

third age

Responding to the Opportunities
and Challenges of Ageing in Ireland

Annual Report 2020



third age

Responding to the Opportunities and Challenges of Ageing in Ireland

A YEAR IN PEOPLE





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Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland, is Patron of Third Age

Third Age is a registered charity 16647
 Charity Number 20060459
 Company Number 414509

Third Age Foundation CLG and Senior Citizens Helpline Company CLG are two separate companies.
 This report covers the activities of both.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

2020 was a year like no other. Third Age faced a time of great challenge in continuing to deliver vital services under difficult circumstances, and I will begin by paying tribute to the Board, staff and volunteers who came together magnificently in rising to this challenge.

Third Age is a voluntary organisation working with and on behalf of older people. For over 33 years we have been developing effective responses to the needs of this group whose numbers are increasing, which highlights the ongoing need for our services and our vision.

Third Age has a national network of over 1,400 trained volunteers who help us deliver our services.

We are committed to alleviating the social isolation that affects older people primarily, and that also reaches into every generation. In 2020, many people experienced the deep loneliness of isolation, fear and despair, and our services were more needed than ever.

The arrival of the coronavirus pandemic to Ireland and the world in March 2020 meant that in common with other services and institutions, Third Age had to immediately repurpose all programmes to ensure the safety of clients and staff.

Where possible, programmes were delivered remotely. Achieving this successfully is testament to the excellent communication and mutual support throughout the organisation. My thanks to the Board especially the finance committee for drawing up an overall risk assessment plan and future strategy and their support throughout the year.

The inability to hold any fundraising events in 2020 added to our funding challenge so we are particularly grateful for the continued support and understanding of existing funders: Age & Opportunity; Community Foundation for Ireland; Healthy Ireland Fund; HSE; Meath County Council; National Lottery; Pobal and Slaintecare. We thank the new funders and sponsors who came to our aid during 2020. These include Baille Guifford Bank; Biogen; Donegal County Council; Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council; RTE Comic Relief; SOLAS; The Stability Fund and Tuath Housing Association.

We are grateful to these bodies for their belief in Third Age and for their practical contribution towards the continuance and development of our services.

We would like to thank the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection for the provision of Community Employment Learners who work with Third Age as administrative assistants, bus drivers, carers and project workers. Without them, we would not be in a position to provide some local services.

The pandemic is causing us, as a society, to reflect on the way we live and support each other. It has given rise to an ongoing debate on the needs of older and vulnerable people and how these are met. Third Age looks forward to contributing positively to this national conversation with the thoughtful perspective we bring to all our work.



JACK NOLAN

CHAIRMAN

CEO'S REPORT

Third Age entered 2020 with exciting plans for the sustainability and development of our national programmes and a varied calendar of events for our members in Summerhill.

However, in early March it became obvious that Covid-19 would have a significant impact on our work throughout 2020 and beyond. As an organisation we responded. We focused on priorities - providing public health briefing to staff, and developing a service strategy in collaboration with staff, funders and volunteers.

We agreed on a clear commitment to continue to provide our programmes and to initiate new services in response to local needs. While taking a whole-organisation approach, each manager assumed responsibility for assessing and reconfiguring their own programme, while the senior management team used regular online meetings to plan, and problem-solve.

We re-purposed all programmes to ensure that clients could continue to receive the supports they need, while at the same time following the public health guidelines to minimise the risks to clients and staff.

SeniorLine's 180 volunteers transferred to working from home with no disruption to service.

Our community education service, Fáilte Isteach began to deliver English language classes online.

Our AgeWell Companions kept in touch with clients during lockdown by phone, text and face-to-face visiting within safety guidelines.

Our Navigate Your Work Future programme was also delivered online - greatly appreciated by older job seekers in providing encouragement, career guidance and professional support.

Our staff in Summerhill became a lifeline to older members living in the wider catchment area, while limited services were delivered in the Centre when strictures relaxed during the year.

Externally we were supported by clear and transparent communication from government, particularly at the start of the pandemic when calm leadership was called for. The intervention of The Wheel seeking a resilience fund on behalf of the sector was very timely.

As the year progressed, many programmes came under increased pressure from a frightened and distressed older public who needed extra services, reassurance and support. Our strengths were our flexibility and adaptability, our work ethic, and our ability to work as a cohesive team.

We thank all those organisations and individuals this year who have listened, who believed in us and have offered help and support. We really appreciate your continued partnership.

In spite of their own difficulties in the pandemic, our volunteers - older people themselves - stood by us and continued to donate their time and expertise while locked down. It is thanks largely to them that we are able to continue to deliver a quality service during the year.

My sincere thanks to my Board and sub-committees for the support they gave me this year. Finally, my sincere thanks to my staff for the way we worked together, forging closer bonds in the face of adversity and emerging stronger and more committed to our goals.



ÁINE BRADY

CEO



Established in 1988 in Summerhill, Co. Meath.

An organisational network of projects and programmes for older people to support and reinforce their autonomy.

MISSION

To value older people’s contribution to society and to help them meet their personal and community needs through innovative programmes.

POLICY PRIORITIES

- Equip older people in Ireland to maintain their independence and voice within family, community and society
- Work to enable people to live as long as possible in the place of their choice
- Develop and provide personal supports
- Promote opportunities nationally for lifelong learning, volunteering and civic engagement
- Constantly challenge ageism and racism
- Support and participate in research into issues affecting older people
- Collaborate with organisations with whom we share objectives
- Provide support, services and activities to older people in Summerhill and catchment area

