

PALs Newsletter

Winter 2024

As we approach the winter months, there is much to celebrate at Age & Opportunity. The autumn and winter seasons have kicked off positively, highlighted by a strong turnout during our European Week of Sport. Our PALs and CarePALs initiatives are thriving, and we would like to welcome all our new PALs and CarePALs. We now have 550 active PALs around Ireland and aim to grow this number every year. Additionally, we have delivered our first PPALs series of the year and our walking football initiative has gained significant momentum with 126 people taking part in a sport they love.

PALs Workshops

We have commenced our series of PALs workshops for the Autumn/Winter season in County Wexford. Additionally, we have initiated PALs training in South Dublin, where another eager group is excited to complete their training. We have also concluded our PALs series in Cork, with all participants receiving their certificates and eagerly anticipating the opportunity to return to their groups to lead activities. The PALs initiative holds significant importance, as becoming a leader enables individuals to promote physical activity to their peers who may otherwise not feel

confident to participate. If you would like to find out more about the PALs initiative or know of anyone that would like to become a PAL, please contact Maire Murphy the Active Programme PALs Coordinator:

maire.murphy@ageandopportunity.ie



Cork PALs with trainers Kathleen and Fiona



Wexford PALs with trainers Margaret and Paul



Dublin PALs with trainers Margaret and Barbara

CarePALs

We began our CarePALs workshops in the beautiful region of Donegal following the summer break. Our new Donegal trainer Laura was joined by Fiona and, as always, they did an amazing job with a great new group of Donegal CarePALs. We have concluded CarePALs workshops in Wexford, led by our trainers Barbara and Bridget. Both groups displayed enthusiasm and are valuable additions to our network of CarePALs across the nation. We also delivered CarePALs workshops in Wicklow.

Upcoming training sessions are scheduled for Galway, Limerick, and Kerry. If you are interested in participating or learning more about the CarePALs initiative, please contact our Active PALs coordinator: maire.murphy@ageandopportunity.ie



Wexford CarePALs with trainers Barbara and Bridget.



Donegal CarePALs with trainers Laura and Fiona

Fitline

FitLine is developing two hubs over the coming months. There will be a physical space in Sligo town and Dublin 9 for a small group of 3-4 volunteers, to come in one morning a fortnight to make and record calls to people who have signed up to FitLine, encouraging them to become more active. If you have 2-3 hours to spare every fortnight and live in Sligo or Dublin and would like to volunteer, or hear more about what is involved please call us: 1800 303 545 or 087 621 1767.

European Week of Sport 2024

Age & Opportunity put together a variety of activities for the European Week of Sport which ran from the 23rd to the 27th of September. We organised a cycle in partnership with Fingal Active Travel. A 12km cycle along the greenway from Maynooth towards Kilcock where participants enjoyed a coffee in the September sunshine.



We also held a Walking Football Blitz with the Irish Men's Shed Association. The men's sheds that took part were Naas, Clane, Kilcoole and Plunkett's and it was a fantastic opportunity for participants that had completed the initiative earlier in the year to play against other groups.



We also had a lovely walking handball event, a new sport to us, with our PALs in Killaloe Clare, led by our trainer Fiona.

PPALs

Our first in person PPALs started in Roscommon this year. This is the first time we have been able to host a PPALs in person since Covid-19. Our PPALs initiative empowers older adults with an intellectual disability to take a leadership role in promoting physical activity among their peers. We have an amazing 11 participants in the Roscommon group along with their support workers. The series will conclude with a wonderful presentation day giving PPALs the opportunity to show their peers and families what they have learned.

Walking Football

The Age & Opportunity walking football initiative is experiencing significant growth, and we are pleased to witness the enthusiasm and enjoyment it has generated among participants. Recently, we organized a walking football event in Cork, which brought together teams from across the county for friendly competition, guided by coaches Peter MacNulty and Billy Lewis. Five teams took part: UCC Mardyke Red, UCC Mardyke Blue, Park United Mitchelstown, Cork City FC/Bandon, and Cork City FC/Mahon. The event was a resounding success, with participants expressing their enjoyment throughout the day. Park United Mitchelstown emerged as the overall winners. Many players shared their delight in returning to the sport they love, some having not engaged in athletic activities for over two decades. If you would like any further information on our walking football initiative, please contact: active@ageandopportunity.ie



Cork Walking Football Blitz

Active Grants in Action

Each year, we allocate grant funds to numerous clubs, groups, and care facilities nationwide. The Ballina Handball Club is among those that effectively utilised our grant by organising a complimentary session led by our active trainer Fiona. Fiona remarked that it was an enjoyable morning filled with fun. Keep an eye on our website, as applications for our Active Grant will open in February 2025. These funds can be used to support activities like the one mentioned above.



About Age & Opportunity

Age & Opportunity is the national organisation that provides a range of opportunities for older people. Our aim is to enable the best possible quality of life for us all as we age, where we can be more active, more visible, more creative, more connected, and more confident. If you would like further information on our programmes, you can visit our website, www.ageandopportunity.ie.

Best Wishes, Máire Murphy, Active Programme PALS Coordinator.