



WELCOME!

Welcome to the first edition of the Galway City and County Older People's Council newsletter!

Here you can find out all about your local OPC, current projects they are working on and get news on activities for older people in your area.

GALWAY CITY & COUNTY OLDER PEOPLE'S COUNCIL NEWSLETTER SPRING 2024



WHAT IS AGE FRIENDLY IRELAND?

Age Friendly Ireland is the organisation responsible for the national Age Friendly Programme. AFI **supports cities and counties to be more inclusive of older people** by addressing their expressed concerns and interests under the eight pillars of the World Health Organization's (WHO) global programme.

WHAT ARE OLDER PEOPLE'S COUNCILS?

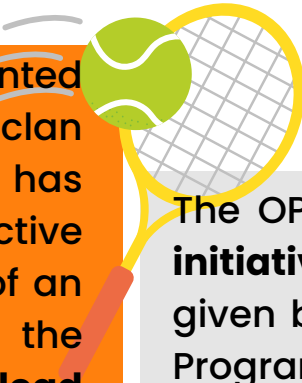
Older People's Councils are **representative groups of older people** who work together and with key state and voluntary agencies **to make Ireland a better place in which to grow old**. The principal aim of the Age Friendly Programme is to give older people **a strong voice in decision-making** on housing, health, spatial planning and all aspects of everyday living so that policies will be inclusive of the needs and choices of older people in urban and rural areas.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU! To submit a piece for the newsletter contact Ciara on 083 0234390 or ciara@gcp.ie.

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

Glenn Millar, Canadian Planner

GALWAY CITY OPC UPDATE



The OPC met the newly appointed **Active Cities Coordinator**, Declan Burke, to hear that Galway City has been selected as part of the Active Cities programme. The mission of an Active Cities is to create the opportunity for residents to **lead healthier and more active lifestyles** as part of their everyday lives. It aims to make participation in **physical activity more accessible for people of all ages and abilities**. This initiative is funded through Sport Ireland by the Dormant Account Fund. One of the initiatives that has commenced is the **'Go for Life Games'**. A new programme has been introduced called **'Good to Go'** which is a training programme designed for older adults. Participants can then bring their training skills back to their member organisations.

The OPC attended a **joint training initiative with the County OPC** given by the Regional Age Friendly Programme Manager on the role of the OPC. *Members of city and county OPCs attending the training are pictured below.*



The next OPC Meeting will hear a presentation from Suzanne McKane, Social Prescriber with Galway City Partnership. **Social Prescribing** is a free support service for adults aged 18 and over. It was set up by the Health Service Executive (HSE). Social Prescribing **links people to sources of support within the community**. It helps them to improve their lives, take greater control of their health and wellbeing.



FIND OUT MORE

To find out more about how Social Prescribing might help you, you can contact **Suzanne** on **083 1969370** or **suzanne@gcp.ie**.



To contact
Galway City OPC

T: 091 536461
E: agefriendly@galwaycity.ie

GALWAY COUNTY OPC UPDATE



The County OPC met the **Creative Ireland Coordinator** for the County to hear of **upcoming funding opportunities for Older People's Groups** through the Creative Ireland Bursaries and a targeted funding programme from Creative Ireland '**Creativity in Older Age**' which aims to enhance health and wellbeing of older people in residential care settings, and in the community.



The OPC has been central to identifying locations for circulation of the **Directory of Services for Older People** in the County, in addition to circulating hard copies of the Directories in their local areas.

The OPC attended a **joint training initiative with the City OPC** given by the Regional Age Friendly Programme Manager on the role of the OPC. *Members of city and county OPCs attending the training are pictured above.*



The OPC met **key library staff** to input into the development of **Age Friendly Libraries** throughout the County and made some suggestions for enhancing the age friendly aspects of the library service, and for the development of library services across the County. The services available through "**Healthy Ireland at your Library**" were also outlined by library staff, with OPC Members making further suggestions on additional activities and health initiatives which could be progressed through local libraries.

The next OPC Meeting will involve **consultations and feedback** on key priority areas identified by older people at a consultation event in November 2023. These will go forward for public consultation to develop an **Age Friendly Strategy for the County**.



VACANCIES

GALWAY CITY OPC

Galway City OPC has representatives from all areas of Galway city – Galway City East, West and Central. The group is very interested in expanding its membership and welcomes people aged 55+ from all walks of life and who are enthusiastic about creating positive change for older people in Galway city.

The group meet **every 6 weeks** on a **Wednesday at 2pm** in **City Hall**, taking a break during the summer.

If you would like to get involved please contact **091 536461** or [**agefriendly@galwaycity.ie**](mailto:agefriendly@galwaycity.ie).