REPRESENTATION OF THIRD AGE ON OTHER BODIES

Age Friendly Platform Meath

Age Platform Europe

Alliance of Age Sector Organisations

Aontas

Board of The Wheel

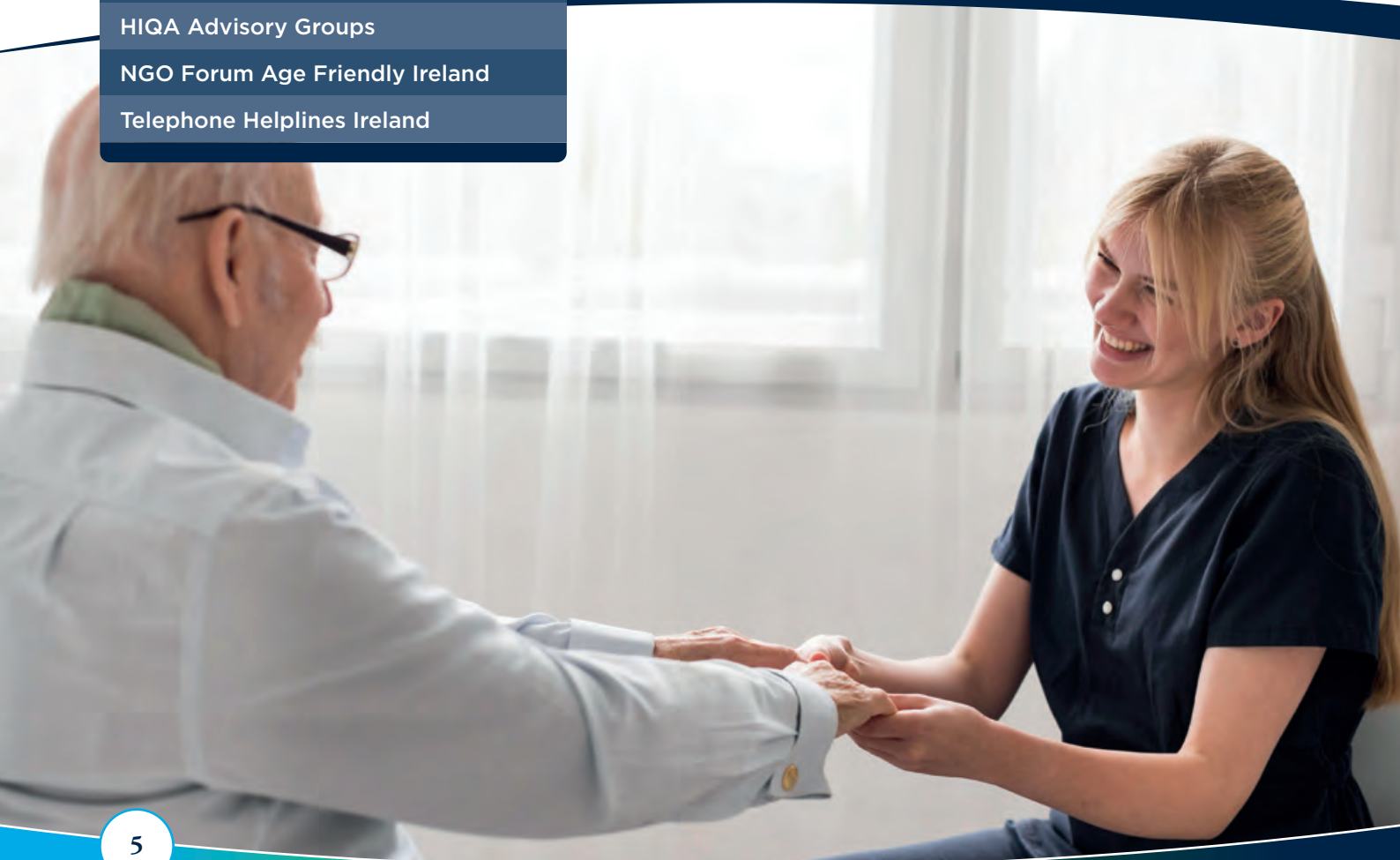
HIQA Advisory Groups

NGO Forum

HIQA Advisory Groups

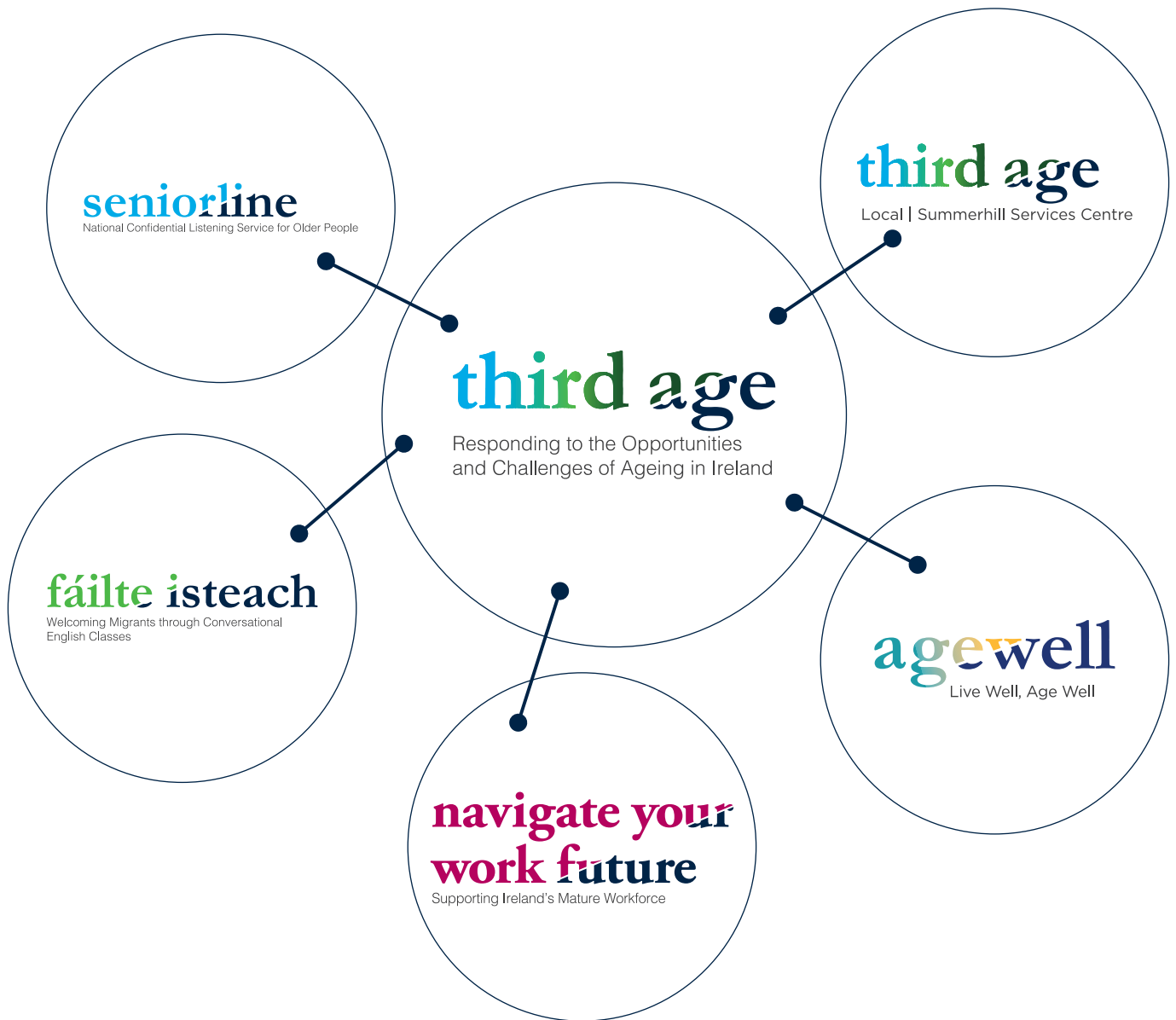
NGO Forum Age Friendly Ireland

Telephone Helplines Ireland



REGIONAL & NATIONAL PROGRAMMES

SUPPORTING PEOPLE TO LIVE WELL AND AGE BETTER



WORKING WITH OTHERS

TO BUILD AN IRELAND WHERE THE THIRD AGE IN LIFE IS VALUED & CELEBRATED





seniorline

National Confidential Listening Service for Older People

FREEPHONE
1800 80 45 91

Established 23 years ago, **SeniorLine** is Ireland's national confidential telephone service for older people offering a listening ear, guidance and support.

Open 365 days of the year from 10am-10pm, this cost-effective service is provided by 180 trained older volunteers. People who contact the service may be lonely, anxious, depressed, or suffer from mental health issues, some Covid-related. They wish to discuss these problems and seek information on practical matters including family problems or financial concerns.

As older people themselves, our volunteers are well placed to listen and understand the needs of callers. Volunteers can provide reassurance, empathy, and referrals to a wide network of other helpful organisations.

External evaluations of **SeniorLine** have consistently confirmed its relevance and effectiveness as well as its quality - underpinned by continuous professional development of volunteers. **SeniorLine** has achieved the **Invest in Volunteers Quality Mark** awarded by Volunteer Ireland.



IMPACT & VALUE

- Increase in calls during 2020 demonstrated the need for a free, skilled and accessible service for older people during the pandemic.
- The service's peer-to-peer aspect proved to be vital - **SeniorLine** volunteers, locked down for periods, had empathy and understanding with similar caller issues.
- Regular information updates enabled the service to offer relevant information to callers in a rapidly-changing environment.
- Older people confined to home suffering from loneliness, fear and isolation found **SeniorLine** to be a lifeline and phoned constantly.
- **SeniorLine** database provided significant data on the lived experience of callers, volunteers and staff during the pandemic.

CALLS & CALLERS

- **SeniorLine** received 17,642 calls in 2020.
- These included 10,408 regular callers and 7,234 first time callers.
- The female-to-male ratio was four female callers to every one male caller, a change from past patterns when call ratios were more equal.
- **SeniorLine** provided 8,760 listening hours in 2020.
- March was the busiest month, followed by April and October; there were fewest calls in February.
- There were approximately the same number of urban and rural callers.
- Some callers felt HSE, media and society in general treated them in an ageist manner during the pandemic.
- Loneliness due to loss of family, friends and former active lives was a major reason for calling.
- Callers also suffered from fear of contracting the virus and other health problems.
- Emotional and mental health difficulties surfaced as the year progressed.
- Family conflict figured very prominently with many calls becoming more difficult and complex.
