mobility and preventing falls. All these resources are sent

to older people when requested through our own communication channels, and also through our partners and local community support groups.

Working in partnership

In the National Sports Policy 2018-2027, the Government recognises 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.

Much of our work runs in partnership with the Local Sports Partnerships that are a central point within each county for sport and physical activity. All of the initiatives within our Active programme are enhanced and reach a wider audience because of the close relationships we have developed over the years with these organisations.

We teamed up with Cavan Sports Partnership to deliver intergenerational PALs to 17 students from St Bricin's Vocational School. This was an eight week course to teach transition year students how to lead physical activity sessions for older people.

We continue to engage with other organisations in developing new ideas to help support older people to stay active and engaged. For example, in 2022 we continued to work with FAI clubs and the Irish Men's Sheds Association to expand our Walking Football initiative, and as mentioned above we started to collaborate with Down Syndrome Ireland in relation to our PPALs training.

In 2022, we collaborated with a HSE physiotherapist in relation to specialised Posture Stability training. Two staff members attended the training in Dublin and Limerick aimed at those working with people who have fallen or are at risk of falling.

European Week of Sport (EWOS)

This event, that takes place each September, encourages everyone across Europe to become more active and involved in sport. Each year we place a strong emphasis on engaging with the National Governing Bodies for Sport and with local activity providers as part of the week's #BEACTIVE campaign.

Our contribution to EWOS 2022, which took place from 23rd to 30th September, was to run 10 sessions of our 'I've always wanted to try ...' initiative. This allows us to engage with PALs and groups across the country to give them a chance to try out new activities. In 2022 we ran sessions in salsa dancing, footgolf, kayaking, walking football and surfing, reaching 160 older people. We also helped support the Tipperary Sports Fest and an older adult 'NCT' session.

Salsa



Showcasing Active National Grant Scheme – Nursing homes and care settings

Our Active National Grant Scheme offers an opportunity for older adult groups, sports clubs and other organisations to apply for funding to help promote sport and physical activity among older people. In 2022, we worked in partnership with Nursing Homes Ireland and the HSE to promote and encourage more care settings to avail of this funding. As a result, over 100 care settings were successful in securing money for equipment and initiatives that will improve the lives of those who live in or visit these settings.

We produced a video that tells the story of how the Active National Grant Scheme benefits older people who live in or visit care settings.

Bernard, a resident of Curam Care Home, Dundalk, a recipient of the National Active Grant Scheme



Physical activity in Carrigoran Health & Wellness Day Centre, Co Clare

Wicklow Day Care Centre
physical activity class



Testimonials

"It's great to get the grant from Age & Opportunity and Sport Ireland. It's wonderful because we will be able to replenish things we had to get rid of and it will increase the activities we can offer. I'm just delighted that we got it."

Sinead Almole (CarePAL), Lead Activities Coordinator, Curam Care Home, Dundalk

"The grant means so much from Age & Opportunity and Sport Ireland. It means we can purchase equipment that is versatile for our clients. It meets all their needs and all of their different abilities."

Veronica Callanan (CarePAL), Acting Manager, Carrigoran Health and Wellness Day Centre, Co Clare

"Getting the grant from Age & Opportunity and Sport Ireland means that we can have a range of different classes now. It means inclusion for a lot more of our people. The more things we have to do the more people we can get involved."

Mary Kinsella (CarePAL), Wicklow Day Care Centre

Showcasing Walking Football Initiative

What is Walking Football?

Walking football is a safe and accessible sport that can be played by anyone, even those who have never played football before. It is non-contact and no running is allowed. Walking football promotes physical activity as well as mental health and social wellbeing.



Walking Football is good for physical and mental health

What is the impact of Walking Football?

Age & Opportunity's research 'Locked Up, Locked In, Locked Out! The impact of Covid-19 on Physical Activity in Older People's Groups' found that the pandemic had a devastating effect on the physical activity levels of older people's groups, particularly men's groups. Men's sheds reported the difficulty they had in keeping in contact with members and their deep concerns of how they were going to get their groups back up and running. Most of these groups did not meet up at all during the pandemic and therefore lost all social contact and the ability to engage in physical activity with their peers.

Our pilot Walking Football Initiative, run with Naas Community Men's Shed in Co. Kildare in August 2021, encouraged men back to their groups through the opportunity to engage in a sport which many had played previously. Participants learned the skills and rules of walking football by taking part in drills and playing small-sided games.

Results from the evaluation of our pilot showed that 79% of the men that took part reported feeling either 'a bit' or 'very much' more active since taking part in the initiative.

In 2022, with support from the Sport Ireland Covid-19 Fund and in partnership with the Irish Men's Sheds Association we rolled out walking football to 10 men's sheds, reaching 100 people in Cabra, Blackrock, Clane, Ayrfield, Tinahely, Vale of Avoca, Kilcoole, Ballymun, Bohemians FC and Shamrock Rovers FC. Participants had two sessions with our Engage team focusing on resilience, and five walking football sessions with our walking football coaches.

We will bring walking football to six more sheds in 2023. Once all the sessions have been delivered blitzes for the 16 sheds will be organised.

Testimonials

"Walking football is great fun and delivers significant benefits such as improved physical, mental and social health".

Walking football coach Peter McNulty

"It's safe, it's so enjoyable and I love doing it. It's great for the auld fitness. But, in fairness, it's more the mental part of it. I don't worry about anything when I'm out on that pitch. I come out here on a Wednesday afternoon, and for that hour I'm 18 again."

Derek Reid of Cabra Men's Shed quoted in The Irish Times, 1st November 2022

Active Programme Our Year in Numbers

Activity / event / workshop	Number of initiatives	Number of events/ work-shops in each initiative	Number of engagements
Physical Activity Leader (PALs) Workshops	2	32	79
Movement Minutes			24,581
Christmas Movement Minutes	1	2	
No. of PALs Interviewers	1	1	9
No. of PALs surveys conducted	1	1	770
PALs Get Together	1	1	7
PROPs Research – no. of peer researchers	1	1	14
PROPs Research – no. of interviews carried out	1	1	232
Walking Football	1	47	100
PROPs Focus Groups	1	1	13
Tipperary Sports Fest	1	1	50
Go for Life Games Day, Sport Ireland	1	1	30
Active Trainer Training Day	1	1	7
FitLine Mentor Training	1	3	6
FitLine Group Activity Carlow	1	1	30
FitLine Group Activity Leitrim	1	1	8
Intergenerational TY Training	1	7	18
Physical Activity Talks	1	2	30
CarePALs Workshops	1	62	244
Previously trained CarePALs up to Dec 2021			1,091
No. of Active DVDs sent out	1	1	120
No. of Fact Sheets posted out	1	1	150
No. of Steady Sevens posted out	1	1	150
European Week of Sport	10	10	160
FitLine Mentors	1	1	19
FitLine Participants	1	1	180
FitLine Engagements	1	26	1,632
Active National Grant Scheme			
Total no. of grant applications Round 1	1	1	1,214
Estimated reach of grant scheme	1	1	30,000
Total no. of applications care settings Round 2	1	1	167
Estimated reach of grant scheme in care settings	1	1	13,000
TOTAL Active Programme	39	211	74,111

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 confident, more often.