COUNTY GALWAY OPC

Galway County Older People's Council has representatives of older people who represent the voice of older people from each of the Municipal Districts in the County, i.e., Athenry-Oranmore, Ballinasloe, Conamara, Loughrea, and Tuam. We currently have a vacancy on the OPC to **represent the Tuam Municipal District**, so if you are a member of an older person's group, Men's or Women's Shed, or an individual who would like to represent other older people in your area, please get in touch with us at **091 509128** or [**agefriendly@galwaycoco.ie**](mailto:agefriendly@galwaycoco.ie).

Please note that you will need to be based in an area in the Tuam Municipal District (outlined in red on map below) and be **available to attend OPC Meetings every 6-8 weeks** – these are usually held at 2pm on Mondays.



Directory of Services for Older People in Galway City and County



2023



DIRECTORY OF SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Galway city and county OPCs played a key role in assisting with updating the Directory of Services for Older People in Galway City and County. Members worked with Galway City and County Councils and the HSE to ensure the Directory reflected the varied needs of older people who may wish to use it.



LAUNCH EVENT

The Directory was launched at the Hardiman Hotel on the 23rd of November 2023. As well as browsing the **new Directory**, attendees enjoyed some **chair yoga**, heard about the **HSE Older Persons Services**, **crime prevention** and about **the benefits of joining your local Older People's Council**. Everyone also enjoyed an uplifting talk on **Living and Ageing Well** by author and former Governor of Mountjoy Prison, John Lonergan.



GET YOUR COPY

Pick up your copy at a library near you or contact **091 536461** or agefriendly@galwaycity.ie.

HEALTHY AGE FRIENDLY HOMES PROGRAMME

The **Healthy Age Friendly Homes programme** is being rolled out nationally, with 44 Local Co-ordinators across 31 Local Authorities. The programme aims to **support up to 10,500 older people each year**. Donal Clancy has joined the programme as a local coordinator for Galway County and Carmel Manfredi is the new local coordinator for Galway City. Both Donal and Carmel will work with participants to help them **continue to live in their homes with a sense of independence and autonomy**, and continue to be part of their community for as long as possible.



Sláintecare.

The Healthy Age Friendly Homes is a **free service** and local coordinators work within the local authorities supporting older people in the areas of **housing, health, technology, finance, community support, and energy efficiency**. This free service is open to **anyone over the age of 65**. You do not have to be a local authority tenant to avail of this free service.

To make a referral to the Healthy Age Friendly Homes programme please contact the national office on **046 9248899** or email **healthyagefriendlyhomes@meathcoco.ie**.





COPE Galway

“GETTING ENGAGED” TOWARDS A MORE AGE FRIENDLY GALWAY

A group of older adults recently took part in a course called “**Get Engaged**” in Galway and thoroughly enjoyed it. The 5 week course was developed and delivered by Age & Opportunity and brought to Galway by COPE Galway with support from the Community Foundation for Ireland. It was designed to **develop the skills and knowledge** of people (aged 50+) who wish to play a part in helping to **make their communities more Age Friendly**.



The course facilitator Brian Dooney has a unique way of making the learning both informative and fun, covering topics such as **Positive Ageing; Teamwork and Collaboration; Working for Change; Planning** and Implementing a Community Project.

Many of the participants are already involved in community projects and this course gave them the **confidence** to keep their groups interested and motivated, and others have started to **develop ideas** they want to progress .

We know already that so much community work is being done by older people, and this course encourages others **to work together on collective activities** or creative initiatives, which address specific needs and strengthen participation in their local community.

Jacquie Lynskey, Head of Senior Support Services with COPE Galway says that some of the participants have also agreed **to be a resource to help Cope Galway** ensure that their services and supports are meeting the needs of the older people they work with.

ACTIVITIES IN MERVUE



COPE Galway

*Participants on the Mervue healthy ageing programme*

The older adults from Mervue are an active community interested in **healthy ageing**. They are involved in a diverse range of activities, organised by COPE Galway's Community Support Service, which addresses the **holistic well-being** of the clients. The program includes physical activities for their **balance, stretch and mobility**; social activities to create **social connections**; and **mindfulness** activities to experience a moment of calm and connection with their body and mind.

Through these activities, they not only take care of their whole well-being but also enjoy the activities as a **regular meeting point** which contributes to their **quality of life**.