- All callers were listened to with compassion and respect.
- All callers were given time to discuss options, and referred as appropriate to other services detailed in **SeniorLine**'s Resource Manual.



SeniorLine volunteer at work.

COVID ADAPTATION

SERVICE

- **SeniorLine** repurposed to a remote service with volunteers responding magnificently to request to work from home.
- This change was achieved with no break in service.
- New rota arrangements were set up to facilitate efficient home rotas.
- New channels were set up for daily receipt of caller data e.g. callers, numbers, issues.
- **SeniorLine** offered range of supports to callers including welcome, reassurance, and mentoring on staying emotionally healthy.

VOLUNTEERS

- Received dedicated phones if needed while home working.
- Supported by staff in solving IT issues arising from remote working.
- Provided with regular, updated information on safety, community services, health concerns - enabling them to answer Covid-related questions.
- Attended weekly online meetings offering informal training and social contact.

STAFF

- Weekly team meeting set up to share information, provide mutual support, discuss volunteer/caller issues and agreed response.

WHAT OUR CALLERS SAID THIS YEAR

'My daughter now works from home and needs a quiet house. I leave the children to school, collect them and give them their dinner. It is extra work, but it has kept me sane and I have become closer to them and my daughter this year. It's great to be needed'.

PHILOMENA

'I wasn't able to see my son and daughter for months because of the nursing home restrictions. I was upstairs and could not hear them through the window. It's better now, but it was so lonely, and I am glad I had SeniorLine to talk to during those awful months'.

MICHAEL

'My wife died eight months ago and we could not have a proper funeral. It has made it that much harder. I like to phone and remember her, we were married for over 40 years. Thank you for encouraging me to talk about her as much as I need'.

GERARD

'I didn't think I would be calling a help line, but my social life has gone this year and I find it very hard to be cheerful. At least I can phone you and have a moan and sometimes we end up laughing. Thank you'.

ROSALYN

SENIORLINE IN ACTION

Niamh O'Doherty, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin heard of **SeniorLine** four years ago and thought she could contribute: *'I felt I might be able to do some volunteering and **SeniorLine** could be a fit for me. My background in social work and administration means that I am used to being a listener. What was going for me also is that I have long learnt to be objective, to take a problem on board and park it.'*

She found the volunteer training to be helpful. *'It was useful to hear about the types of issues we would be facing, I found the role plays quite challenging, but overall the training gave me a breadth of learning, and it was a really enjoyable week. Our model of listening is to Connect, Understand and Empower the caller, and if I'm stuck, I can still hear some of the guidance we learnt in training.'*

'I am very much still on a learning curve and I honestly feel that I learn something new with each rota even if I speak to people who contact us regularly and who I would have spoken to in the past', she said.