Age & Opportunity Arts Programme is Ireland’s leading vehicle for developing arts initiatives with and for older people. Through our Arts programme, we support the meaningful participation and representation of all older people in the arts in Ireland through celebrating the arts and creativity as we age. We also aim to underline the importance of the arts to positive ageing and to influence policy and practice in the area.

Our Arts programme comprises a range of initiatives and events, the biggest one of which is the annual month-long Bealtaine Festival, which takes place in May throughout local communities all around Ireland. We also deliver a comprehensive development and resource programme of initiatives designed to support the arts and ageing/ creative ageing sector in Ireland.

We work through resourcing artists, arts participants (and audiences) and arts organisations to engage with us and raise the standard, knowledge-base, policy, and visibility of the arts and ageing sector in Ireland.

Why We Run Our Arts Programme

Ireland is committed to upholding the cultural rights of every citizen to access and express their own culture as enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. As such, our Arts Programme primarily aims to provide more opportunities for older people to engage with the arts and to resource the arts sector to support that engagement. We also wish to make sure older people are represented in the arts in Ireland and to demonstrate and celebrate how our creative potential can improve with age.

Creativity is a key factor in how we adapt to ageing. There is now a significant body of research demonstrating the health and wellbeing 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.



Dawn Chorus 2022, Blackrock, Salthill, Co. Galway

Bealtaine Festival

Established in 1995, the 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 for the entire month. Through Bealtaine, we bring together older people and artists from all over Ireland and across generations to participate in arts and creative activities.

The success of Bealtaine can be measured by its prominence as a national festival and its central role in showcasing the arts and older people in Ireland. The festival has also been an inspiration for the development of international festivals including Luminate in Scotland, Gwanwyn in Wales, The Age of Creativity in England and ARMAS in Finland.

Bealtaine Festival aims:

- Nurturing the greater participation and representation of older people in the arts;
- Celebrating older artists and highlighting the creativity and potential of older people;
- Platforming the diversity of older age;
- Supporting organisations to deliver their own events;
- Nurturing solidarity between generations.

Bealtaine Festival objectives:

- Creating an inclusive and welcoming Festival in a wide variety of settings and locations with a wide variety of events;
- Challenging expectations of a Festival celebrating older age;
- Nurturing the participation of organisations and communities around Ireland;
- Platforming and reflecting on key issues impacting on age through projects and discussions.

Bealtaine 2022

The festival programme in 2022 was once again based around the theme of in(ter)dependence (the second of three years), and showcased hybrid events across Literature and Ideas, Music, Theatre, Dance, Visual Arts and Film. The festival also featured a mixture of popular events (the Dawn and Dusk Choruses, Standing on the Shoulder of Giants and Bealtaine Book Club) as well as new events. There was a balance of direct participation (workshops and discussions) and audience experiences (Bealtaine Tour). In addition, Bealtaine 2022 was our most diverse festival yet. Events included those celebrating major cultural milestones relevant to some of our audiences such as 'Flikkers - Come As You Were' a film about an LGBTQ+ nightclub, and socio-political events which determine the way we live – a Discussion series; Restorying Ageing – older women and life-writing; and our 'Where Do All the Old Gays Go?' film commission. Bealtaine 2022 also featured intergenerational participants and audiences of all ages, backgrounds and identities.

For the first time, the Festival comprised both online and in-person events. The total number of registered national Bealtaine Festival events was 316. This includes 75 in-house events (and 27 in-house Festival initiatives) curated by Age & Opportunity and a further 241 registered events curated by 124 organisers (including 69 nursing homes). This number does not include the many national Bealtaine events that were not registered on bealtaine.ie. The estimated total audience for in-house and registered events for 2022 was over 10,209. This breaks down as follows:

- There were 5,389 attendances at in-house events curated by Age & Opportunity (including in-person attendances, online live attendances, and online video views). Many of the curated events remained available to watch online after the Festival

and by mid-August 2022 there were 843 additional online views recorded.

- For the national Bealtaine Festival curated by partner organisations, there were an estimated 4,820 attendances at 241 events based on our own (conservative) aggregation of 20 persons attending each event. This estimated number includes National Arts in Nursing Homes Day and the inaugural National Arts in Nursing Homes Day Award (see below).

Of the 241 events registered on the Bealtaine website, 52 took place in Dublin, 31 in Tipperary, and 20 in Laois with the latter two counties having strong programmes developed by local authorities and libraries. Other counties with relatively high registration numbers include Cork, Sligo and Waterford.

Bealtaine Evaluation – Summary of key evaluation outcomes

Bealtaine 2022 was successful in attracting new audiences nationwide with 22 counties represented by survey respondents. Those attending Bealtaine events for the first time accounted for 69% of respondents and yet again, as a positive consequence of online delivery, the Festival attracted an international audience with 32 audience members responding to the survey from outside Ireland.

As in previous years, audiences reported that they felt more artistic/creative (47%), more confident (18%), more connected to other people (55%) and more likely to engage with the arts again (49%).

Furthermore, results indicate that Bealtaine 2022 contributed to our overall organisational aims, with audiences reporting that participating in the Festival made them feel more visible (23%), more positive about ageing (55%) and gave them an increased sense of well-being /happiness (48%).

Development work

Our Arts programme has been supporting the development of older arts audiences and participants since Cultural Companions was established in 2011. More recently, with the development of supports and training for artists, as well as supports for arts organisations working with older people the Arts programme has vastly expanded its work by developing new ways to support creative ageing in Ireland. Specifically, it has developed initiatives that resource older arts participants, audiences and artists, as well as arts organisations who work with older people.

As above, our arts development work aims to create greater access to and representation in the arts for older people and raise the standard, knowledge-base and visibility of older arts participation in Ireland.

There are three strands to this work:

- artist development activities;
- audience development activities;
- arts practice/organisational development activities.



Fabulous Flickers Exhibition, remembering and celebrating the Flickers Disco era at the Hirschfeld Centre, Bealtaine 2022

Artist Development Activities

This strand aims to support the careers of older professional artists and offer them more opportunities to develop and show work.

Arts in Care: Introduction to Arts Health and Older People (AHOP)

This is an initiative that was developed in 2021 and 2022 between Age & Opportunity, Waterford Healing Arts Trust and Uileann, West Cork Arts Centre. AHOP aims to provide a broad introduction outlining the essential components for emerging arts practitioners who wish to work with older people and/or in a health context. In 2022 the event consisted of a three day online programme of presentations, case studies, workshops and networking.

Arts in Care: Artists Care Information Exchange (ACE)

In 2022, building on the Artist in Residence in a Care Setting initiative (ARCS) which connected artists with the residents of care settings, we developed an initiative to support and further train artists



Post show discussion at the screening of 'Where Do All The Old Gays Go' at the Irish Film Institute



Colm Toibin at Bealtaine 2022

working in care settings. Informed by recommendations in the Imogen Blood and Associates evaluation of the last round of ARCS (2020/2021), we created the ACE as a structured online programme of seven half-day information and exchange sessions focussed on the practicalities and ethics of working in care homes.

Visual Arts Professional Development KCAT Residency

The KCAT (Kilkenny Collective for Arts Talent) partnership offers Age & Opportunity the chance to directly engage with a dedicated and open-access life-long learning initiative and a programme, Engagement at KCAT, which forges partnerships between artists with learning disabilities and professional artists of different backgrounds and skills. Engaging in arts initiatives that involve disadvantaged older people is a key objective for our Arts programme.

