

# third age

Responding to the Opportunities  
and Challenges of Ageing in Ireland

## annual report 2018

seniorline | fáilte isteach | agewell | local & regional initiatives

## third age - 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  
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Third Age Foundation clg and Senior Citizens Helpline Company clg are two separate companies.  
This report covers the activities of both.

## chairman's report

Ireland is ageing. In 2016 there were approximately 624,000 people over the age of 65 living in the republic, representing 13.2% of the overall population. It is estimated that by 2046 this number will have grown to 1.4 million, or 22% of the population.

These statistics indicate that there is a greater need than ever for services that support older people to age with dignity and confidence and to live in their own homes for as long as possible. Studies have shown that people age better at home in their own environment and surroundings, provided they have access to appropriate care and support structures.

An ageing Ireland also means that the remit of Third Age - to keep as many people as possible in a productive third age in life - becomes particularly relevant.

Third Age is a national voluntary organisation founded in 1988. We are dedicated to social inclusion at every age, and to promoting the value and contribution of older people through our volunteer-led programmes and services. Our work in supporting older people at home and engaged in their own community continued this year with the consolidation of our AgeWell programme, the expansion of Fáilte Isteach, SeniorLine and our Digital Skills programme. The range of services provided by the Summerhill Service Office continued to develop.

Our A-Z of loyal funders in 2018 is as follows: Age Well Global, Community Foundation for Ireland, Conseil de l'Europe, Department of Communications, Department of Justice, (Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration), Dublin City Council, Generali, Healthy Ireland Fund, Specsavers, Health Service Executive, Louth County Council, Meath County Council, National Lottery, Pobal and Social Innovation Fund. We thank these bodies for their belief in Third Age and for their practical contribution towards the continuance and development of our programmes.

I would like to thank my fellow Board members for their guidance and expertise in a year of continued consolidation, reflection and planning. On your behalf, I express our gratitude to our CEO, Aine Brady, for managing a very busy year in the life of Third Age with thoughtfulness, enterprise and grace. I note that Aine is the first to pay tribute to her management team and local and national staff.

The needs of an ageing Ireland continue to grow. There is plenty of work for us to do, and we are not short of ideas and vision to meet current and future demographic concerns. I look forward to our work in 2019, and to continuing our ethos of social inclusion through a range of programmes that offer practical and caring responses to older people throughout Ireland.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Tom Dowling', written in a cursive style.

**TOM DOWLING**  
CHAIRMAN

## ceo's report

2018 was a busy and productive year for Third Age - and a year of anniversaries.

- Third Age celebrates its 30<sup>th</sup>, SeniorLine its 20<sup>th</sup> and Fáilte Isteach its 10<sup>th</sup> year anniversary since official launch
- Our new care co-ordination model for older people, AgeWell launches in Co. Meath
- First group of trained AgeWell Companions begin visiting older people at home and assessing their weekly health
- Fáilte Isteach extends to 25 counties in Ireland, with increase in student and tutor numbers
- Fáilte Isteach is co-operating in Co. Monaghan programme to upskill migrants and improve their employability
- Third Age continues to train older people in IT Skills as part of Department of Communications 'Getting Citizens Online' programme
- Digital skills students report on the value of the classes to their social health as well as to gains in computer literacy
- SeniorLine moves into new city centre offices offering scope for new initiatives
- SeniorLine volunteers provide 8,760 listening hours to callers from January to December
- A successful fundraising event is held in Fairyhouse in October
- Third Age Summerhill expands its local membership and initiates a number of new programmes
- The Sage Advocacy programme establishes itself as a separate legal entity from Third Age, and is granted charitable status. This process is completed in February 2018.

The year also contained its challenges. The current funding/fundraising environment remains difficult with many organisations competing for limited resources and funds. Our approach to sustainability involves diversifying our funding streams, exercising economies of scale and reducing costs, while continuing to respond to the needs of older people in dynamic ways.