Pre-Covid, Niamh worked in **SeniorLine**'s Donnybrook centre with a sense of mutual support between herself and her fellow worker. *'I became accustomed to working from home reasonably quickly. I had a few technical phone issues but we got these sorted. Working alone is different, we can need more support from the **SeniorLine** team and they have been absolutely fantastic', she said.*

'The classic caller is someone who says 'have you got a few minutes? I am really lonely and I need someone to talk to'. It can be anything. Someone experiencing difficulty with an adult child, someone feeling hard done by with the world in general, someone who needs a chat. Some callers have a lot of fear. People are doing their best, but being confined to home is having a big effect. It can be something as banal as saying they are not going to vacuum the floor as nobody will see it, so what's the point? A number of people have said to me that Covid has changed them and made them old'.

Niamh herself is having a busy pandemic. She is on the board of South Dublin County Volunteer Centre, the South Dublin Community Information Centre and Stillorgan Credit Union. *'I work at the kitchen table, with three to four Zoom meetings every week, and I'm beginning to think I need a softer kitchen chair!' she said. Widowed, with close family links, they have a weekly Zoom quiz. 'I would like to say I am grateful to **SeniorLine** for helping to keep my own issues into perspective. Listening to callers helps you to understand what other people are going through. With **SeniorLine**, I know I gain far more than I give', she said.*



NIAMH O'DOHERTY

SENIORLINE VOLUNTEER



fáilte isteach

Welcoming Migrants through Conversational English Classes

Fáilte Isteach is a community project involving predominantly older volunteers welcoming migrants through conversational English classes. To the 100+ communities it impacts across Ireland, the classes are so much more.

Fáilte Isteach groups provide a space for those who are isolated to connect, for perspectives to evolve and attitudes to develop. The informal learning approach allows those who feel marginalised to engage more easily and begin to integrate into Irish life.

Fáilte Isteach classes are tutored by volunteers who welcome participants into the community through language, identify needs through conversation and focus on fluency and confidence-building. For participants who have come from frightening and traumatic circumstances in their own countries, this inclusive, welcoming approach makes all the difference.



Fáilte Isteach English class in session.

IMPACT & VALUE

- **Fáilte Isteach** supports communities across Ireland to have a more active role in promoting the integration of migrants.
- The project plays a vital part in increasing mutual understanding between migrants and their local community.
- **Fáilte Isteach** works to provide migrants with the tools and confidence they need to reach their potential in Ireland.
- **Fáilte Isteach** provides class resources to assist migrants towards active citizenship, in form filling, and CV creation while class discussion supports migrants to learn about their entitlements and employment rights, and Irish political and cultural life.

GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

- **Fáilte Isteach** operates 134 classes in 104 communities in every county in the republic.
- 3,800 students are supported each week.

COVID ADAPTATION

- All classes were postponed in line with public health guidelines.
- Covid highlighted the digital divide - tutors and participants with suitable hardware and broadband were able to continue to work remotely.
- Clients in Direct Provision centres could not initially participate either because Wi-Fi was inadequate, or because online classes were too difficult for beginners.
- 15% of classes reformed immediately to work digitally March-May 2020.
- **Fáilte Isteach** team developed resources to train tutors to deliver classes online with the least possible break in service.
- The network became a means for sharing and disseminating critical public health guidelines and information from state agencies such as the Department of Social Protection.
- During summer 2020, the **Fáilte Isteach** team delivered a number of online training programmes to support existing groups and upskill new volunteers.
- These included Understanding Racism and Supporting the Employability Skills of Migrants.
- 240 people attended Introduction to Zoom sessions, with one-to-one training offered to a further 26 individuals.
- By the start of the academic year September 2020, 50% of classes had moved online, involving 500 volunteers and 1,100 students.
- This number continues to grow as the **Fáilte Isteach** team offers ongoing online digital training.



SUPPORTING ASYLUM SEEKERS

- In 2020 asylum seekers in five Direct Provision centres in Counties Clare & Cork began receiving online training from **Fáilte Isteach**.
- By year end 2020, **Fáilte Isteach** has established contact with Spirasi regarding asylum services initiatives, (Spirasi is the national centre for the rehabilitation of torture victims).
- A pilot programme to train Spirasi volunteers as tutors is planned for 2021.

COLLABORATION

- **Fáilte Isteach** has developed working relationships with over 40 relevant organisations including Education Training Boards, (ETBs), Family Resource Centres, partnerships, justice, community and voluntary groups, and other NGOs and charitable organisations.
- **Fáilte Isteach** continues to work with multiple partners to ensure that those most in need have access to free tuition.

EXPANSION

- During 2020 the programme experienced a surge in volunteer enquiries, building a list of 250 interested volunteers who wanted to support online classes.
- From this list, **Fáilte Isteach** trained and placed over 50 volunteers with online groups, and gained support for reopening of classes 2021.
- Volunteer interest also facilitated the introduction of online introductory sessions for communities interested in setting up a new group.
- 32 individuals across Ireland attended these introductory sessions, learnt about the project, its ethos, and how to start a local group in their local community.
- As a result, 32 new volunteers and eight new groups are ready to launch across Counties Clare, Cork, Dublin, Kildare and Meath in 2021.



Fáilte Isteach and Integration English class students receive their certificates at an award ceremony in Kilkenny.

FÁILTE ISTEACH IN ACTION

In spring 2020, Claire Dalton, **Fáilte Isteach** National Development Officer met Noreen Leahy of the Bridge to Resources Integration & Justice, (Brij), a group providing friendship and support for asylum seekers living in Direct Provision Centres in Cork, and felt the two organisations could work together for mutual benefit.

There are currently 7,400 adults and children living in 38 Direct Provision Centres in Ireland. The government plan to end the practice by 2024 in favour of a four month stay only, before a move to various housing options. This reform has been welcomed by many organisations working with migrants and those campaigning for a just and human rights based approach to asylum seekers.