Visual Arts Professional Development Bealtaine, Fingal and Tyrone Guthrie Centre Residency

Developed in 2022, this residency offered two Fingal-based visual artists of 50+ the opportunity to spend time in the Tyrone Guthrie Centre during May exploring their work and practice in terms of the Bealtaine Festival theme of interdependence. The residency was won by Una Sealy and Thomas Brezing and culminated with an 'in conversation' event that was shown online during the 2022 Festival.

Artists Professional Development Age & Opportunity, Local Authority (Meath and Louth) and Tyrone Guthrie Centre Residency

This residency was developed by Age & Opportunity in partnership with local authorities in 2022 to offer artists of any artform from Louth and Meath who are aged 50+ the opportunity to spend a week at the Tyrone Guthrie Centre exploring their work and practice.

Artist's Awards

In 2022 we launched two new artist's awards to support older and emergent artists and increase the platform and visibility for older artists:

- Emerging Artist award for older artists
- Professional Development Bursaries for Older Artists

This award aims to encourage and support older artists who are newly emerging and to offer a mentoring opportunity. It was awarded to writer Colette Cullen.

This award aims to offer support for an artist to undertake professional development opportunities. It was awarded to visual artist Sioban Piercy.

Supporting Older Musicians

In 2022 we started work with First Music Contact to survey and ascertain the needs of older musicians in order to better support their needs.

Audience Development Activities

Cultural Companions

Our Cultural Companions initiative supports older people to engage with Ireland's arts events and initiatives through a cultural buddy network. The initiative also supports local authorities and regional hubs to set up a Cultural Companions in their area. To date, we have established seven Cultural Companion hubs: in Clare, Cork, Dublin, Mayo (planning a relaunch in 2023), Tipperary (also planning a relaunch in 2023), Sligo and Wexford, with Roscommon and Donegal in development. In late 2022 we organised a 'soft' relaunch of Cultural Companions Dublin at the Chester Beatty Library.

Bualadh Liom (Meet Me...)

Bualadh Liom is an arts and social network and initiative for older people based on the idea of weekly arts clubs. In 2022 we continued to coordinate a small network

of arts venues to explore this idea which included Axis in Ballymun, Glor in Clare, IMMA in Dublin and the Model in Sligo. Bualadh Liom is developing into an information and exchange network of organisations who work with older people.

National Arts in Nursing Homes Day (NANHD)

We developed NANHD in partnership with Nursing Homes Ireland in 2021 in order to promote the active participation of care homes in a 'National Day of Arts' on the third Friday of the Bealtaine month. The event aims to create arts experiences for residents and visitors of day and care home settings, and to stimulate and encourage the homes to value and engage more with the arts. In 2022, NANHD attracted 69 nursing homes. (See showcasing page 32.)

NANHD Awards

In 2022, we launched the NANHD Awards, again in partnership with Nursing Homes Ireland. There are three awards – one of €1,000 and two of €500 – for nursing homes and day care centres that develop, with professional artists, great arts projects for their residents.

Arts Event Listings

This year-round listings portal was launched in Autumn 2022 on bealtaine.ie. It offers a searchable database of age friendly arts events that older people and their relatives, carers and social prescribers can see at a glance.

Bealtaine Hero

This award aims to support the creation of an engaging arts project with a professional artist in the community for Bealtaine Festival. It was awarded to Suzanne Buttimer (working with Bramleigh Lodge Nursing Home) and Gráinne O'Carroll with Sophie Kasser (working with Tearmann Éanna, Galway).

Organisation and Art Practice Development

The Gathering

The Gathering is an annual event which brings together our local and national partners for a day of networking, practice, discussion and feedback on the Festival. The 2022 Gathering was held in Project Arts Centre on October 17.

Arts & Creative Charter for Older People

After three years in development and following public consultation, we have created a National Arts & Creative Charter for Older People setting out a set of principles and concrete commitments for organisations in terms of working with and for older people in the arts in Ireland. A pilot initiative involving seven arts venues was commenced in late 2022.

The Aims of the National Arts & Creative Charter are:

- To improve the experience of older audiences, arts participants and artists in their engagement with arts organisations in Ireland by recognising older people as distinct communities with particular sets of needs;
- To increase the confidence of older people in their engagement with arts organisations;
- To increase the confidence of arts organisations in working with and for older people;
- To advocate for and influence policy (also to be used in training) and best practice in relation to the arts and older people in Ireland.

(See Showcasing page 30.)

Arts, Disability Equality & Older People Training and Tool Kit

In 2022, in partnership with Arts & Disability Ireland, we continued the development of a

hybrid arts and older people training module which will support those organisations adopting the Arts & Creative Charter.

Matchmaking

This initiative aims to match artists and arts organisations wishing to work with older people through a meet, greet and exchange initiative. It was piloted in the winter of 2020 with Tipperary Arts Office, developed in 2021 with Roscommon and expanded to Clare in 2022.

Research / Creative Ageing Writing Bursary

The bursary is intended to afford time and space for an artist or writer to reflect on their practice, whether that be as an artist or arts worker, as it relates to the arts and ageing. In 2022 the award was won by theatre maker Noelle Browne.

Dance & Older People

Dance Ireland and Age & Opportunity, in consultation with Dance Theatre of Ireland, presented a networking event – 'The Floor is Yours!' – for dance artists, companies and organisations working with older people, that aims to strengthen and connect the sector. The event took place in December 2022 and offered workshops, discussions and presentations from those working in the field nationally.

Mapping the Arts & Older Person Survey

In the spring of 2022, Age & Opportunity set out to research the arts and older person sector. This survey, led by volunteer Antoinette Hensey with the assistance of the Arts Programme found key points of information about the arts and older person sector within Ireland, which we aim to address in our Arts & Creative Charter for Older People (see page 30).

Arts Programme Our Year in Numbers

Arts Programme Statistics - Full year 2022	Number of initiatives	Number of events / work-shops in each initiative	Engagements (views/ attendances)
Total Bealtaine Age & Opportunity Curated events	52	75	5,389
Events curated by National Partners:			
National Arts in Nursing Homes Day	1	74	1,480
Bealtaine website registrations	1	167	3,340
Total events curated by national partners	2	241	4,820
TOTAL Bealtaine events 2022	54	316	10,209
Development initiatives			
Access Initiative	1	6	3
Arts Events Listings	1	1	21
Artists Care Exchange	1	7	10
Arts & Creative Charter for Older People	1	1	N/A
Arts and Creative Toolkit for Care Settings	1	1	20
Beyond Bealtaine Book Club	1	2	17
Bualadh Liom meetings	1	3	5
Charter Consultation Meeting	1	1	3
Charter Pilot Meeting	1	2	6
Charter Pilot	1	1	7
Creative Ageing Writing Bursary: Creaking	1	1	N/A
Cultural Companions Events	1	4	14
Cultural Companions Relaunch Event	1	1	19
Cultural Companions Volunteer Meeting	1	1	4
Dance Development: The Floor is Yours	1	1	31
Experience: Arts, Health & the Older Person	1	3	12
Experience: Arts, Health & the Older Person Report	1	1	N/A
Feel the Fear & Do it Anyway – An Introduction to the Arts	1	1	305
Flikkers Screening	1	1	21

Arts Programme Statistics - Full year 2022	Number of initiatives	Number of events / work-shops in each initiative	Engagements (views/ attendances)
KCAT residency	1	5	6
Mapping the Arts & Older Person Sector	1	1	N/A
Older Musicians Initiative	1	3	2
The Gathering 2021 (held in 2022)	1	2	21
The Gathering 2022	1	1	40
Total development initiatives	24	51	567
Total including family and staff attendances			663
Total development initiatives	24	51	663
Overall Total	78	367	10,872

Showcasing Arts & Creative Charter for Older People

The National Arts & Creative Charter in Ireland aims to increase and improve the experiences of older audiences, arts participants and artists in their engagement with arts organisations in Ireland. Over the course of two-and-a-half years, a co-design group of arts organisations and older people met to develop a series of six guiding principles and nine (organisational) commitments. This work was tested through public consultation and a further sectoral focus group. As such, the Charter sets out both an organisational and a national statement of intent in terms of working with and for older people in the arts in Ireland.

