

# third age

Responding to the Opportunities  
and Challenges of Ageing in Ireland

## Annual Report 2021

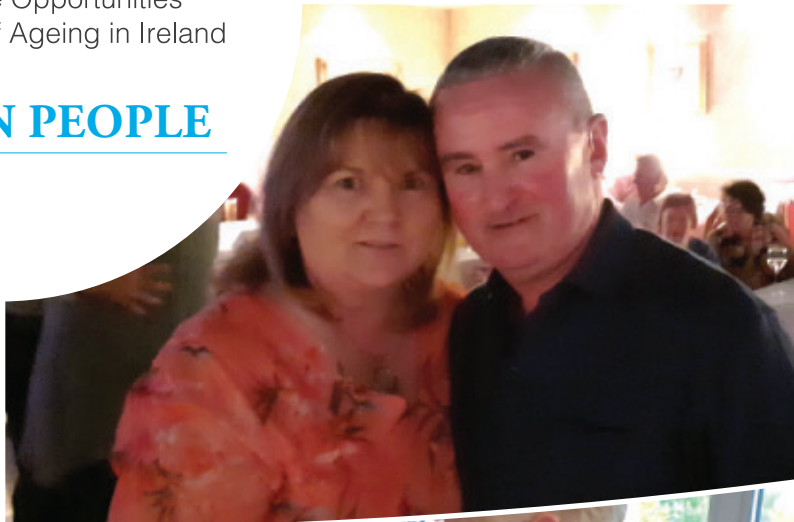




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Responding to the Opportunities  
and Challenges of Ageing in Ireland

A YEAR IN PEOPLE



## CONTENTS

<b>Chairman's Report</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>CEO's Report</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Third Age</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Programmes</b>	<b>7</b>
• SeniorLine	7
• Fáilte Isteach	11
• AgeWell	15
• Navigate Your Work Future	20
• Third Age Summerhill Services	22
<b>2021 - Third Age in Numbers</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Board &amp; Staff</b>	<b>26</b>

### 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

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Third Age is a national voluntary organisation with over 1,400 trained volunteers, working with and on behalf of older people throughout Ireland. For over 33 years, Third Age has developed effective responses to the needs of this group, whose numbers are increasing, a factor which highlights the ongoing requirement for our services and our vision.

In recent years, Third Age has faced great challenges in continuing to deliver vital services under difficult circumstances. I must begin by paying tribute to the Board, staff and volunteers of the organisation who respond so effectively to increasing demands on a continuing basis. I must also acknowledge the work of the Board and finance committee for drawing up an overall risk assessment plan and future strategy, and their unstinting support throughout the year.

As an organisation we are committed to alleviating the social isolation that affects older people primarily, and that also reaches into every generation. In 2021, many people continued to experience the deep distress caused by isolation, fear, and despair, compounded by the continuing impact of the coronavirus pandemic in Ireland. Third Age continued to maintain service delivery through its support programmes to ensure the wellbeing and safety of clients and staff.

Programmes are mainly delivered remotely, and their success is testament to the excellent communication and mutual support that permeates throughout the organisation.

Finance remains an ever-present concern and a factor in all the organisations' activities, and we are particularly grateful for the continued support and understanding of existing funders: Community Foundation for Ireland; Healthy Ireland Fund; HSE; Meath County Council; National Lottery; Pobal; Sláintecare; SOLAS; The Stability Fund and Tuath Housing Association. We thank the new funders and sponsors who came to our aid during 2021, including RTE does Comic Relief and Ecclesiastical Charity Trust.

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 our Community Employment Learner who works with Third Age as housekeeper/cleaner.

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

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As an organisation committed to promoting the value of social engagement for older people, 2021 - in imposing regular periods of isolation - was always going to be a challenge. During the year, the development of vaccines helped Ireland open up again, though life did not return to normal for all. Some older people were advised to remain largely at home for their continued safety, and others were fearful of venturing out.

The Third Age management team met frequently online, with senior staff assuming responsibility for ongoing adaptation of their programmes as necessary.

SeniorLine volunteers continued to work remotely, and new protocols were established regarding volunteer support, administration, technology and training.

AgeWell Companions kept in touch with clients by phone during lockdowns and reintroduced home visits when permissible. Companions received increased support in managing these transitions.

Fáilte Isteach tutors moved online in delivering English conversation classes to migrants and asylum seekers with new initiatives in place to support them.

Our Navigate Your Work Future programme continued to offer online seminars to job-seekers during the first half of the year.

Staff in Summerhill kept in constant contact with our members, with services opening up in our centre when periods of lockdown eased.

During 2021 our strengths have proved to be our adapted structures, teamwork, and our commitment to vulnerable people throughout Ireland who needed us more than ever.

Public discourse acknowledged the difficulties experienced by many older people during the year. Despite good intent on the part of State, many felt patronised and dismissed in the way Covid management was communicated and implemented. This realisation offers the opportunity for positive change.

Third Age is a member of The Alliance of Age Sector NGOs representing the collective thinking of significant NGOs working in the age sector. In mid-year the Alliance researched and published a major report 'Telling it Like it Is,' a description and reflection on the experience of older people during the first years of the pandemic. The Alliance concluded that some of the strategies used to deal with Covid seriously disrupted the social determinants of older people's health and wellbeing by isolating so many from the relationships, activities, services and supports that keep them going and make life worth living.