Eleven Brij volunteers were scheduled to train with the **Fáilte Isteach** programme, but before they could begin, Covid-19 hit, and many national face-to-face initiatives went to ground. **Fáilte Isteach** began to train their own volunteer tutors to offer classes online. Brij volunteers also found creative ways to offer support to asylum seekers at a distance. They kept in touch by mobile, WhatsApp, virtual coffee mornings and when permitted, met safely out of doors.

Later in 2020, Brij volunteers finally trained as tutors with **Fáilte Isteach**, and in September began to deliver English language classes to 20 Asylum seekers in Cork Direct Provision centres. *'We tutor online, for now, one-to-one or in small groups, and our students range from complete beginners to others with some fluency'*, says Noreen Leahy. *'It can be very difficult arriving into a new country knowing nobody, often after a long, challenging journey. Then arriving at a centre with little or no English. It can be a very disorientating, isolating, traumatic experience'* she said.

'Being able to speak English is essential, it is like breathing air. It is important for connection, integration, employment and to live a fuller life in Ireland. Language proficiency is a bridge. It is essential'.

Noreen has witnessed many positive stories, where asylum seekers are contributing actively within their local communities through employment and volunteering. *'It has been great for Brij to link with **Fáilte Isteach**, it has given us solid training, resources and new skills to connect virtually with asylum seekers especially during the pandemic. We are looking forward to continuing this work face to face'*, she said.



NOREEN LEAHY

BRIDGE TO RESOURCES
INTEGRATION & JUSTICE



CLAIRE DALTON

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
OFFICER, FÁILTE ISTEACH





agewell
Live Well, Age Well

AgeWell is an award-winning model of integrated care supporting older people to remain safer and healthier in their own homes for as long as possible.

AgeWell recruits and trains **AgeWell** Companions who provide social engagement through home visits and phone calls, and provide health monitoring through the use of a mobile Health App.

The App - a health screening tool created by gerontologists - is used by the Companion to continually assess client health issues, and appropriately refer them to Primary Care Teams (PCTs) and other community services as necessary. Social and environmental problems can also be identified before they worsen, enabling clients to be linked into the appropriate treatment, in the right place at the right time.

The core aim of the **AgeWell** programme is to enable clients to remain living in their own homes and communities for as long as possible, increasing the access to early intervention and reducing the burden on acute emergency and long-term care.

Life before Covid - AgeWell training January 2020.



IMPACT & VALUE

- **AgeWell** delivered supports to 286 older people in Co. Meath in 2020.
- Five new **AgeWell** Companions trained in January, giving 19 Companions at year's end.
- Clients received 2,326 face-to-face visits from Companions, maximising safe contact in lockdown.
- Client health monitoring led to referrals to other services including Meals on Wheels, community and transport services, home support, and housing repair adaptation grants.
- Each client is assessed upon joining the programme and at four monthly intervals.
- Assessments invariably show a decrease in loneliness and an increase in wellbeing.
- 25% of clients at risk of poor wellbeing at the start had dropped to 7% after an average four months, with this improvement maintained.
- Proportion of clients reporting increased physical activity rose by 15% within four months of starting the programme.
- Significant improvements were also recorded in emotional and informational support and in self-rated health, with such improvements also sustained.
- 100% of clients reported they were satisfied with the programme, and 98% would recommend it to a friend or family member.

COVID ADAPTATION

- **AgeWell** carried out an immediate risk assessment in response to Covid-related public health restrictions.
- A balanced practice was put in place to safeguard both Companions and clients.
- Companions were provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and received specific training on conducting home visits in safety.
- **AgeWell** became a vital contact for vulnerable clients connecting them to services such as transport, medicine and food supplies.
- Companions also became a link for Primary Care Teams providing an intermediary support for Public Health Nurses.
- Companions remained in constant touch throughout the year whether on home visits, on phone or socially distanced door visits, as permissible.
- The needs of clients missing social contact became apparent and Companions lengthened their visits to provide extra support.
- The Health App picked up many signs of Covid-19 supporting clients to seek medical help while also keeping an eye on any routine health issues.
- **AgeWell** became a constant social glue, offering emotional contact in changing times.

COMPANION SUPPORT

AgeWell volunteers receive fortnightly Continuous Professional Development sessions with the **AgeWell** Care Coordination team providing the opportunity to raise relevant issues and to discuss specific cases.

The team provides monthly steering group meetings with members including HSE, Primary Care representatives and local support providers. **AgeWell** collaborates with public health nurses, social workers, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, Gardai and other community services.

WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAID

'The visits and phone calls are always welcome and delivered with humour and wide life experience. I have made a number of changes, all suggested by AgeWell, and although I can now accept that I am an old man, I have never been more relaxed or content'.

'My AgeWell Companion has made a world of difference to my everyday life, especially in overcoming the difficulties I have encountered during COVID-19'.

'My quality of life changed for the better the day my AgeWell Companion came into my life. She became a friend and a source of many benefits to my general well-being. The negative effects of years of isolation and loneliness gradually reduced and AgeWell worked around the Covid restrictions finding safe ways to continue their vital service'.

'My Companion has been a huge help in my processing and accepting my husband's death. She motivates me to polish and shine on the days she visits! Though she hasn't met my family, she knows each one and is up to date on their activities. We can chat for hours catching up on local news, church, choir and shopping'.

WHAT OUR COMPANIONS SAID

'Our clients have so much to offer - stories of old days - and talking about their family. You come away rejuvenated and consider yourself lucky to be allowed into their homes. Absolute satisfaction!'

'Becoming a Companion was one of the best decisions I have ever made. Older people have so much to offer as they have lived through very tough times. We visit weekly and ring twice a week to make sure all is well, and the phone calls are very important to them'.

'One of my clients lives alone as her husband died four years ago and none of her family is in Ireland. She is very smart and I enjoy my chats with her. I remind her of any hospital appointments and check that she has transport to get there. She is a woman of great faith and has taught me some lovely prayers'.

"I have six clients. Various issues, concerns and tasks arise from sourcing pendants to making appointments with doctors/opticians/chiropractors to getting a sewing machine repaired. What have I gained from them? So very much. They are a wealth of information on everything from gardening to history, and I always leave happy in the knowledge that we have made a difference to each other's lives'.