The Charter is currently at pilot stage, with seven arts venues around the country (including two National Cultural Institutions) rolling it out. The pilot is being evaluated and will conclude at the end of 2023, at which point recommendations about its national rollout will be made.



National Arts & Creative
Charter poster

The following testimonial is from Maureen Murphy, one of the Charter co-designees:

"When you are young it's very easy to think that people in their 60s and older are past it. And many older people grow into that expectation. I joined the Charter working group to help break that glass wall for both organisations and people in general."

Along with members of Age & Opportunity, the group consisted of several older individuals with experience in performance and the appreciation of the arts as well as representatives from several interested organisations.

The interactive process, discussions over zoom and written observations brought up a whole host of thoughts, fears and hopes for the future. It was a most fulfilling experience.

We are teachers and students, actors and listeners, pioneers and travellers. Our voices speak through the charter."

Showcasing National Arts in Nursing Homes Day

One of our core aims is to nurture and support the nursing home sector to create access to the arts for the people living in and visiting those settings. Following on from a very successful start in 2021, we continued our partnership with Nursing Homes Ireland to further develop National Arts in Nursing Homes Day. It aims to promote the regular and meaningful arts engagement of older people in nursing homes and day care centres and to encourage them to celebrate our Bealtaine Festival on the third Friday of May each year. In 2022, 72 care settings participated, with an estimated 10 to 15 residents and additional staff attending each event.

In 2022, the National Arts in Nursing Homes Day Award was created to recognise three outstanding arts projects. We invited applications from care settings who wished to facilitate their residents' artistic and creative expression by organising interactive and engaging arts workshops, sessions and events led by professional artists. The successful award applicants were Kiltipper Woods with artist Lorraine Cross; Esker Lodge with Bloom the Art Project; and Dealgan House Nursing Home with Rozzi Kennedy. Their work culminated in celebrations on National Arts in Nursing Homes Day.



National Arts in Nursing Homes Day celebration
at Kiltipper Woods Nursing Home

The following testimonial is from award recipient Kiltipper Woods Nursing Home:

"Partaking in the National Arts in Nursing Homes event has been a great boost to all those involved. It has given us all a new focus and reminded us of how important art is as an activity and a means of communication."

The celebration [on NANHD] was an indoor garden party with over 100 residents, staff, family members and representatives from Age & Opportunity and Nursing Homes Ireland joining us.

The party gave the residents an opportunity to show their family members what their hard work had achieved. The residents, having worked so hard over the previous two months with artist Lorraine Cross, were proud of their achievement which will remain in Kiltipper Woods. It will remind of us all of how interdependent we are on one another, not just in Kiltipper Woods, but in life in general."

Age & Opportunity engage

**What we want
to see for older
people**

**An Ireland where all older people can be more active;
more visible; more creative; more connected;
more confident; more often.**

Each year, as a team, we look to innovate and respond creatively to the changing needs of older people, conscious that these needs are never static. Our Engage Programme offers a range of learning initiatives, courses and workshops focused on personal development and empowering older people to play an active role in their community and to inspire others to play an active role.

Our goals are to facilitate those we engage with to develop personal resilience and to mine the skills, experience and insight they have developed over the years, to achieve the best possible quality of life in older age.

Why we run our Engage Programme:

We age from the moment we are born. Ageing is part of life, but so too is learning. That is why we speak of lifelong learning and for us, within the Engage programme, lifelong learning assumes many forms. It can be about health and wellbeing; keeping body and mind active; understanding personality, managing emotions, listening to our bodies; cultural participation; broadening social contacts and networks; learning to work with and care for other people; understanding the world we live in; sharing knowledge and experience; adjusting to new challenges; finding meaning and purpose in life.

Mary Oliver, in her poem, 'The Summer Day' poses us all a very potent question, when she asks: 'Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?'

Her question demands a compelling answer. Our Engage programme response is - To Keep on Learning! We run our initiatives because we believe learning is an enjoyable and creative activity in its own right, which greatly enriches our sense of connectedness and quality of life.

Online / In-person

In 2022, our Engage Programme initiatives were provided remotely from January to early May, as a continuation of our response to Covid-19. In-person delivery then recommenced from early May until the end of the year, with the exception of a few online courses at the request of some groups.

Those we engage with embraced the return to in-person delivery. We had learnt from our online delivery of courses that although they did not work for everybody, with digital access posing a significant problem for some, they allowed us to reach participants nationwide who may not otherwise have had access or the means to travel to our in-person initiatives. Therefore, in 2022 we decided to retain some online delivery in our future planning for Changing Gears, one of our most popular courses.

AgeWise

We strive to ensure that those who work directly with older people – or those whose work affects the lives of older people – are conscious of their needs and the value of their participation in society. Our AgeWise initiative offers age equality workshops to policy makers and service providers who provide information on older people and ageing in Ireland. It challenges myths and stereotypes about ageing and older people through the delivery of workshops to those who can effect change.

In September 2022, as part of Positive Ageing Week, we ran two AgeWise sessions online for staff in Fingal County Council. Given the context, the content was adapted to highlight the significance for health and wellbeing of the participants' personal attitude to ageing and the positive messages they could help to promote. The focus throughout was on positive and creative ageing.

Azure

Azure explores how people with dementia-related conditions such as Alzheimer's Disease, and the people who care for them, can participate in cultural activities and have a deeper engagement with cultural institutions. The initiative began as a collaboration between Age & Opportunity, The Alzheimer Society of Ireland, the Butler Gallery in Kilkenny and the Irish Museum of Modern Art. Training was developed so that staff within arts venues could offer specifically designed tours to people living with dementia and their family, friends, or professional carers, inviting them to engage with the art work on show.

The Azure network has now expanded to include numerous arts venues nationwide, all of which offer Azure-guided exhibition tours. In conjunction with our original collaborators, we continue to provide this training to arts organisations. In 2022, Azure training was delivered in-person to 38 members of staff at the Office of Public Works, in Dublin, over four sessions.

Changing Gears – Promoting Resilience in Later Life

Changing Gears is undoubtedly one of our most popular and successful initiatives. It is delivered over four to six sessions and focuses on building resilience as we age. It was originally developed through a peer design process that drew people from different educational backgrounds together. It invites participants to explore the skills and resources available to them to manage significant life-changes or transitions more creatively.