To get in touch with COPE Galway about activities for older people contact Sandra at 085 747 5021 or sviramalay@copegalway.ie

SCHEMES FOR RETIRED AND OLDER PEOPLE



An Roinn Coimíree Sóisialaí
Department of Social Protection



Your Guide to Our Schemes and Services: Retired and Older People

This guide will give you an overview of **some of the ways the Department of Social Protection can help you as you get older** (55 years and older). It covers Benefits for Jobseekers, Benefits for Pensioners, Supports for Carers, Travel and Household Supports, Benefits for people who work, Disability Payments, Supports for living alone and living on islands and more.

[Click here to view the document.](#)

HSE COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE WEST AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH LAUNCH LANDMARK REPORT

HSE Community Healthcare West and the Department of Health launched a landmark report entitled: **'The Pilot Implementation and Evaluation of the interRAI Family Carer Needs Assessment'**, in Tuam, Co. Galway on March 4th 2024. The report was the culmination of a three year project that piloted an internationally validated instrument that **assesses the support needs and health and well-being of family carers**. This was the first time the Carer Needs Assessment form was tested in Ireland, which was made possible by Government funding received under the Dormant Accounts Fund. Family carers and health and social care professionals from across HSE Community Healthcare West and many voluntary agencies attended the event.



Report image

The Department of Health was represented by Mairead Creed, Assistant Principal Officer who said: **"Family carers are without doubt the backbone of care provision in Ireland.** Carers are essential to the Sláintecare reform of our health and social care system, which aims to support people with care needs to live independently in their own homes and communities for as long as possible".



Left to Right: Pat Grogan, National Lead, Family Carers Ireland; Mairead Creed, Assistant Principal Officer, Department of Health; Des Mulligan, Head of Service – Older Persons, HSE Community Healthcare West.



HSE COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE WEST AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH LAUNCH LANDMARK REPORT



Back Row Left to Right: Noreen Brophy, Case Manager, Disability Services, CHW; Bernie Austin, Programme Lead, Portfolio Management Office, CHW; Dr. Patricia Carney, Department of Public Health; Dr. Natalie Vereker, interRAI Ireland National Programme Manager; Kate Brennan, Senior Project Manager, National Dementia Office; Mairead Creed, Assistant Principal Officer, Department of Health; Joan Comer, CHW; Des Mulligan, Head of Service – Older Persons, HSE Community Healthcare West. Front Row Left to Right: Geraldine Collins, Project Manager, CHW; Michelle Harrison, Project Lead and Coordinator, Carers Department CHW; John Fitzmaurice, Chief Officer, HSE Community Healthcare West. **(Steering Group)**



Left to Right: Michelle Harrison, Project Lead and Coordinator, Carers Department, CHW; John Fitzmaurice, Chief Officer, CHW; Dr. Natalie Vereker, interRAI Ireland National Programme Manager; Dr. Patricia Carney, Department of Public Health.

Speaking at the event, John Fitzmaurice, Chief Officer, HSE Community Healthcare West thanked the family carers and the health and social care professionals who participated in the pilot programme and said: "The process of systematic assessment **ensures family carers are identified and recognised**, acknowledges their right and entitlement to access supports, have their own needs documented and responsive actions taken to meet those needs."

For further information contact the HSE Carers Department on 091 546133.

NOTICE BOARD



Good2Go Older Adults Activity Training

Wednesdays, 10am–1.30pm, 10th April – 8th May, Ballybane Community Resource Centre. Refreshments provided. To register contact Chelsea on 087 1329049 or candc@galwaycity.ie.



Indoor Activity Program

Thursdays, 4th–25th April, Westside Community Centre. €10 per person. Registration essential. To register contact eloftus@galwaycoco.ie.



Tuam Audiobook Club

Starts 12th April at 1pm in Tuam Library. The audience listens to a short story read aloud and members can then discuss the story together, if they wish. Large print and digital editions of the book are offered to members who would like to read along. This is a great opportunity for anyone who wants to join a book club but struggles to read, for whatever reason! The group will continue to meet on the **second Friday of the month** at 1pm.



Scrabble for Seniors

Wednesdays at 2pm in Galway City Library. All are welcome, however booking is required. Each week is a separate event, so there is no requirement to be there each week. Whether you are a serious Scrabble addict, or just looking for something social to do during the week, give it a go! Book your place by emailing city@galwaylibrary.ie or phoning 091-509094.



Free Courses with The Carers Department, HSE Community Healthcare West

FREE certified 'Heartsaver CPR AED' courses for family carers in various Galway city and county locations. **FREE certified 'Manual and People Moving and Handling' courses** to family carers in Connemara. If interested contact the HSE Carers Department on 091 546133 for an application form immediately to avoid disappointment. Places limited. *Please note that you do not have to be caring full-time and you do not have to be in receipt of Carers Allowance and other social welfare payments to apply.*