AGEWELL IN ACTION

Alice Maguire is 84 years young, with a very happy and positive attitude to life. Born on a farm in Kildalkey, Co. Meath, Alice moved nine miles to Rathmolyon when she married her husband Billy. They had thirteen children, now aged from 45 to 61, many living nearby. She has 33 grandchildren. Billy died eight years ago. *'He died very suddenly. He was on the phone to his sister in America and he suddenly dropped dead. It was a terrible shock, and I still miss him terribly. He was always here, we were always together'.* she says.

Despite her loss, Alice says she is able to look after herself well, she keeps hens and sounds very self-sufficient. She feels she is blessed in her family who are very good to her, her daughter Colette staying over every Sunday night to shop together and collect Alice's pension each Monday. *'I am fine on my own, but when Colette stays the house feels different. It is great to have the company'.*

Alice's AgeWell Companion is 68 year old Eileen Reilly and they know each other well: *'Eileen comes and spends an hour with me every week. It is great to see her, she tells me all the news. AgeWell is a great service'*, says Alice. Eileen also lives in Rathmolyon and joined AgeWell in 2018: *'I was attracted to the idea as I was about to retire from my role as HSE home support worker, and thought that volunteering with AgeWell would help keep that link alive with older people. I felt I had the resources to reach out to others'*, she explained. Eileen is married to Michael with three adult children, one in Australia and two living nearby.

Even though she worked in elder care, Eileen found the AgeWell training useful. *'It was excellent insofar as I learnt a different approach to people. As a home support worker, you don't have time to listen to people's private lives. The only problem I had initially was managing the health questions on the WhatsApp, but the AgeWell team told me they would give me all the support I needed and they were true to their word. With AgeWell, I learnt how to listen and this is what I do now, go in, give them the time to speak especially at the start of a visit. You listen'*, she says.

Alice is one of Eileen's 11 AgeWell clients. *'I love them all to bits. I do my visits over three days a week, so they are three busy days'. How would she describe Alice? "I know her well as her daughter used to babysit my children. Alice is caring, bubbly, not afraid of anything. We don't talk about the virus. As far as she is concerned, she weathered many things in her life and she will weather this too. I would describe her as dauntless and fearless'*, she said.

Eileen uses her mobile health tool regularly to monitor Alice's health, and there is rarely anything negative to report. Alice confirms she is in good health. She had a cataract removed from one eye last year and may need surgery on the second. Her other problem is arthritis which can affect her ability to walk a distance.

Eileen praises the Health App. *'It is really beneficial. It throws up any little problem that they might have, and then I can refer to the AgeWell team, and we might ask, for example, that the nurse could call and check it out. It can show up if someone seems to be growing a little confused. Recently, a man told me he had had a fall, he didn't say anything before, as he did not want to make a fuss, but the specific questions gave him a place to say it. All this is very important, a fall needs to be taken seriously depending on what has caused it. One of the important aspects of the service is that we don't make decisions or make any judgements, we refer to the AgeWell team, so we know it is all in hand'*, she says.

AgeWell seems to be a win-win programme for both Companion and client. Alice enjoys reading, loves music and counts herself lucky in life. *'I am independent, I'm not afraid of anyone, I have a Socially Monitored Alarm which gives a feeling of safety. I know people who are on their own and have nobody coming to see them. I live on my own, but I have AgeWell, the family are always there, bringing me out and about and they couldn't do enough for me'*, she says. *'I am thrilled with my AgeWell work and every visit is a pleasure'* said Eileen. *'I love it. It gives a sense of contentment. These days, every day is a bonus'*.



Alice Maguire, AgeWell Client and Eileen Walsh, her AgeWell Companion.

navigate your work future

Supporting Ireland's Mature Workforce

Established in 2019, **Navigate Your Work Future** addresses the challenges faced by many older people to find employment. The programme represents a partnership between Third Age and the global professional services company, Accenture.

The rationale for the programme is the current changing face of work. Many in their 40s/60s who find themselves unemployed or redundant can have difficulty obtaining work again. Some may lack sufficient technical and digital skills, or - in spite of employment equality legislation - may be negatively affected by ageism and age discrimination. On the other hand, many older workers have competencies and attributes such as leadership, maturity, reliability and experience. The programme aims to support older workers who may need to reskill, returners to the labour market after home duties, and those considering a career change.

The Department of Social Protection helped to promote the Navigate Your Work Future Programme.



IMPACT & VALUE

- From January to March, five one day workshop sessions were held in Leinster and Munster attended by a total of 293 delegates.
- The workshops offered participants the opportunity to evaluate personal skills and strengths.
- Practical sessions demonstrated how to apply these to best advantage e.g. to market oneself, and appreciate the value of networking.
- There was input on the changing workplace and future trends, and how to identify new opportunities for reskilling, upskilling and lifelong learning.
- Each workshop included follow up resources.
- The programme began to build a reputation with key stakeholders, most notably the Department of Social Protection, who promoted it to their job-seekers.
- The pandemic with consequent unemployment and redundancies means that **Navigate Your Work Future** is relevant and timely.

COVID ADAPTATION

SPRING

- Face-to-face workshops ended in March and work began on programme adaptation for online delivery.
- A database of career professionals was built up to deliver online sessions.

SUMMER

- Six online webinars were organised.
- Subjects covered included: Life Lessons for Career and Work Success; The Future of Work; Writing a great CV and Excelling at Interviews; Beyond the Boundaries of Experience; Think Flexibly; You are more Resilient than you Think.
- Topics were chosen in response to needs expressed by participants.
- The sessions included ice-breakers; individual work exercises; Q&A/chat function for engagement, tea and coffee breaks.
- Each seminar offered a follow-up resource pack with links to articles, book lists, video clips and attached slides.
- A total of 680 people attended, of which 323 were unique participants.
- The seminars were extremely well received.
- Group training sessions were also organised and hosted to promote Accenture's online learning Skills2Succeed.
- Logging on to no-cost online learning from home proved to be very helpful and accessible for target audience.