In January/February 2022 we delivered Changing Gears online to FitLine mentors as part of the nationwide expansion of the FitLine initiative, run by our Active programme and funded by Sport Ireland (see

page 13). We also ran the course in October/November for FitLine participants, this time, in-person. Changing Gears for FitLine will continue into 2023.

In Autumn 2022 we received additional funding from the HSE to allow us to deliver further Changing Gears. By the end of December 2022 we had delivered nine in-person courses in Cork, Dublin, Galway, Kildare, Laois, Leitrim, Westmeath and Wicklow (twice). Most of these courses were open to the public and free of charge and promoted through both social media and local media. We received excellent uptake for courses and kept waiting lists for in-person courses in certain counties to carry forward in 2023.

Some deliveries in particular stood out for us from this funding strand. These were the two Changing Gears we ran in Blessington, Co. Wicklow. The first took place in September/October, the second in November/December. They formed part of The Welcome Project

at the Baile Cóimín Centre. This project was open to older people of all nationalities as a stepping-stone to rebuilding community after the challenges and isolation of Covid-19. Both courses were a great success, drawing on the energy and enthusiasm of participants across a wide diversity of ages (50 to 91), with a wealth of experience and story.

Feedback was resoundingly positive, highlighting that the mix of movement, music, art, poetry and personal reflection employed was a great way of boosting resilience and a sense of connection with others.

We also delivered Changing Gears to Longford County Council online in March/April and through Care Alliance online in May/June. Our delivery to Care Alliance was part of our effort to support family carers who were still experiencing the enormous strain placed on them by Covid-19, when many day care and respite centres were closed.



Changing Gears participants in Blessington, Co Wicklow

Changing Gears at the Aisling Hotel, Dublin



Creative Exchanges at IMMA



Creative Exchanges

Creative Exchanges is a training course designed to provide activities coordinators working in care settings with the skills, ideas, competence and confidence needed to run meaningful creative activities, as required by the HIQA Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People. It was initially known as 'Arts in Care' and, with support

from the Community Foundation for Ireland, was developed as a Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI) accredited course (Level 6).

We delivered Creative Exchanges in-person in May/June 2022 at the Irish Museum of Modern Art over seven sessions.

Currently, we are reassessing our delivery options in the light of QQI re-engagement requirements.

Spirituality

This initiative, delivered over four to six sessions, invites participants to explore the meaning of spirituality from the perspective of their life experience. Using art, music, poetry and story, it examines spirituality as the search for meaning; a way of living; a source of wonder; a sense of connection with something bigger than the self; and 'something, for the sake of which, it is worthwhile to live on earth' (Nietzsche). It was first piloted in 2019.

In 2022, we delivered five courses to 66 participants in total. One was delivered in-person to students of the MA in Applied Spirituality from Waterford Institute of Technology. The other four courses were delivered on-line through the Lumen Dominican Centre, Blackrock; Marino Institute of Education, Dublin; and Mount St Anne's Retreat and Conference Centre, Portarlinton.

Personal Resilience

During 2021 this four session course facilitated personal reflection on the experience of Covid-19, encouraging participants to identify assets and resources for dealing with challenges in their lives. It draws on peer sharing in small groups and the use of reflective journals. All the worksheets and materials are designed to form an integrated tool-kit for personal benefit. Outcomes include a greater sense of confidence and connectedness and a heightened awareness of personal competencies and external supports.

In 2022, three Personal Resilience courses were delivered through Older Voices Kildare (OVK), a social inclusion initiative working to build the confidence and capacity of older people living in Co. Kildare. The Engage

programme responded successfully to a tender from OVK seeking a supportive initiative for their target audience.

Our Engage team also designed and delivered an input on Resilience to participants from our Active Programme's Walking Football Initiative (see page 18).

Is Ageism Ever Acceptable? Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) Citizen Assembly

In June 2021 we received funding from the IHREC for an initiative to reflect on whether the policy of cocooning based on being 70+ was inherently ageist and to explore whether the human rights of older persons as rights bearers have been compromised by the national response to Covid-19.

We held a final assembly in June 2022 and invited Sinead Gibney, Chief Commissioner, IHREC, to contribute her reflections.

European Projects

Europe for Citizens

Over the past few years we were the lead partner on a European project, funded by Europe for Citizens, called Get Engaged for Europe. The project concluded in 2022. It promoted active citizenship among older people including older migrants. Our partner organisations were Bulgarian Red Cross, Gouden Dagen in the Netherlands and Fundación Albiar in Spain. We designed a Train the Trainer programme to enable older people and migrants of all ages to work together on collective activities or creative initiatives which addressed specific needs and strengthened participation and civic engagement within their local communities. The project succeeded in bringing a wide



Creative Exchange participants, IMMA

range of migrants (from China, Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Palestine, Morocco, the Caribbean, Surinam and Somalia), of all ages together, drawing on their ideas, skills, resources and lived experiences, to plan and implement a range of innovative activities.

The total reach of the project was 2,221 individuals. This included 17 participants within our Train the Trainer preparation and delivery; 207 participants in our Get Engaged course delivery – 60 in Bulgaria, 56 in Ireland, 51 in the Netherlands, and 40 in Spain; 78 participants in our partner learning events; and 1,919 individuals (at project end) through our communication channels.

Our communications activity surpassed the targets we had set within our communications strategy. Of the 207 participants in our Get Engaged course delivery, 70% were women and 30% were men; 54% of participants were

classified as disadvantaged; 46% were over the age of 65; 47% were aged between 30 and 65; and 7% were aged under 30.

The individual reports and evaluation from the four partners (including testimonies of those who took part) and feedback from the partner learning events, clearly demonstrate that active civic engagement by people of all cultures is of great value to all. Among the principal benefits noted were: meeting new people and sharing experiences of different cultures; increased awareness among participants of their common situation and shared aspirations; a greater sense of purpose and resolve in planning and implementing community projects together; renewed confidence and self-belief, including a desire to combat negative stereotypes and promote positive messages about ageing.



Chinese migrants in Rotterdam share a meal and a discussion about their lives in the Netherlands, as part of the Europe for Citizens project.

Trainers Gulgun Gaygadzova and Denica Lazarova from Bulgarian Red Cross, one of the Europe for Citizen partners.



CyberSeniors

In 2020 we began work on the Erasmus+ European project, CyberSeniors, as the Irish partner. The collaboration also involves partners in Austria, Cyprus, Romania and Spain, with the lead partner in Spain.

The objective of the project is to produce and evaluate a multilingual online training platform with open educational resources for in-person and online training, in the use of smart phones/tablets, for users aged 55+ years. Essentially, its aim is to help older people who own smart phones and tablets to get more from their devices and to broaden the range of tasks they use

them for, on a daily basis. A by-product is to increase their confidence around Information and Communication Technologies as they improve their skills.

The project began in November 2020 and will finish in April 2023. The online platform and open resources were completed in 2022 and in 2023 we will deliver several pilot training sessions which will help us to evaluate the resources developed. We will also hold a dissemination event to promote the resources and publicise the project outcomes.