The question now is how best to involve older people in future policies that affect them. As a society we need to listen to an older population and discuss policy changes this sector would like to see in the way they are viewed and addressed.

We need to see over 65s as a positive force both individually and collectively, and develop new relationships with organisations already working positively in this space. Third Age is contributing to the conversation.



**ÁINE BRADY**

CEO

# third age

Responding to the Opportunities  
and Challenges of Ageing in Ireland

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

HIQA Advisory Groups

NGO Forum Age Friendly Ireland

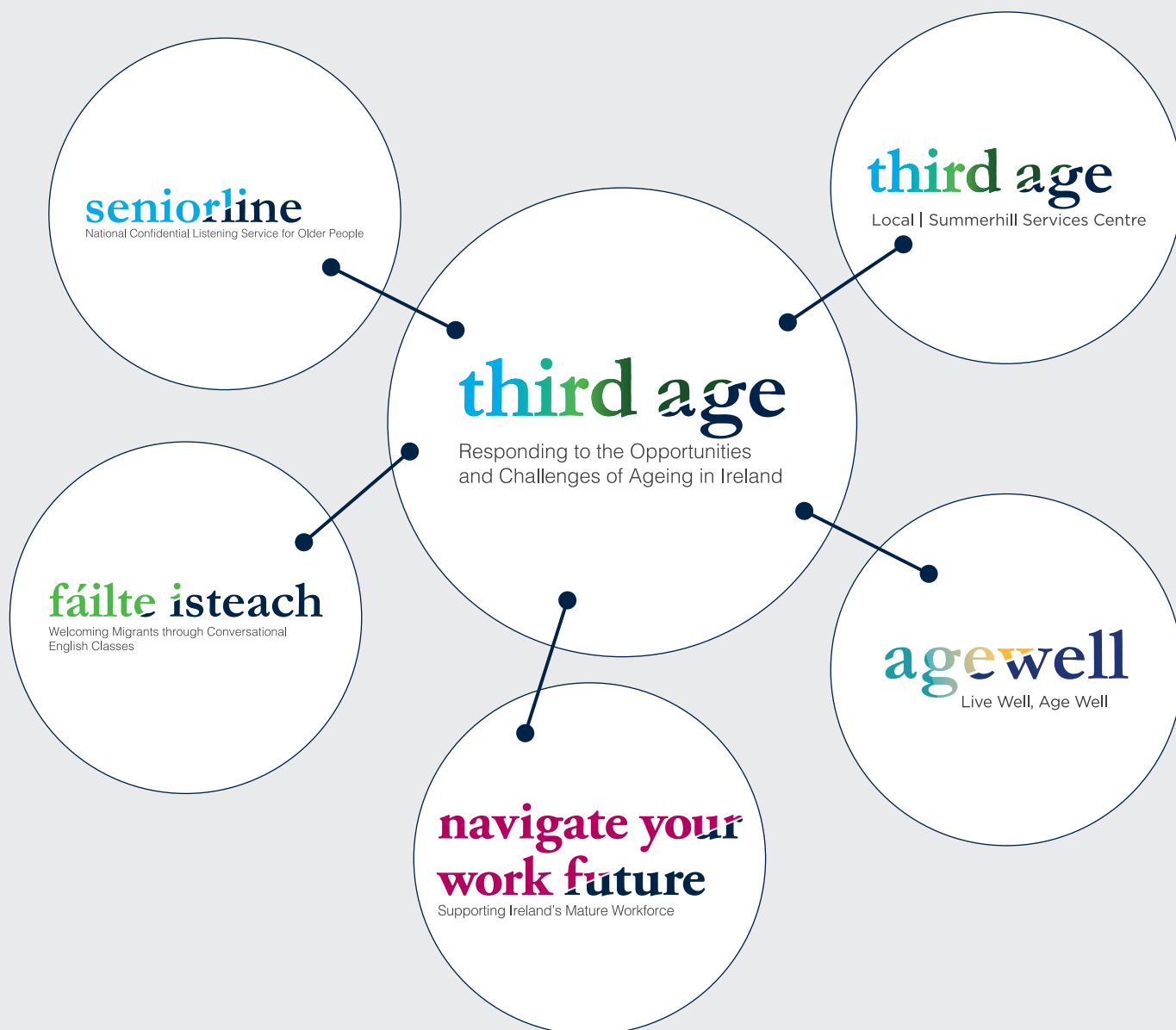
Telephone Helplines Ireland





## 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 has been provided by 180 trained older volunteers. People who contact 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

- A daily support for older people in the second year of Covid 19
- Providing stability, information and reassurance during the ebbs and flows of lockdown
- Offering practical discussion and encouragement on all aspects of vaccination
- Guiding a return to safer and more engaged living as this becomes possible
- Acting as a conduit for information from Government, community and civic society
- Mentoring and motivating callers who are living particularly solitary lives
- 2021 call volumes and issues continue to reflect the relevance of a free, skilled, accessible telephone service for older people