2018 saw the introduction of new recommendations for general data protection, fundraising, and charity governance. Third Age has adopted internal control systems to ensure compliance with legislation and best practice. These controls aim to ensure efficient and effective use of company resources, and maintain integrity of financial information.

Third Age has signed up to the governance code and the fundraising guiding principles. We are currently working through the newly launched Charities Governance Code. Sustainability is extrinsically linked to best practice and compliance. We continue to review all our programmes in terms of service delivery, operating model, effectiveness of impact, quality of response and cost.

We could not achieve all we do without the generosity and dedication of our teams of volunteers. Your commitment and enthusiasm continues to make a positive difference to the lives of many people, and it is particularly rewarding for us to hear that you receive more than you give.

Nor would our work be possible without the support of our funders. Third Age remains fortunate in attracting support from those who know our mission and believe in our vision. I would like to thank all our funders national, regional and local, as well as individual donors and sponsors. Thank you for your belief in us and in what we do. Your continued support is greatly appreciated. Thank you also to the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection for the provision of Community Employment Learners who work with us as drivers, administrative assistants, carers and project workers. Without this support, we would not be in a position to provide some local services.

I would like to thank the Third Age and SeniorLine boards for the care, attention and commitment they bring to their voluntary role, and for the guidance they give me. Finally, a special word of thanks to the committed and loyal staff of Third Age. I am proud of the team we have created and look forward to many more years working together delivering innovative programmes for Ireland's growing older population.



**ÁINE BRADY**  
CEO

## third age

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Third Age is a national voluntary organisation representing all older people and responding positively to the opportunities and challenges of ageing in Ireland.

Co-ordinating a network of innovative projects and programmes, Third Age celebrates the third age in life when people may no longer be in paid employment, but can remain healthy, fulfilled and continue to contribute to society. The longer people are encouraged and supported to remain in this life stage, the better for older people themselves, their families, communities and society as a whole. Third Age works for, with and on behalf of older people, providing direct services which enhance their rights and well-being, and demonstrate models of excellence.

Third Age offers choices, and provides opportunities for lifelong learning, volunteering, community development and social inclusion.



# third age strategy 2017-2020



## vision

An Ireland and a world where the third age in life is valued and celebrated.



## mission

To value the contribution of older people in society and help meet their personal and community needs through innovative programmes.



## objectives

- Respond to the opportunities and challenges of ageing in Ireland.
- Support and facilitate older persons to live in the place of their choice for as long as possible.
- Act as advocates wherever ageing poses a challenge.
- Address societal needs through volunteering opportunities.



## programme goals

- Develop our capacity for the design, development, testing and expansion of good practice in areas relevant to the quality of life and well-being of older people as equal and autonomous individuals.
- Demonstrate programme models of excellence, connectedness, creativity and challenge.
- Provide direct services with and for older people, which enhance their rights and well-being.
- Continue to engage older people as volunteers in the development and delivery of services of value to themselves and their community.
- Advance the rights and potential of older people as citizens, and ensure these are reflected in public policy, and in public and private service provision.
- Achieve excellence in corporate governance to support and sustain the organisation and individual programmes.



**ÁINE BRADY**  
CEO, THIRD AGE



## third age programmes, services and responses to the needs of older people are designed and developed in line with the National Positive Ageing strategy and its objectives

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### **Remove barriers to participation and provide opportunities for involvement of people as they age.**

Third Age has 1,350 volunteers nationwide engaged as listeners, educators, care givers, and befrienders who make a positive difference to the lives of vulnerable older people every day. We facilitate the participation of service-users in activities that develop resilient and healthy communities, with positive outcomes for the volunteers in improved wellbeing, and positive self-esteem.



### **Develop and deliver high quality services and supports.**

Third Age develops and drives a range of national, regional and local programmes and services. Collectively these contribute to life-long learning, information provision, intergenerational linkages, breaking down barriers, promoting social inclusion, and community development.