Engage Programme
Our Year in Numbers

Initiatives	Number of initiatives	Number of workshops in each initiative	Number of engagements
Ageing with Confidence for Intellectual Disability – Total	0	0	0
AgeWise – Total	2	1	13
Creative Exchanges - Total	1	7	9
Changing Gears HSE Funding – Total	9	40	128
Changing Gears (Other) – Total	5	28	39
Spirituality – Total	5	23	66
Older Persons Consultations – Total	0	0	0
Personal Resilience – Total	3	12	32
Azure delivery - Total	1	4	38
Europe for Citizens - Total	7	21	2,221
IHREC funded Citizens Assembly - Total	1	1	14
Total Digital Literacy Initiative	2	2	914
Bespoke Training – Total	1	2	18
Resilience Piece for Walking Football – Total	8	12	88
PPI engagement	1	6	33
TOTAL Engage Programme	46	159	3,613

Showcasing

St Brigid's Project

'Brigid, Our Spirit Stirring'

This project arose through funding provided by the Creative Ireland Programme to Age Friendly Ireland for the delivery of regional creative initiatives for older people, in the context of supporting health and wellbeing.

Following a call for proposals, the Age & Opportunity application, partnering with artist Marie Brett, was selected for the North Region. The project involved participants from six counties: Leitrim, Sligo, Mayo, Donegal, Cavan, and Monaghan.

The project explored past and future views of Brigid and her transformative relationship to the Irish people. Participants worked with Marie in a series of craft and poetry workshops. They produced hand-crafted artefacts such as Brigid-style crosses, protective God's eyes, masks, hats and Brídeóga. These artefacts were then showcased at a final pageant event held at the National Museum of Ireland, Country Life, in Mayo. Participants paraded their creations in a procession, inspired by traditional ritual and holy pilgrimage. 'Brigid, Our Spirit Stirring' was filmed at the pageant event and can be viewed on YouTube.



Making Brigid's Crosses at the launch of the film 'Brigid, Our Spirit Stirring'



Brigid, Our Spirit Stirring film project

Lead artist Marie Brett said:

"It was such an enriching, creative experience to make this work, with so much elder knowledge. 'Brigid, Our Spirit Stirring' is a digital fusion of a contemporary live event that reimagines collective and cross-generational folk custom. I loved creating this work; the contributors created beautiful, evocative poems and gorgeous processional artefacts."

Mairead Cranley, Age Friendly North Regional Manager, said:

"Following consultations with older people in the North Region, we knew they wanted to explore traditions associated with St Brigid. This project was creative, colourful, and everyone got active."

Feedback from project participants included the following comments:

"I didn't know I'd be able for making such lovely things."

"The materials are lovely." [straw was one of the main materials used]

"It was lovely to see new places and to meet new people."

Showcasing Research on Digital Access and Older Persons throughout Ireland using Public Person Involvement (PPI) as a Core Principle.

When Covid-19 restrictions forced us to move delivery of our initiatives entirely online, we became aware of the disparity between some sections of the older population in Ireland in terms of access to, and use of, digital technology.

We decided to research this phenomenon, and were successful in applying for funding from Comic Relief, administered by the Community Foundation of Ireland.

We set about investigating the issue using Public and Personal Involvement (PPI) as a core principle. PPI is research carried out 'with' or 'by' members of the public rather than 'to', 'about' or 'for' them.

We liaised with Age Friendly Programme Managers in five counties to recruit 16 older persons as peer researchers – researchers who have lived experience and understanding of digital exclusion. During 2021, they interviewed 898 older people aged over 65 years of age about their digital access.

We wanted to find out about where people in Ireland, particularly older persons, are experiencing greater levels of digital exclusion and why people don't use, or can't use, computers, internet or other digital technology.



We commissioned Seamus Mullen, of Straightforward Research and Design, to compile the research findings and they were published in March 2022.

They include the following findings:

- The level of digital connectivity across the five counties decreases with age across access to and usage of computing equipment, online connectivity and mobile phone connectivity;
- Digital connectivity among older people is lower in rural communities and some marginalised groups;
- Less than half of older people who use the internet indicated that they currently use online banking facilities.

Some of the recommendations include:

- Make PPI standard practice for research and action planning to address digital exclusion;
- Policy and practical support should highlight the benefits of digital connectivity e.g. to save money through online banking and to keep in touch with friends and family;
- As a significant proportion of respondents indicated that they simply do not want to engage in online services or connectivity, essential government or financial services must not take a 'digital first/digital only' approach.

Corporate and Public Affairs

Policy, Research and Evaluation

What we want to measure, inform and influence for older people:

An Ireland where all older people can be more active, more visible, more creative, more connected, more confident, more often

Our Policy, Research and Evaluation work underpins and supports our Arts, Active and Engage programmes through:

- Configuring 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;
- Configuring the work of Age & Opportunity in research frameworks to highlight our effectiveness and our capacity to support public policy development;
- Increasing 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.

Following an extensive collaborative process involving Board, staff and other stakeholders, our policy priorities were agreed and an operational plan developed during 2022. Implementation is ongoing and, during 2022 we gathered and shared evidence and expertise from our programmes with Government Departments and other stakeholders across a range of communication channels to further policy development and progression across our policy objectives.

We used evidence from our programmes to advocate for increased government support for older person's groups which, as evidenced by our 'Locked In, Locked Out, Locked Up' research, were negatively impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. We specifically highlighted this issue in our budget submission and were very happy to see the Department of Rural and Community Development increasing supports for community centres, volunteering and Public Participation Networks in their budget announcements in September and a specific allocation of €100,000 towards the development of Women's Sheds in October. In March we concluded the IHREC funded series of Citizens' Assemblies where Sinead Gibney, Chief Commissioner, responded to the reflections of older persons on Covid-19 restrictions.

Drawing on the independent evaluation of our Artist in Residency in a Care Setting initiative, we advocated for greater support for meaningful activities in care settings and

participation in the arts. This resulted in an invitation at the end of the year to prepare a submission for the Joint Oireachtas Committee on the development of local and community arts. Our submission may have influenced the inclusion of a Creative Health and Wellbeing priority in the Creative Ireland Programme which was extended by the Government for a further five years at the end of 2022, placing an emphasis on community and inclusion.

As a member of the Alliance of Age Sector NGOs we collaborated with other organisations in the age sector to align our common policy objectives. We called on Government to relentlessly pursue the three key policy goals which Ireland committed itself to when adopting the 2022 Rome Ministerial Declaration on Ageing, and which are reflected in our own policy priorities: Promoting active and healthy ageing throughout life; Ensuring access to long-term care and support for carers and families; and Mainstreaming ageing to advance a society for all ages. In addition, in our own submissions, as well as Alliance communications, we advocated for the establishment of an Independent Commissioner for Ageing and Older People. (See page 50)

Over the last few years we have continued to increase our capacity to conduct and collaborate in research activities. Our Personal and Public Involvement (PPI) Group continued to be involved in our research and evaluation activities and collaborative research projects with other organisations and internally. This included working with:

- our Engage Programme on completion of a qualitative study on digital poverty and its effects on older persons throughout Ireland;
- working with our Active Programme on a qualitative study on the barriers and motivators of using public space for

physical activity in Ireland drawing on members of the PPI Group along with our Active Programme PALs network as citizen researchers.

Older Persons and the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty

This research project, funded by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, will examine older persons' perceptions of themselves as rights holders and how their rights are compromised by ageism. It seeks to support compliance with the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty – the legal obligation of all public bodies in Ireland to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect the human rights of their employees, customers, service users and everyone affected by their policies and plans. Our PPI group will be involved at all stages of this research which will be published to coincide with International Day of Older Persons in 2023.