## CALLS & CALLERS

- 22,431 people contacted **SeniorLine** in 2021
- These included 15,054 regular callers and 7,477 first time callers
- Some callers had resumed their normal lives and no longer needed our reassurance and company as the year progressed
- Other callers still confined to home depended on us for loneliness alleviation
- The gender ratio was three female callers to every one male caller
- **SeniorLine** provided 8,760 listening hours in 2021
- January was the busiest month, followed by June and March; there were fewest calls in November
- Many January callers were separated from family over Christmas season
- Slightly more calls received from rural Ireland than from urban centres
- Callers suffering in continuing grip of the pandemic wondered when/if life would return to normal
- Loneliness due to loss of family, friends and former active lives constituted a major reason for calling
- Callers unable to see family members in hospital/nursing home phoned with feelings of loss, worry, frustration and helplessness
- Emotional and mental health difficulties surfaced as the year progressed
- Family conflict figured prominently with many calls becoming more difficult and complex
- All callers were listened to with compassion and respect



SeniorLine volunteer at work.

## COVID ADAPTATION

### OPERATIONAL

- Remote/Working from Home continued with no break in 12 hour daily service
- Hybrid rota arrangements in place giving volunteers the choice to work weekly, regularly or occasionally
- Call volumes reported and collated each day
- Important emerging caller issues shared within the network
- Ongoing in-person help provided to volunteers dealing with technical issues arising from remote working including provision of dedicated phones
- Updated range of supports offered to callers including expanded Directory of Services referring callers to other helpful organisations

### VOLUNTEERS

- Participated in fortnightly social Zoom call 'Coffee & Conversation' helping to keep in touch with staff and each other
- These Zooms shared helpful ideas, online resources, recipes, tips on health and wellbeing
- Participated in fortnightly Support Workshop to discuss caller problems/queries and to arrive at agreed responses
- Participated in monthly Continuous Professional Development Zooms with presentations from a range of professionals chosen to enhance and develop volunteer role
- Received regular newsletter with news, comment, information and guidance
- Received regular bulk texts providing instant information throughout network as necessary

### STAFF

- Attended weekly Zoom team meeting to provide mutual support, discuss all operational matters, and process any volunteer/caller issues needing decision

## SOME CALLER STORIES DURING 2021 *(names have been changed)*

Sylvia had a good social life before the pandemic, and found it difficult to be confined to home. She began phoning initially feeling very low, but soon found herself telling volunteers about her life and becoming cheered up in the process. **What Sylvia says about us:**

*'We often end up laughing which was just what I need'.*

SYLVIA, 66

Peter wanted advice on how to handle a difficult situation with a nursing home where his mother was a resident. **SeniorLine** listened and referred him to Sage Advocacy. **What Peter says about us:**

*'They listened carefully and directed me to exactly the organisation that was able to help me'.*

PETER, 57

Martha, described herself as 'emotionally depleted'. A widow, she was minding grandchildren, but felt somewhat unappreciated. **SeniorLine** helped her to set up some useful boundaries. **What Martha said about us:**

*'I needed to talk to someone outside the family. They gave me the space to gain this perspective and I've made some changes'.*

MARTHA, 72

James had an unhappy marriage. He is now widowed and finds himself dwelling obsessively in the past. **SeniorLine** listened and let James work through his very mixed feelings. **What James said about us:**

*'I realised I had been very stuck. I am now going to a bereavement counsellor thanks to my initial discussions with SeniorLine'.*

JAMES, 68



## SENIORLINE IN ACTION

Volunteer Conor McNulty read an article about **SeniorLine** and thought about contacting an organisation that was national in character: *'After retiring, I wanted to give something back to the communities around Ireland'* he said.

He has had a varied working life. Initially joining an auctioneering firm and studying auctioneering, he realised he wanted something with better earning potential. Conor found his niche in sales, graduating onto training and management roles in a variety of companies. All along the way he was honing the listening skills that were to prove useful in life and later on **SeniorLine**: *'I volunteered my services to the training department. I learnt a lot from listening to the new sales recruits'*, he said.

In 2005-2011 he was Client Liaison Manager with one of Ireland's leading human rights law firms representing migrants fleeing their war-torn countries seeking refuge in Ireland. *'They were coming from Somalia and the Sudan and I have never seen people more frightened in my life. It was heart-breaking. They were beautiful people, elegant, so full of dignity. My role was to befriend and support and act as an advocate at meetings or if they needed to go to court'*, he said.

Conor volunteers for **SeniorLine** one afternoon a week, and will often help out if extra cover is needed. What has he learnt from life on the line? *'I have learnt a lot about myself by listening to callers who just want to feel they are not alone. I enjoy when we are thanked for being there. Sometimes it's hard when you can't help callers who have serious issues with their family. I realise I had made a lot of assumptions about various groups of people that I really know nothing about. SeniorLine has helped me overcome my prejudices.'*

*'I also recall from what we learnt in training that callers may have a different frame of reference, which affects how they view themselves and others. I always try to put myself in their shoes and listen carefully to what they are saying and how they see their situation'*.