### **Enable people to age with confidence, security and dignity in their own homes and communities for as long as possible.**

Third Age contributes to the current understanding of the value to 'age in place' i.e. providing the necessary supports for older people to remain in their own homes and communities. National programmes **SeniorLine** and **AgeWell** offer accessible practical help to people at home. **Fáilte Isteach** contributes to migrants' ability to become involved in their own community. **Digital Skills** helps to connect participants with family, friends, local and national services, while our **Summerhill Service Centre** contributes positively to the quality of life for local older people.



### **Support the research about people as they age to better inform policy responses to population ageing in Ireland.**

Third Age is in a unique position to hear at first hand the issues, concerns and needs of the wide range of older people we serve. Our programmes are designed to involve older volunteers in design and delivery. We collate and record a rich body of data and use this information to advocate to government and other fora. We are a credible voice for older people and represent their views whenever and wherever possible.

programmes

# seniorline

National Confidential Listening Service for Older People

when listening  
is helping

Established 21 years ago, **SeniorLine** is Ireland's only national confidential listening service for older people provided by trained older volunteers, and one of the few worldwide.

During 2018, **SeniorLine** relocated to a more central city location offering more scope for programme expansion, continued to train volunteers, set up a pilot project for volunteer support and supervision, and completed the final stages of application for the Invest In Volunteers award.

The SeniorLine Freephone number is **1800 80 45 91**, open every day of the year from 10.00am to 10.00pm.

## service impact

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Loneliness is a public health crisis in today's Ireland.

SeniorLine offers a free, accessible, daily antidote to loneliness for many older people who live alone or feel alone. SeniorLine receives core funding from the HSE which recognises the service as a primary health care provider, helping people to live more social, integrated lives at home for as long as possible. This is also government policy. SeniorLine is part of a vital community network in an ageing Ireland.

Loneliness describes our personal sense of being alone, feeling isolated, a sense that we may not be sufficiently wanted or needed. Social isolation includes an absence of social interactions, a lack of social support structures, and poor engagement with family or local community.

In many calls to SeniorLine, loneliness is expressed or implied. Many callers live alone with nobody with whom to share a problem or share their day.

If loneliness is a silent epidemic, human contact helps to defeat it. SeniorLine alleviates the loneliness of many callers by offering company, conversation, and, above all, a listening ear. SeniorLine is an affordable, ready-made source of help, encouragement and support for such people every day of the year.

## growth and development

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- Recruited, trained and mentored 23 new volunteers in 2018.
- Initiated a pilot support/supervision service to volunteers.
- Delivered 63 training hours to new volunteers.
- Provided 35 mentoring hours to current volunteers.
- Continues service centralisation to meet our objective of improving service quality (though increased volunteer contact), and achieve sustainability (through reducing operating costs).
- Volunteers work in Dublin city centre, Donnybrook and Leopardstown.

## calls and callers

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- SeniorLine volunteers provide 8,760 listening hours to callers from January to December.
- These included just over 7,000 regular callers and 3,545 first time callers. The female to male ratio was: 6,129 female callers and 4,516 male callers.
- SeniorLine provided 8,736 listening hours in 2018.
- 35% contacted the service due to loneliness, 22% of callers had health problems, 13% reported family problems, 11% calls were due to isolation, and 8% reported depression. 5% of callers had little social contact other than SeniorLine, and 5% were recently bereaved.

- Other callers may be lonely due to isolated location, poor family/community support, bereavement, illness, immobility, shyness, family conflict, more.
- Most calls were received in September 2018, followed by the months of July, December, June, October.
- Calls from regular callers typically last 10 minutes, callers with specific problems may last up to 30 minutes, while callers needing significant time may receive an hour's support or longer.
- Slightly over half of all calls came from rural Ireland.
- Regular callers may be encouraged to become more engaged in life, through becoming involved in local activities and services.
- New callers are also given time to discuss helpful options. They may be referred to other relevant services set out in SeniorLine's Resource Manual.