In addition to these peer research projects, PPI members also collaborated on two Irish Research Council funded projects (with NUIG and DCU); attended the PPI Summer School in UL in June; visited the Living Lab in DCU in July; and attended the launch of the PPI Ignite Network's Values and Principles Framework in TCD in October.

During 2022 we conducted a comprehensive review of our Active Programme's PALs initiative. Data collected from 771 PALs was analysed and will inform reinvigoration of the initiative following the Covid-19 pandemic.

We continued to gather robust evidence relating to our initiatives throughout the year. Independent evaluations on initiatives funded by Europe for Citizens, Sport Ireland and Healthy Ireland were managed to completion. We evaluated in-house the impact on

participants and organising partners of the 2022 Bealtaine Festival and collaborated on the evaluation of our Active Programme's Walking Football Initiative which will continue into 2023. Formative evaluations of proposed initiatives continue to help develop new ideas across all of our programmes and ongoing process evaluations ensure that our delivery remains relevant, efficient and effective.

During 2022 we continued to raise organisational capacity in relation to ongoing evaluations including revision of our evaluation frameworks and the upskilling of staff to use logic models and online survey software. Also during 2022 we hosted a Post-Doctoral Researcher (seconded to the HSE) with expertise in data analytics for the HSE, improving our approach and competency in this area as a result.

Throughout the year we continued to display leadership and grow influence by participation on government department and other stakeholder consultation and implementation groups as well as presentation at conferences and forums of our research findings and evaluations of our initiatives. We sought out and responded to many opportunities for action and awareness raising and ensuring greater visibility and consideration of older people. The unique reach enabled by our Programmes, the generous contributions of our Policy, Research and Evaluation Advisory Group and investment in staff development continues to improve our understanding of emerging issues for the age sector and older persons.

During 2022 we took every opportunity to share this evidence and expertise through consultation and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders including government departments, academic institutions, NGOs, statutory bodies and older persons.

Communications

Communications activity is core to the operation and continued existence of our organisation. We refreshed our Strategic Plan in 2021 and have set our strategic objectives for the next four years. Our organisational communication underpins all four key strategic themes in our Strategic Plan (2021-2024) by:

- building understanding and awareness of our work, to engage and grow support for our initiatives;
- creating opportunities for older people to have their voices heard by relevant policy and decision makers;
- engaging strategically with partners, programme participants and older people to advance our stated vision and mission in a sustainable and effective way;
- shaping informed, compelling and targeted goals for relevant policy and decision makers;
- developing and delivering programmes which promote community development and enhance the ageing experience;
- celebrating and profiling diverse stories of ageing.

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

2022 continued to present challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, throughout the year we continued to build on our profile across print, broadcast and online media as the voice of positive ageing in Ireland. We had

273 media pieces throughout 2022, which is 10% more than 2021, with an audience reach measured as Opportunity To See (OTS) of 15,564,129, which represents a 52% increase on 2021 figures.

Our Active Programme Walking Football initiative proved to be the PR highlight of the year. In September it was the focus of a five minute report on RTE's Nationwide programme. And in November an Irish Times article and online video prompted national radio stations Today FM and Newstalk to follow up with interviews. Throughout the year there was consistent local press coverage of Age & Opportunity programmes.

We grew the followers on Age & Opportunity social channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn) by 3% to 35%, and we grew the Bealtaine Festival social channels (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) by 7% to 39%. In January and February the news page about our Active National Grant Scheme was the most popular on the website and the home page was the second most popular. For the rest of the year the homepage was the most popular page each month. The Engage programme page, or one of its initiatives – Ageing with Confidence – was the second most popular other than in May (Bealtaine festival), and June and September (Active National Grant Scheme).

Improving our understanding of the needs and views of older people

The focus of our Strategic Plan 2021-2024 is on continuing to improve our understanding of the needs and views of older people, and building our communication and feedback processes with them. Covid-19 was an unexpected occurrence that changed the lives of people worldwide, and which heavily influenced our work. During the pandemic, we continued working to provide and develop critical programmes and initiatives

addressing the ever-growing challenges and opportunities presented by ageing.

Digital Communications

In 2022 we continued 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 communicate with our stakeholders across many channels and touchpoints and our Age & Opportunity website is a growing area for those who want to find out more about us, and access a programme that 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.

We continue to monitor and view analytics on the Age & Opportunity website in order to see what is working and what content is most popular with our users. Our statistics for the website from January to December 2022 are:

- Total number of users – 45,256 (7% more than 2021)
- Total number of page views – 103,932 (5% more than 2021)
- Total number of sessions – 54,406 (6% more than 2021)
- Average time on page – 1min 39secs

The Bealtaine Festival website statistics:

- Total number of users – 29,815 (13% more than 2021)
- Total number of page views – 115,219 (1% less than 2021)
- Total number of sessions – 37,181 (11% increase on 2021)
- Average time on page – 1min 48secs

For our Arts programme we send a monthly eZine to some 4000 Mailchimp subscribers. It has a consistently high open rate, averaging 53.5% per eZine.

In December an Age & Opportunity electronic newsletter was sent to a MailChimp audience of 7,000 general subscribers. It yielded a 44% open rate.

Outdoor advertising

For two weeks in early January we ran outdoor advertising for FitLine with over 80 poster and digital ads for in Dublin, Cork, Galway, Kilkenny, Limerick and Waterford.

The Alliance of Age Sector NGOs

Age & Opportunity is a member of the Alliance of Age Sector NGOs, which represents the collective thinking of seven significant NGOs working in the age sector in Ireland.

Separately, each of the Alliance member organisations provide vital programmes and services for older people; support older people to contribute to and participate in community life; and advocate for better policies, services and supports for older people at national and local level. Together, Alliance members collaborate to combat ageism and to seek action on the specific issues that make older people's lives more difficult than they need to be.

2022 was another busy year for the Alliance. Highlights include:

- Development of a position paper for the Minister for Mental Health and Older People that sets out the need to refresh and 'COVID-19 proof' the National Positive Ageing Strategy (2013);

- Development of an Annual Statement calling for a renewed focus on regaining the positive role of older people, post-pandemic, in Irish society;
- Research and development of a second edition of the Alliance's 'Telling It Like It Is' series. This document:
 - Exposed the ingrained nature and impact of ageism in Ireland in which older people are typically portrayed as frail and vulnerable;
 - Revealed the implementation deficit of many of Ireland's policy commitments relevant to ageing and older people;
 - Identified practical and evidence-based steps to combat the ageism negatively affecting every section in society.

The Alliance also committed itself to a three-year Strategic Plan that will guide its work and focus from 2023-2025. The plan commits to leading a campaign for the establishment of an Independent Commissioner for Ageing and Older People in Ireland.

The Alliance believes that such an independent authority will have a key role to play in reviewing and overseeing the adequacy of legislation, policy formation and future planning with regard to an ageing population. An Independent Commissioner would, the Alliance believes, be best placed to hold Government and public bodies to account on the pledges that have been made in respect of positive ageing.

The Alliance believes that an Independent Commissioner can provide the leadership required to enhance the capacity and capability of public services to address the challenges, and indeed opportunities, associated with population ageing.

The Alliance members are Active Retirement Ireland, Age & Opportunity, ALONE, The Alzheimer Society of Ireland, Irish Hospice Foundation, The Irish Senior Citizens' Parliament and Third Age.