AUTUMN

- By September, further public health restrictions caused the cancellation of proposed return to in-person seminars.
- Programme was again repurposed with eight online half day sessions organised October-December.
- We began the programme of three hour webinars with interactive content from career guidance professionals, consultants, career and personal coaches.
- Subjects covered were Find the Job you Really Love; Approaching your Career with Confidence and Focus; Creating Your own Personal Brand Online, How to Write a Great CV and Excel at Job Interview; Returning to the Workforce after a Break; Self-Compassion, Self-Care and Support through Mindfulness.
- A total of 462 people attended, 327 of which were unique learners.
- Six group training sessions were organised for the online learning platform, Skills 2 Succeed.

WHAT OUR PARTICIPANTS SAID

'I found the last session really useful and have now secured not one but two jobs! So life is busy. I will pass on details of your programme to a friend who I think will also find the sessions helpful. Thanks again for everything'.

SIOBHAN

'Just to let you know that I was offered a job and am starting in a few weeks. Thank you for hosting these sessions which I feel have been very beneficial for me'.

JOSEPH

'I am contacting to let you know that I have been successful in getting a new job as a director in community development. I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you, Third Age Ireland and Accenture for organising and hosting these events. They have really been a lifeline for people like myself who found themselves out of work during this pandemic. You have helped me to stay focussed and calm'.

MARION

WHAT THE DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT & SOCIAL WELFARE SAID

'Thanks for the hard and diligent work you put into project. I would be interested in any future seminars and recommend same to my colleagues'.

CASE OFFICER

'Thank you for the information below which I have passed onto my job seeking clients, who would benefit from understanding how confidence and belief in oneself is key to building a career pathway'.

JOB COACH

'I am passing on feedback from a service user who has attended the programme sessions for six months and found them useful and practical. She particularly appreciated learning the value of networking when job hunting and how to go about it'.

EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS OFFICER



DIGITAL SKILLS

For a number of years, Third Age has been providing free Digital Skills classes for older people in Leinster. The programme aims to improve IT literacy and is funded by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment and part of their initiative to get older citizens online. The Digital Skills programme continued January - March 2020. Face to face activities then ceased. The programme was repurposed in Summerhill to offer phone support and training to existing students, and to a new cohort anxious to access online services in the pandemic. People were supported in ordering online shopping, taxing one's car and managing other necessary online tasks.





third age

Local | Summerhill Services Centre

THIRD AGE SUMMERHILL SERVICES

For over 30 years, **Third Age**, Summerhill has been providing vital services to older people within a 30 mile radius. From computer classes to counselling, fitness to film shows, the Centre has offered a space and place for local people to engage, to learn, and to maximise their physical and social health.

The menu of activities is wide-ranging and responds to members' needs and suggestions. Activities and services are designed both to promote well-being and to reduce isolation and loneliness.

The volunteering ethos of **Third Age** began with the first members in Summerhill, and the centre continues to promote active citizenship, and to help members interact with the local community in positive ways.

The centre provides holidays, outings, access to health services, health screening and monitoring, transport, information and out-reach. And much more.



A-Z ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES 2020



Aromatherapy



Drop-in Centre



Movement to Music



Art & Drama



Holidays



Movie Mornings



Chaerobics



Hot Stone Massage Therapy



Outings



Audiologist



Knitting Group



Reflexology



Chiropody



Library



Resource Centre



Computer Classes



Line Dancing



Socials



Counselling



**Little Jobs Project
(community service)**



Transport Service



Reflexology room in Summerhill.

IMPACT & VALUE

- Summerhill began 2020 with a busy calendar of planned services, outings and events.
- The first three months of regular activities were well attended.

COVID ADAPTATION

SPRING

- With the advent of Covid-19, centre-based activities ceased in compliance with government regulations and to protect members and staff.
- Local members suddenly found themselves deprived of Third Age services at a time they needed them most.
- Third Age staff drew up a rota to contact each member regularly by phone, providing contact and support.
- Staff liaised with local shops to co-ordinate the collection and delivery of groceries, household supplies, fuel, medicines and prescriptions.
- Some people needed help with plumbing and electrical repairs, and staff helped to organise these services also.
- Local older people were provided with SeniorLine Freephone number and opening hours.
- Staff acted as an information conduit for government health information, and extended the database to include non-members referred for support by Co. Meath Community Garda.
- Staff sent Easter cards, hand-written letters and postcards to vulnerable members, with good wishes and messages of support.

SUMMER

- Restrictions had lifted and people began to meet again.
- Staff invited members to outdoor gatherings for coffee, cake and company in Summerhill patio and local gardens.
- In partnership with Age Friendly and Local Link, staff distributed support packs containing books, puzzles, non-perishable foodstuff, chocolates and flower seeds. (HSE has stressed the value to mental health of pastimes, puzzles, reading, knitting and crafts).
- Summerhill staff also provided encouragement and support to those who continued with some centre-inspired activities at home.
- The Third Age Knitting Group began to knit blankets for Alzheimer patients at Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, Drogheda and cot bedclothes for babies at the Rotunda Hospital, Dublin. Wool was supplied and delivered to members by staff.

AUTUMN

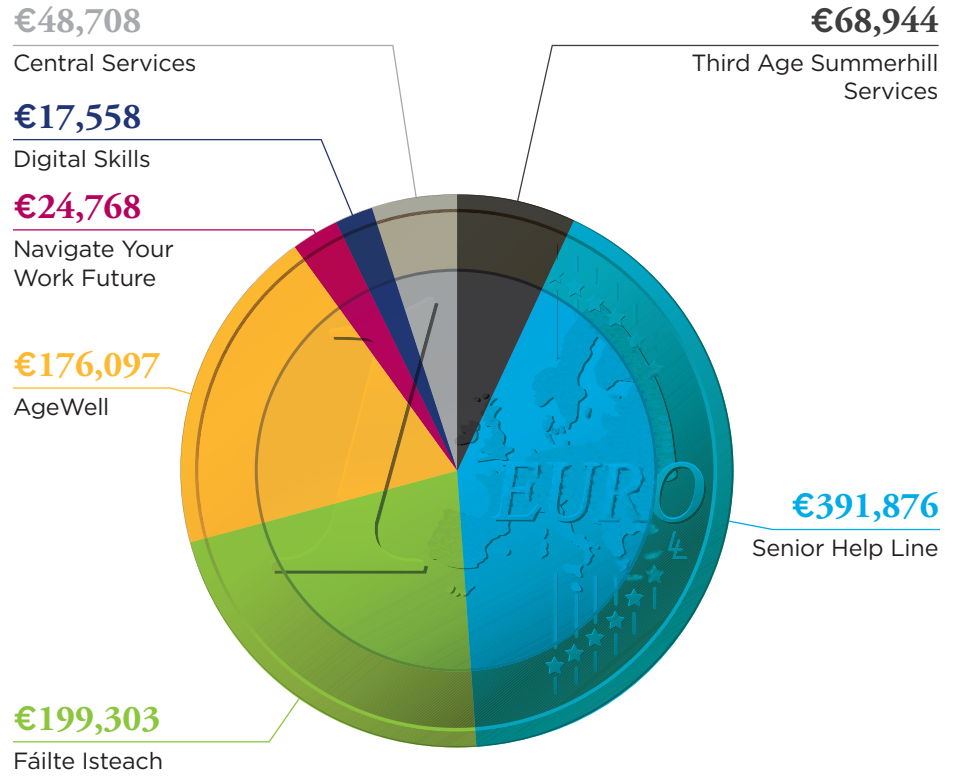
- Summerhill continued to provide friendship and support, paying particular attention to those living alone or in remote areas.
- In October, the flu vaccine was administered to Third Age members.