## what our callers said this year

*"It can be hard to go into your own house, close the door and be on your own. That's when I know I can pick up the phone and talk to you."*

**MAURA**

*"I have a chronic complaint, I live on my own and can get very down. I love to have the craic, and some SeniorLine people can lift me out of myself. I always feel better."*

**NIGEL**

*"I heard of the number, but didn't ring due to feeling nobody could help with my family problem. The person I talked to listened, and we discussed what I could do. It gave me a new perspective. I'm not out of the woods yet, but changes have improved. Thank you."*

**BERNADETTE**

*"My roof needed repair and I worried about the cost because of the insurance involved. You pointed me in the right direction. SeniorLine's service is very good."*

**JOSEPH**



## service promotion

- In 2018, SeniorLine was invited to participate in 23 national, regional and local radio interviews. Subjects included the proposed payment for parents, (the so-called 'Granny grant'), need for expanded Home Care Packages, SeniorLine's national survey of older people, inter-resident abuse in nursing homes, bereaved callers, self-care in winter, stress management and more topics relevant to older people.
- SeniorLine participated in four print media interviews, and had over 20 articles published in print media including the Irish Independent, Sunday Business Post, Daily Mail, Limerick Post, Senior Times, Irish Community Health Nurses Annual Journal and Mature Living magazine.
- SeniorLine generated 12 press releases in 2018. Subjects covered included: the Health & Positive Ageing (HaPAI) Initiative, valuing our volunteers, promoting SeniorLine in Co. Cork, winter cold and isolation, St. Valentine's Day and older people, home care packages and Senior Line's twentieth anniversary.
- SeniorLine promoted the service with other health and community national and regional services caring for older people, and distributed our FreeFone bookmark 1800 80 45 91.
- SeniorLine participated in Expo 50+ at the RDS in October, and presented our service to other groups, community and age-sector meetings.
- SeniorLine continued activity on social media with frequent posts and links.



## volunteer stories

Eric

Callaghan

Donnybrook



I retired in 2013. A very close friend died in August 2017. I was his carer as well as his friend, and his death completely floored me. I felt that some good had to come out of such a deep tragedy, and I began looking at opportunities to volunteer. I was attracted to SeniorLine, because it was on the phone instead of face-to-face, and offered anonymity to both caller and volunteer. I felt this was something I could do.

Working on SeniorLine has proved to be very worthwhile and rewarding. There is nothing too dramatic and many calls are quite ordinary. But they are not ordinary either, because people needed us enough to phone us and ask for help.

My friend's death has changed me a lot. I am a completely different person now in many ways, and as a listener on SeniorLine. My loss, what I have gone through, has greatly improved my capacity for empathy. When callers talk about losses in their lives, I do understand, and I can show I understand in my response. I think this is appreciated. I feel my friend has not died in vain. I wanted something good to come out of his death, and this is what has happened. And I also think he would really approve of that I'm doing. SeniorLine is giving me a lot.

Ann Marie

Lalor

Leopardstown



Date

No

It is very easy for me to remember why I joined SeniorLine. I have been separated for 25 years and when my children left and I was on my own, I felt very lonely. I'm independent and I read a lot, but I missed the comings and goings and having people in the house. I began to think about others who may be lonely and was considering starting some kind of group when I read about SeniorLine in my parish newsletter. It was exactly what I was looking for, and I contacted the organisation the next day.

The centre we work in is perfect, we each have our own room, there are parking facilities, it's a privilege to work there. I think SeniorLine is a very worthwhile service. There is a huge preponderance of regular callers wanting conversation and company. Before I leave for duty, I think about one or two topics that would interest my caller. I can see for many people it would be a huge thing to call a strange number, not knowing how they would be received, though I would encourage more people to call.

I joined in order to contribute something and I never realised I would get so much out of it myself, including friendship with the other volunteers. Each one is nicer than the next, we share the same values and we meet socially as well. It's an extra bonus.