*'We have a model of listening which is to connect with, spend time listening to, and understanding the caller and then seek to empower them. This approach, particularly desiring to understand will always help me listen from the caller's perspective'*, he said.

**SeniorLine** does not give advice to callers or tell them what to do, but Conor feels one of the values is to offer a gateway to callers finding their own solutions by - among other things - providing referrals and contact details to other relevant organisations. *'I always have this information at the ready for the caller's benefit'*, he said.

If he were Minister for Older People what law would he pass to improve the lives of older people? *'I would fund charities such as SeniorLine to continue to provide services and protect the values we hold for our older and vulnerable callers who have a voice and a vote'*, he said.

Conor says he feels good when a caller thanks him at the end of a call. *'It is great when a caller tells me that I have been understanding and that through talking to me, they now feel clearer on future action. I also try to be cheerful and encouraging. For example, I might say 'tomorrow is another day things may get better for you, try and have a good night's sleep, and you are more than welcome to ring us again soon''* he said.

Conor has a wide range of hobbies and interests. *'I walk, I swim, I am Santa Claus every Christmas for a charity, I garden, I absolutely love my garden, and my partner Gilly always laughs at me when she says I go on about my pansies!'*, he said.



**CONOR McNULTY**

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, and 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.

During 2021, as Ireland's migrant and asylum-seeking population grew, so too did the demand for **Fáilte Isteach** services. The ability to speak English is recognised as a vital skill for integration and advancement.



*Fáilte Isteach English class in session.*



## IMPACT & VALUE

- **Fáilte Isteach** provides an opportunity for Irish people to reach out and welcome migrants into their communities.
- The programme offers new skills to many Irish adults.
- It deepens our understanding of other cultures.
- It increases our understanding of the suffering and difficulties experienced by many in migration.
- **Fáilte Isteach** works to provide migrants with the tools and confidence they need to reach their potential in Ireland.
- These include resources to assist migrants towards active citizenship, in form filling, and CV creation.
- Class discussion supports migrants to learn about their entitlements and employment rights, plus Irish political and cultural life.

## GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

- There are now 134 **Fáilte Isteach** groups in every county in Ireland.
- **Fáilte Isteach** supports 3,800 students each week.
- A national census of classes and students began during the year.
- **Fáilte Isteach** has responded to specific support requests from tutors to provide diversity training for our volunteers.
- This included cultural awareness training with the Irish Centre for Diversity, and trauma training with Spirasi (national centre for the rehabilitation of torture victims).
- **Fáilte Isteach** remains committed to gathering relevant data to inform future project development, and help uncover the needs of migrants in gaining access to language learning.
- 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.



*Fáilte Isteach and Integration English class students receive their certificates.*

## COVID ADAPTATION

- During the year, 75% of classes moved online, with face-to-face tuition continuing for individuals and groups where it was safe to do so.
- Many groups have taken a blended approach combining online and in-person tuition.

## COLLABORATION

- **Fáilte Isteach** continues to build relationships with multiple agencies.
- These include Welcome Integration and Support Hub for Refugees (WISH), New Communities Partnership, Migrant Women Opportunities for Work, Irish Refugee Council, Anew women's service, and HSE local branches.
- **Fáilte Isteach** has been invited by Trinity College Dublin and DCU to be part of a research project on technology-enhanced language support for adult migrants post-pandemic.
- This research will begin in January 2022 and develop of new digital resources and materials benefiting tutors and learners.
- **Fáilte Isteach** continues to work with multiple partners in the community education field to ensure that those most in need have access to free tuition.

## SUPPORTING ASYLUM SEEKERS

- In 2021 **Fáilte Isteach** implemented a pilot programme to train volunteers from Spirasi as tutors.
- This covered trauma training and cultural awareness training with the Irish Centre for Diversity.

## NEW RESOURCES

- A range of new tutor resources were launched online during the year.
- These include an introduction for migrants to the Irish political and healthcare system, 72 learning sessions at beginner, elementary and intermediary levels, some hundreds of text books at different skills levels, distributed these to in-person and online groups.







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. The programme recruits and trains **AgeWell** Companions who offer 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 to continually assess client health issues, and appropriately refer to Primary Care Teams (PCTs) and other community services as necessary. Social and environmental problems can 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 at home and in their community, increase access to early intervention as needed and reduce the burden on acute emergency and long-term care.





## IMPACT & VALUE

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- **AgeWell** Companions have cared for 343 older people since programme inception four years ago.
- In 2021 there are 19 trained Companions working in Co. Meath.
- During the year, Companions carried out 2,474 in-home visits.
- Companions provided other supports during periods of lockdown.
- These included weekly phone calls, shopping for groceries, medicines and other supplies, and organising household repairs (plumbing heating, appliance servicing) and more.
- Companions gave clients accurate and updated information on staying safe, public health guidelines and the HSE vaccination and booster programmes.
- Some clients needed encouragement to participate in immunisation programmes.
- However, Companions invariably noted some client degeneration when in-person contact was curtailed due to pandemic.
- Some clients were less mobile and/or had lost some mental acuity.
- Companions worked with such clients to regain lost ground.
- **AgeWell** became a constant social glue, offering practical and emotional contact to clients in changing times.
- The mean client age remains at 82 years; 72% of clients are female.