WINTER

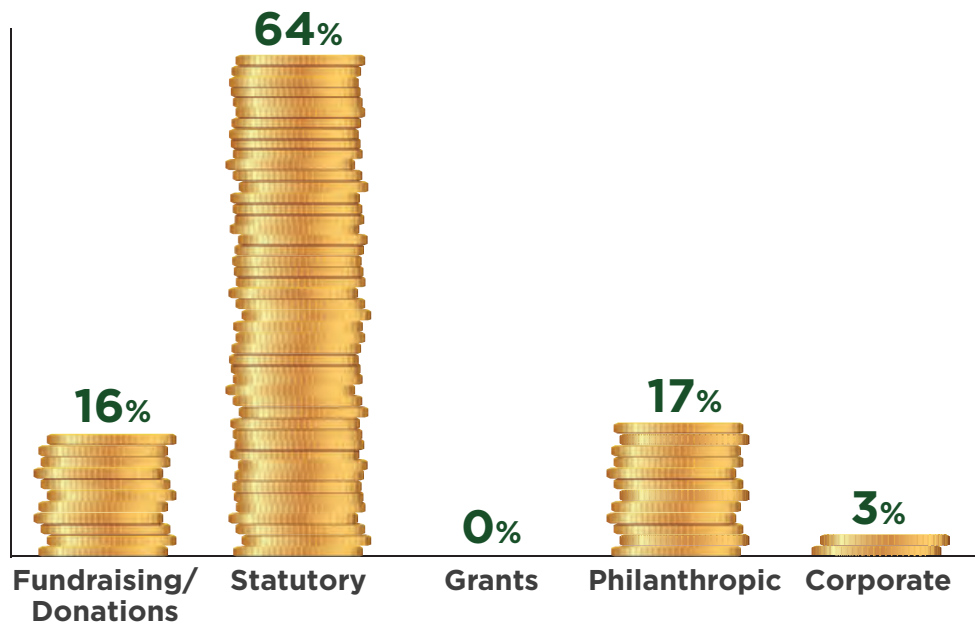
- Winter 2020 was very busy with staff responding to Socially Monitored Alarm requests, to members who had suffered falls, had other health issues or needed support after hospitalisation.
- In December staff sent a Christmas card to each member and each service provider.
- A number of long-time members died in 2020 and a Mass was offered for all deceased members during the year.
- As we move into 2021, it is envisaged that many members will need continued practical and psychological support and encouragement to return to their post-Covid lives.

2020 Third Age in Numbers

PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE 2020



SOURCES OF INCOME 2020



Full details of the Audited Accounts and Financial Statements for both Third Age Foundation clg and Senior Citizens Helpline Company clg can be obtained from the Companies Registration Office.

BOARD

third age

Responding to the Opportunities
and Challenges of Ageing in Ireland

Chairman	Jack Nolan
Company Secretary	Tom Collins
Members	Harry Casey, Tom Collins, Pat Cox, Tom Dowling, Amanda Phelan (<i>Patricia Rickard Clarke resigned in July</i>)

seniorline

National Confidential Listening Service for Older People

Chairman	Jack Nolan
Company Secretary	Tom Collins
Members	Harry Casey, Pat Cox, Tom Dowling, Maura O’Keeffe, Amanda Phelan

STAFF

third age

Responding to the Opportunities
and Challenges of Ageing in Ireland

**Chief Executive Officer**

Áine Brady

Operations & Finance Manager	Alison Branigan
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Communications Manager	Anne Dempsey
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Programme Manager	Liam Carey
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National Development Officer	Claire Dalton
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Programme Manager	Damian Leneghan
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National Office Administrator	Ann O’Brien
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Dublin Office Administrator	Beryl Carroll
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Programme Manager	Avril Hevey
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Care Co-ordinators	Paul O’Rourke, Annmarie Slevin
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fáilte isteach

Welcoming Migrants through Conversational
English Classes

seniorline

National Confidential Listening Service for Older People

agewell

Live Well, Age Well

**navigate your
work future**
Supporting Ireland's Mature Workforce

DIGITAL SKILLS

third age
Local | Summerhill Services Centre

Project Team Liam Carey, Anne Dempsey

Digital Skills Administrator & Tutor Yvonne Keane

Digital Skills Tutor Louise Coughlan

Administrators Rosemary Doyle, Maeve Carton

Administrative Assistant Mairead Gillick

Drivers Joe Gould, Pat Regan

Housekeeper Alan Morris

Carers Rena Murray and Joan Pratt





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Responding to the Opportunities and Challenges of Ageing in Ireland

A YEAR IN PEOPLE





Full details of the Audited Accounts and Financial Statements for both Third Age Foundation clg and Senior Citizens Helpline Company clg can be obtained from the Companies Registration Office.

Third Age Foundation clg is a registered charity 16647
Charity number 20060459
Company number 414509

Senior Citizens Helpline clg is a registered charity 16756
Charity number 20061104
Company number 414508

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Responding to the Opportunities
and Challenges of Ageing in Ireland

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