Christine

Kelly

Donnybrook



Date

No

I met SeniorLine at the RDS Expo so a few times and decided to volunteer. As a nurse I had been listening to people for years, because I worked in a specialist area of St. James's Hospital where some patients had a lot of social problems.

I learnt the value of listening as many of the people had nobody to talk to and it meant so much to them that we would give them that time. The training I got further reinforced the realisation that I'm not there to solve the problem and reminded me again to think before I speak.

We have a lot of regular callers, some who find life difficult can seem to be more relaxed now, maybe because of the trust that has built up between us. I recently had a caller who had been bereaved. She needed to talk about it. People who have no experience of bereavement don't always understand this, but through my work experience, I know the value of listening particularly in these situations. Working on SeniorLine makes me realise how lucky I am. Some people have nobody to talk to, so I'm glad we are there for them.

Four years ago, recently retired teacher, Monica Egan, noticed information in the ILAC Centre about volunteering opportunities.

Monica

Egan

City Centre



Date

No

I'm a retired teacher, and absolutely loved it, but was open to something different. I found SeniorLine training a challenge because I have a hearing problem and I needed courage to move out of my comfort zone into a new area. But I was delighted that training was available, and it was made clear we could explore the role to ensure we were suitable. I appreciated that.

You never know what kind of a caller you will get. We are asked to leave our troubles outside the door, and I do that to try to be completely available to the caller. I want to listen with an open mind. It can be hard to do that, to listen without jumping in. I may not have the answers. I may not even like what the person is saying. It's not about me being a superwoman, it's about realising there may be a bigger thing at work here and trust the process. Some people are very talkative. Others are quiet and with them, it is helpful to be quiet and let the conversation develop. It's lovely when people say 'thank you for listening'. As a volunteer, I get as much as I give. Callers often say because they don't know us and can't see us, it's easier for them to speak their mind and let off steam. Then there is the social aspect of the service, we have regular meetings, meeting fellow volunteers and seeing the people I trained with and with whom there is still a special bond.

## valuing our volunteers

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- There are currently 157 volunteers working in the service.
- New volunteers are mentored on to the line after training, welcomed personally by a staff member at their first duty rota, and invited to a meeting three months later for continuing support.
- During 2018 we spent time on improving the management and support of our volunteers as part of the Volunteering Ireland 'Invest in Volunteers' award. This national quality standard promotes good practice in volunteer management in the Republic of Ireland. Within award guidelines, we refined some policies and procedures and made a number of other improvements in our operating model.
- In late 2018 we began a pilot project in volunteer supervision and support. We met with volunteers in small groups to listen to any concerns, comments or suggestions for service improvement. Volunteers made a number of suggestions and a training needs analysis has been developed from the process. The project will continue in 2019.
- Volunteers received 10 Continuous Professional Development workshops in 2018. These included presentations on: Arthritis, Crime Victims Helpline, Lifelong Learning, Alzheimer Care, Home Shares for Older People, Parkinsons Disease, Mens Shed, Children at Risk in Ireland, Transgender Equality Network Ireland. Speakers are chosen to inform volunteers personally and in their volunteer role.
- Volunteers received six newsletters during 2018 combining SeniorLine news with items of interest to older people in Ireland.