## REGULAR MONITORING

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- Each Companion observes client at each visit and refers to other services as appropriate.
- At every second visit, each Companion uses the Health App to formally assess each client and note results.
- The client is assessed regarding physical and emotional health, physical activity, self-care and social engagement.

## ASSESSMENT

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- A significant aspect of **AgeWell** is the series of regular independent assessments that measure the effectiveness of the programme.
- These assessments use internationally recognised validated scales.
- Upon joining the programme, each client receives a baseline assessment which examines wellbeing, emotional/informational support, self-rated health, loneliness, and physical activity.
- Midline assessments are held every four months using same scales and methods.
- Assessments invariably show an increase in wellbeing, physical activity and emotional and informational support.
- There is a significant and consistent reduction in loneliness levels.
- 25% reduction in client loneliness four months after joining **AgeWell** had increased to a 48% loneliness reduction over two years later.

## REFERRALS

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- Client health monitoring led to referrals to other services including Meals on Wheels, community and transport services, home support and housing repair adaptation grants.
- Many referrals were made to the relevant Public Health Nurse to facilitate access to a wide range of local services.

- Companions - through visits and Health App information - became a link for Primary Care Teams providing an intermediary support for Public Health Nurses.
- A number of non-medical referrals were also handled by the AgeWell team providing extra social contact/information to clients.

## COLLABORATION

- In February, Third Age/**AgeWell** provided training and support to Cope Galway to develop a pilot training project.
- **AgeWell** was invited by TILDA to contribute to research on the major patterns of multi-morbidity (two or more chronic conditions) in older people, to examine socio-economic factors and to look at prevention and intervention.
- This will form part of **AgeWell**'s quarterly client assessment, with results contributing to TILDA's academic research.

## COMPANIONS

- **AgeWell** Companions were recognised as frontline care workers, and received their vaccines accordingly.
- During Covid periods when social distancing was mandated, the **AgeWell** team supported Companions through weekly phone calls and regular Zoom meetings.
- Regular in-person support meetings with Companions resumed during the year when safe to do so. These meetings also offered refresher training and extra support if requested.
- Companions received presentations from Aware on suicide prevention and support; on dementia training and on self-care.
- Care Co-ordinators received mentoring on how to manage the emotional support needs of some Companions.

## EAST MEATH PILOT PROGRAMME

A 2020/2021 Sláintecare-funded project in East Meath involved 74 older people and 12 **AgeWell** Companions. Three-quarters of the clients were over 80, with a mean age of 84.

Within the project, the Companions received extra sessions of CPD. The client group had reduced face to face visits, but enjoyed other supports such as increased phone calls, more information, supplies, medication and repair/maintenance services. All other aspects of the programme were the same.

These clients appeared to do better than their pre-Covid 19 counterparts because their experiences and expectations were different. Enrolled during Covid, they did not experience major changes in the services provided, compared to clients enrolled pre-Covid who experienced service disruption during lockdowns and restrictions, and knew what they were missing.

The results were measured using the UCLA Loneliness scale. (This 20 item scale is designed to measure subjective feelings of loneliness as well as feelings of social isolation). The findings demonstrated a greater reduction in loneliness compared to mainstream **AgeWell**, a similar improvement in wellbeing, in informational and emotional supports, and a greater improvement in self-reported physical activity. The project demonstrates that increased intervention achieves increased positive results. The project is now being mainstreamed.

## AGEWELL IN ACTION

Paul Kinsella, Kells, Co, Meath has been an **AgeWell** client for over two years. A diagnosis of glaucoma, (damage to the optic nerve), led rapidly to blindness. He lost the sight in his left eye and can see shadows only from his right. 'It happened so quickly, there was no build up, and while it was like a bereavement, you learn to adapt. It is a case of just adapting to a new way of living, to realise there are certain things you cannot do, and learning to cope with it and get on with life', he said.

Paul is 67. Born in Ireland, his mother was English and he has spent much time in both countries. A retired teacher, he has taught in schools in Ireland and the UK, and retains strong family links in the north of England. In recent years Paul moved from teaching English and Geography at a second level school in Dublin, to working in a special school in Navan. *'In Dublin, I was working in the same corridor, same subjects, different ages, I needed a change. I took a Diploma in Special Education to qualify to teach in Navan, and I enjoyed that teaching experience. I am in touch still with many of my pupils, actually one of my past pupils phoned yesterday'*. He believes that special education facilities have improved over the years. *'We needed them to come on a bit'*, he says.

Paul's **AgeWell** Companion is Dermot Clarke, and they sound like a good mutual fit. *'Dermot visits me for at least an hour every week and phones several times a week. We are both very interested in music, he brings me CD's and we have great conversations. Dermot is very helpful. If I need to get to my doctor, he will drive me down, he is currently organising that I get any injections I need'*, he said.



Paul Kinsella is an AgeWell client for the past two years.



Paul manages well. He does his own cooking, is visited also by his Public Health Nurse and a private homecare company does his shopping. *'I am content enough, I can get around my own house, I can go for short walks round my own familiar neighbourhood. It is always good to have small things to break up the routine'* he says. There is company also in his three cats Mutt, Jeff and Belinda.