A tribute to John Mc Adam, Independent Chair of the Alliance of Age Sector NGOs

We were profoundly saddened at the death of John McAdam, Independent Chair of the Alliance. John died peacefully after a short illness in Dublin on September 20th 2022.

John had an immediate positive impact when he took up the role as Independent Chair of the Alliance in March 2020. He was a popular and highly engaged Chair, who had great empathy and understanding of the challenges and opportunities that people have as they age. John was trusted by all because of his inclusive style and his understanding of working in partnership. John set high standards and was keen for the Alliance to achieve whatever progress it could in a policy area that clearly meant a lot to him. He made particularly valuable contributions to Alliance discussions on our Strategy 2023-2025.

We extend our deepest sympathies to John's family. He will be remembered for his tremendous commitment, integrity, intellect, wisdom and great wit.

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 were ten Trustees throughout 2022. 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 implementing 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 2022. We also held five meetings of our Finance, Governance, HR, Quality, Safety and Nominations Committee and 4 meetings of our Audit and Risk Committee.

We are fully compliant with the Charities Regulatory Authority's Governance Code and the Governance Code for Sport as a Type C organisation, and our various funders' governance requirements.

This was evidenced during 2022, as we were selected for audit by the HSE and we were delighted that the audit showed that overall we are compliant with the requirements of our funding agreement. Also in 2021 we were selected for audit by Sport Ireland, another one of our core funders, and we secured the highest level of assurance, 'Excellent Assurance', in the audit report. In 2022 we also appointed internal auditors and are working to a three-year internal audit plan.

A range of significant risks facing Age & Opportunity have been identified. These risks are detailed in our formal Risk Register and Risk Management Plan. We continued, at our Audit and Risk Committee meetings, Finance, Governance, HR, Quality, Safety and Nominations Committee meetings and Board meetings throughout 2022 to evaluate these risks and continue to 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 throughout 2022 were:

- Ita Mangan (Chair)
- Mairead Egan (to 30th May 2022)
- Josephine Feehily
- Claire Kelly (to 26th September 2022)
- Mary Kelly
- Catherine Marshall
- Tony McCarthy
- Helen O' Donoghue
- John Kerrane
- Peter Smyth

Board Committees

Finance, Governance, HR, Quality, Safety and Nominations 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:

- Mary Kelly (Chair)
- Claire Kelly (to 26th September 2022)
- Ita Mangan

Audit and Risk 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:

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

Board meetings

Trustee:	14/02/22	28/03/22	30/05/22	26/09/22	28/11/22	Attendance
Ita Mangan (Chair)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5/5
Mairead Egan	✓	✓	✓	n/a	n/a	3/3
Josephine Feehily	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5/5
Mary Kelly	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5/5
Catherine Marshall	✓	X	✓	X	✓	3/5
Tony McCarthy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5/5
Helen O'Donoghue	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	4/5
Claire Kelly	✓	✓	✓	✓	n/a	4/4
Peter Smyth	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	4/5
John Kerrane	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5/5

Finance, Governance, HR, Quality, Safety and Nominations Committee Meetings

Trustee:	31/01/22	14/03/22	16/05/22	12/09/22	14/11/22	Attendance
Ita Mangan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5/5
Mary Kelly (Chair)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5/5
Claire Kelly	✓	✓	✓	X	n/a	3/4

Audit and Risk Committee Meetings

Member:	21/03/22	10/05/22	12/09/22	25/11/22	Attendance
Ita Mangan	✓	✓	✓	✓	4/4
Catherine Rogers (Chair)	✓	✓	✓	✓	4/4
Tony McCarthy	✓	✓	✓	✓	4/4

Organisational Advisory Groups

We have four organisational Advisory Groups. 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. They also provide guidance on innovative approaches to encouraging participation of younger older people and marginalised older people in our programme areas. In addition, they provide 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.

Active Programme Advisory Group

- Robert Grier (Chair)
- Tony McCarthy, Age & Opportunity Trustee, PAL Representative
- John Kerrane, Age & Opportunity Trustee, Former Lecturer in the School of Health and Human Performance, DCU
- Oisin Foley, Partnerships Manager, Sport Ireland
- Professor Liam Glynn, Professor of General Practice, Graduate Entry Medical School, University of Limerick
- Marian Mooney, Active Programme Physical Activity Leader (PAL), Bunbrosna/Multyfarnham/Ballinafid ARA

Arts Programme Advisory Group

- Catherine Marshall, (Chair) Age & Opportunity Trustee and Curator and Art Historian
- Lorraine Comer, Head of Education, National Museum of Ireland
- Ailbhe Murphy, Previous Director, Create
- Helen O'Donoghue, Retired Senior Curator & Head of Education & Community Engagement & Learning Programmes, Irish Museum of Modern Art
- Brendan Teeling, Deputy City Librarian, Dublin City Council
- Dominic Thorpe, Visual Artist

Engage Programme Advisory Group

- Mairead Egan, Chair, Age & Opportunity Trustee and Retired School Principal (to May 2022)
- Colm Kilgannon, Lecturer and Strand Leader, ALBA Programme, DCU
- Janet Gaynor, Co-Chair of Donegal OPC, trainer and facilitator, retired from the HSE

Policy, Research and Evaluation Advisory Group

- Fionnuala Hanrahan, (Chair) and Retired County Librarian
- Dr. Austin Warters, Manager of Older Persons Services, HSE CHO 9
- Dr. Jane O'Kelly, Chair BSc in Education and Training, Assistant Professor School of Policy and Practice Institute of Education, DCU St. Patrick's Campus
- Professor Kieran Walsh, Professor of Ageing and Public Policy and Director of the Irish Centre for Social Gerontology, NUIG

Staff Members:

- Karen Horgan, CEO
- Maurice O’Connell, Acting CEO, (June to September)

Operations and Programme Support:

- Melissa Byrne, Communications Manager
- Iva Pocock, Communications Manager (Maternity cover from September 2022)
- Anne Carroll, Communications Assistant
- Mary Harkin, Policy, Research and Evaluation Manager
- Lasarine O’Carroll, Financial Controller
- Margaret Roe, HR and Office Manager
- Roisin McCarthy, Postdoc Researcher, seconded to the HSE (from March 2022)

Arts Programme team

- Dr. Tara Byrne, Arts Programme Manager
- Bridget Deevy, Arts Programme Assistant Manager
- Edel Doran, Arts Programme Assistant Manager (maternity cover to June 2022)
- Eva Griffin, Arts Programme Assistant Manager (maternity cover from June 2022)
- Eva Griffin, Arts Programme Administrator
- Madison Riggan, Arts Programme Administrator (from July to December 2022)

Active Programme team

- Sue Guildea, Active Programme Manager
- Paul Gallier, Active Programme Assistant Manager
- Ciara Dawson, Active Programme Administrator
- James Flanagan, Active Programme FitLine Coordinator (to July 2022)
- Caroline Eldridge, Active Programme FitLine Administrator (to July 2022)
- Mary Halpin, Active Programme FitLine Administrator (from December 2022)

Engage Programme Team

- Ciarán McKinney, Engage Programme Manager
- Brian Dooney, Engage Programme Training and Development Facilitator
- Fiona Holohan, Engage Programme Coordinator



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