There are some losses. *'I was a great reader. There are rows of books that I am no longer able to read which I miss'*. Radio is another great support and he listens constantly. *'Also Dermot. I suppose most of all he gives me companionship'*, Paul says.

Dermot Clarke, 61, of Cortown, Co. Meath has been Paul Kinsella's Companion for over two years. Dermot saw a notice about **AgeWell** in his parish bulletin and was immediately interested: *'I had recently retired, I saw it as an opportunity to do something, to make a wee small difference to someone's life. I thought it could be a lovely thing to do'*, he said.

Dermot enjoyed the Companion training provided by Third Age. He was the only male among female trainees, but was quite happy in this company: *'I am the only boy with seven sisters. I have the shield and the cross, so being with a group of women was no bother to me'*.

Paul is one of a number of **AgeWell** clients visited weekly by Dermot, who has a very relaxed attitude to the role. *'I'm a naturally sociable person. I don't sit down and wonder what I will do. With Paul, I introduced myself and we took it from there. I wanted to see what interests he had, and with him it was very easy. We are both interested in music, books, current affairs, and Paul had also been interested in walking and hiking, as I am. So it was very natural, and after a few weeks, you would feel you had known him all your life.'*

*'Paul has no family in Ireland and does not have many visitors, so I think having someone calling, spending time with him and talking about the subjects that interest him is very important. The radio is his lifeline and we will often discuss music he has heard. He can get by very well. A few weeks ago, I handed him a 600 page book by Paul McCartney thinking he might enjoy the illustrations. But he is half-way through it with the aid of a magnifying glass.'*

*'We are a very good fit for each other. I enjoy seeing him, though his lack of sight could make him vulnerable to unscrupulous callers, for example. The people next door do look out for him but, generally speaking, he has very few callers. He does not answer the door to strangers. I am always careful to ring before I call so that he expects me. There is a lot of bad news on RTE these days and is has alerted people, particularly those living alone, to be careful'*.

**AgeWell's** 20 Question App is a good tool for keeping track on any change in client's physical or mental health. Dermot says that most of his clients invariably answer questions positively with no change from week to week, but says the App would show up any deviation from this.

Dermot is a widower with four adult children. He believes **AgeWell** is a good befriending model: *'I think we used to take visiting each other as neighbours for granted. But since Covid, when people could not visit each other, we really saw how positive company is for all ages. Young people lost out during Covid, and some older people are still living with social isolation. This programme is very good'* he concludes.

**DERMOT CLARKE**

AGEWELL VOLUNTEER

## navigate your work future

Supporting Ireland's Mature Workforce

Established in 2019, **Navigate Your Work Future**, (NYWF) addressed the challenges experienced by many older people in upskilling for career development or returning to the workforce after a break. The programme represented a partnership between Third Age and Accenture, the global professional services company, with the Department of Social Protection helping to promote it nationally.

Many people in their mid-forties and older can find it difficult to find work, and may need upskilling to fit them for a modern technical workforce. On the other hand, many older workers have competencies and attributes such as leadership, maturity, reliability and experience which are needed today. **Navigate Your Work Future** aims to support the older workers who may need to reskill, and those considering a career change.





NYWF offered a number of one day workshop sessions to older workers. These covered practical issues such as CV preparation, interview techniques, the future of work and the current job market. The in-person sessions ran January-March 2020, and subsequently went online post-Covid with a series of online presentations and seminars.

These continued in 2021. From February to May 2021, online seminars were attended by a total of 502 participants. They covered topics such as Skills to Succeed; Creative Job Seeking; on flexible work arrangements and building self-confidence. Participants were also provided with resource packs, plus links to helpful articles, book lists and web sites.

A number of job-seekers contacted after the completion of the programme and reported it had been largely instrumental in helping them find permanent work.

## WHAT OUR PARTICIPANTS SAID

*'I am contacting you to let you know that I have been successful in getting a new job! I have accepted the position of Director with a Community Development company. I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for organising and hosting this programme. They have really been a lifeline for people like me who found themselves out of work during this pandemic. The sessions helped me to stay focused and calm.'*

GILLIAN

*'I hope you are well. Just to let you know that I was offered a job and am starting next month. Thank you for the programme, all the sessions were helpful, especially the guidance on assessing our skills in relation to a particular job market.'*

ANTHONY

*'Thank you for details for the upcoming session. I found the last sessions really useful and have now secured not one but two jobs. So life is busy. The Navigate Your Work Future programme gave me the kick-start I needed to put myself out there again with more focus and clarity.'*

FRANK





  
third age

Local | Summerhill Services Centre

## THIRD AGE SUMMERHILL SERVICES

For 33 years, Third Age in **Summerhill** has been providing friendship, activities and services to older people within a 30 mile radius. The Third Age Centre offers a space and place for local people to engage, to learn, and to maximise their physical, emotional and social health.

Covid restrictions meant that the menu of activities was limited in 2021. The overarching emphasis, however, was to support the continued engagement of members, particularly those living on their own. To this end, **Summerhill** staff phoned members daily or every few days, opportunities to meet were taken when it was safe during the year, and every effort was made to help members interact positively with each other and with the centre.



## A-Z ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES 2021



**Audiologist**



**Holidays**



**Patchwork**



**Chaerobics**



**Knitting Group**



**Reflexology**



**Chiropody**



**Library**



**Resource Centre**



**Counselling**



**Line Dancing**



**Drop-in Centre**



**Men's Shed**

- In February, **Summerhill** staff liaised with local GP Dr. Joe Clarke to establish a vaccination clinic, with our centre used as a recovery space after procedure.
- In March, staff organised with local supermarket to supply Easter eggs, and with a local school to create Easter cards. Cards and confectionery were distributed to members at home by Third Age staff.
- In late May, the Knitting Group began meeting outdoors weekly.
- In June, the Third Age sale of work displayed completed work including child blankets, matinee coats and hats.
- Some services/activities opened in the centre including audiology, aerobics, chiropody, counselling and line dancing. Any appointments were carefully scheduled and followed safety guidelines.
- In July deceased members were remembered at our annual Mass.
- In October, the flu vaccine was administered to Third Age members.
- 52 Third Age members enjoyed a short autumn break in Westport, Co. Mayo.



Summerhill knitting group.

## HOME SUPPORT

- Some members still felt unable to leave their homes due to age or underlying health conditions.
- **Summerhill** staff continued to support these members with daily/regular phone calls.
- Members also phoned the centre maintaining the connection while apart.
- Many believe that Covid has deepened the links between staff and members in **Summerhill**.
- Third Age was asked by other organisations to contact other older people in the community.
- For many years, Third Age has provided online training to older people through a Digital Hub in **Summerhill** and Digital Skills training offered to older people in Leinster.
- In the pandemic, this programme was repurposed to offer phone support and training to online students, and also providing online training to new people anxious to access online services.
- Services included ordering shopping and taxing one's car online.
- Weekly Chaerobics were streamed by Third Age tutor, and shared links to religious services and concerts.

## SUMMERHILL IN ACTION

In August 2021 Third Age was a runner-up in National Heritage Week Award 2021, chosen from over 1,500 projects throughout Ireland. The Week, an initiative by the Heritage Council, brings together communities, families, organisations, cultural institutions, academics and enthusiasts, to build awareness about the value of heritage, and to support its conservation.

The Third Age entry *'The Way We Were'* is an intergenerational living history project involving local members explaining the use and significance of a collection of artefacts from earlier times. The items were gathered, mined and collected over the past number of years, foraged from attics and tracked down in barns and garages. The collection has been added to year on year and includes equipment from home and working life.

Seven Third Age members Mary Hayes, Tom Holmes, Annette Cribbin Knarr, Anne McGarry, Patricia Maher, Mary Mulvey and Noeleen Pearle spoke on the video of the everyday objects in their younger lives. Anne McGarry was born in Leixlip beside the then main Dublin to Galway Road and recalled playing hopscotch on the road because there was so little traffic.

When Mary Hayes was 13, she successfully bid for a sewing machine at auction. It fostered her love of patchwork and she displays some of her intricate work. *'Patchwork is 5,000 years old and found in tombs of Egypt and China. Originally it was a way of using precious fabric that had become worn'*, she said, later becoming an art form for wall hangings and quilts. Tom Holmes exhibited the arts in a different form, talking about his extensive vintage collection of films and musicals.

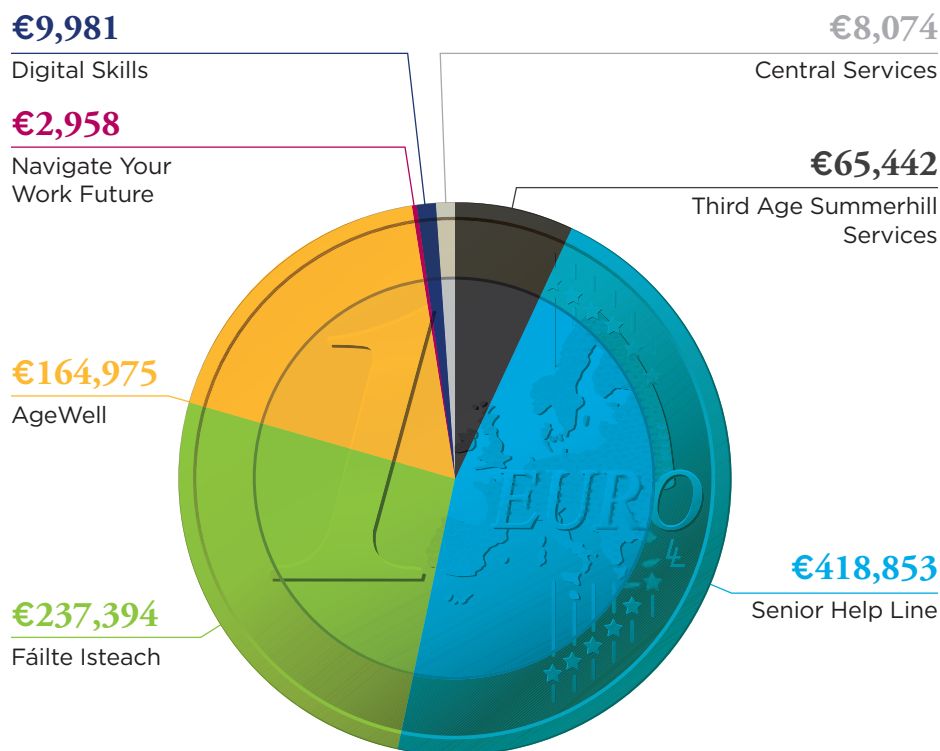
Annette Knarr went to America as an au pair aged 19 and stayed 51 years. She looked after six children in the Kelly family, and knit Aran sweaters for them all: *'The Americans couldn't get enough of the Aran. Each sweater has its own family design. Tragically, if there was a drowning in an Irish fishing community, people could be identified by their sweater pattern'*. Noeleen Pearle grew up in Dublin but was asked by an aunt in Summerhill to go down and look after her. *'I never left'* said Noeleen she contributed a large lidded skillet pot with handle to the exhibition it would be placed upon the open fire with meat, potatoes and vegetable simmering inside.

*'The Way We Were'* is a Third Age production, organised by Rosemary Doyle and Maeve Carton, filmed by Alan Morris, edited by Claire Dalton.

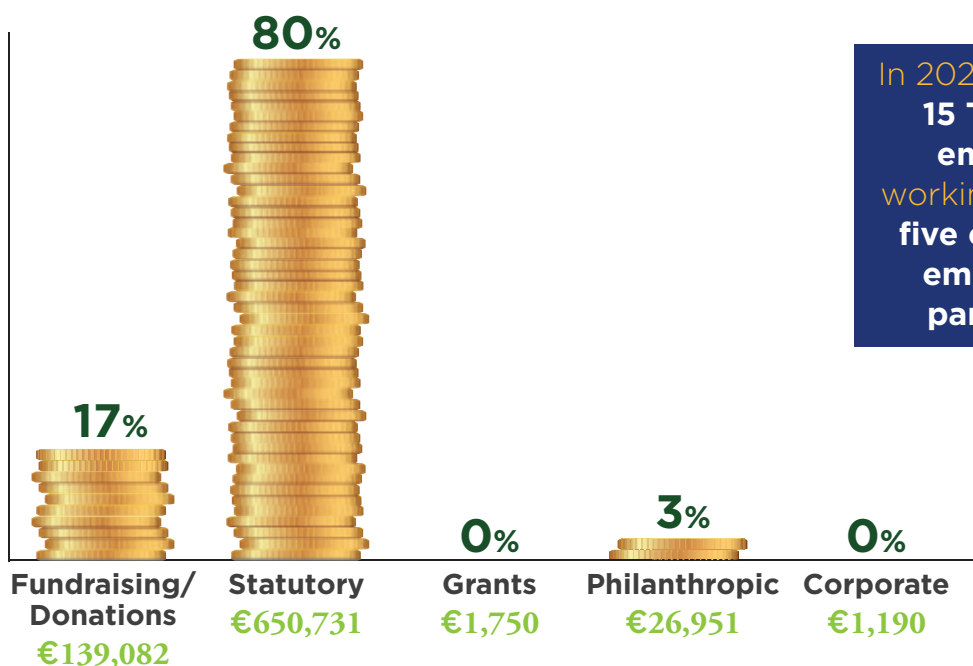


# 2021 Third Age in Numbers

## PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE 2021



## SOURCES OF INCOME 2021



In 2021, there were  
**15 Third Age employees**  
working alongside  
**five community employment participants**

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

<b>Chairman</b>	Jack Nolan
<b>Company Secretary</b>	Tom Collins
<b>Members</b>	Harry Casey, Tom Collins, Pat Cox, Tom Dowling, Amanda Phelan

seniorline

National Confidential Listening Service for Older People

<b>Chairman</b>	Jack Nolan
<b>Company Secretary</b>	Tom Collins
<b>Members</b>	Harry Casey, Pat Cox, Tom Dowling, Maura O'Keeffe, Amanda Phelan

## STAFF

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and Challenges of Ageing in Ireland

Chief Executive Officer

Áine Brady

<b>Operations &amp; Finance Manager</b>	Alison Branigan
<b>Communications Manager</b>	Anne Dempsey

fáilte isteach

Welcoming Migrants through Conversational  
English Classes

<b>Programme Manager</b>	Liam Carey ( <i>resigned in 2021</i> )
<b>National Development Officer</b>	Claire Dalton

seniorline

National Confidential Listening Service for Older People

<b>Programme Manager</b>	Damian Leneghan
<b>National Office Administrator</b>	Ann O'Brien
<b>Dublin Office Administrator</b>	Beryl Carroll

agewell

Live Well, Age Well

<b>Lead Care Co-ordinator</b>	Paul O'Rourke
<b>Care Co-ordinator</b>	Ann Marie Slevin

local & regional  
initiatives

<b>Administrator Third Age Services</b>	Rosemary Doyle
<b>National Office Administrative Assistant</b>	Maeve Carton
<b>Community Employment Participant</b>	Alan Morris





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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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