programmes

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# fáilte isteach

Welcoming Migrants through Conversational  
English Classes



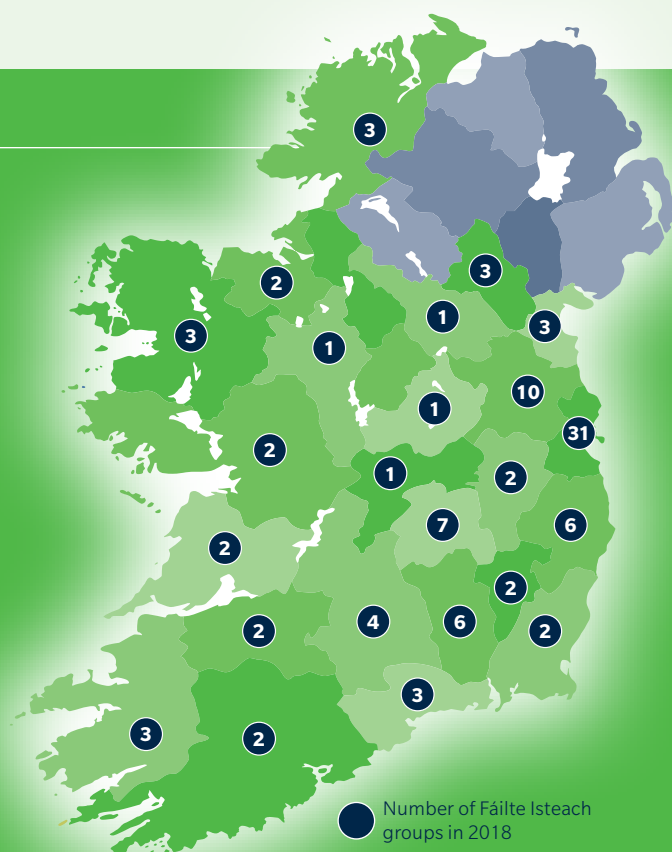
**Fáilte Isteach** is a community-based project involving older volunteers welcoming migrants to Ireland through conversational English classes. Each group is managed by a volunteer co-ordinator. The demand for the service continued in 2018.

## service impact

Ireland is today a multi-ethnic society with all the challenges and opportunities this entails. Third Age's Fáilte Isteach has been working for over 10 years with migrant populations in Ireland offering free conversational classes in English. Fáilte Isteach continues to increase its involvement with programme refugees, mainly from Syria, and in 2018 opened a new community and volunteer-led group supporting this demographic in Lisdoonvarna. New groups in UCD, Carlow and Ballyhaunis were also opened during 2018.

## growth and development

- Fáilte Isteach now has 112 groups operating in 26 Irish counties.
- Classes are delivered each week to 3,600 migrants from 80 different countries.
- This amounted to 76,000 hours of tuition in 2018.
- The programme is delivered by 1,020 volunteer tutors.
- 88 groups are run in partnership with Family Resource Centres, Community Partnerships and other community groups.
- Fáilte Isteach has five European branches in Germany with a total of 80-100 participants weekly, and two groups in Italy providing tuition to 30 participants.
- In November, Fáilte Isteach was contacted by the Islington Centre for Refugees and Migrants, London. The Centre wished to meet us to discuss introducing a Fáilte Isteach model in the UK, possibly in partnership with the University of the Third Age, (U3A) and are planning to visit us in Summerhill in autumn 2019.



## training and support

In March/April 2018, the Fáilte Isteach team hosted training seminars for co-ordinators. These were designed in co-operation with the European Network Against Racism Ireland, (ENAR) a group working collectively to eradicate racism in Ireland. As part of the seminar, ENAR provided information to local coordinators on how to promote a safe and welcoming environment in their groups, and detail on how best to report and deal with incidents of racism. The seminars also provide coordinators with information on how to facilitate creative classes, how best to link with other organisations, and gave ideas on how to support and encourage volunteers on a limited budget.

Fáilte Isteach offered refresher training in 15 locations for volunteer tutors throughout September and October 2018. These provided information, support, and the opportunity to share experiences, and focused on working with beginners and conversational learning.

In December 2018 Fáilte Isteach presented at a conference in Rome funded by the Council of Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants, (LIAM). The aim is to assist member states in developing coherent and effective policies in keeping with shared Council of Europe values and principles.

Our organisation was chosen by the Council of Europe to disseminate the LIAM toolkit *'The Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants'*, a series of 55 different lessons for tutors. These clarified the difference between asylum seekers, refugees and other migrant issues, and gave general information on national structures such as, for example, the government health system and how to access it. This toolkit was shared with the centres in our network. Fáilte Isteach hopes to continue to offer the toolkit to existing groups around the country, to assess the ongoing needs and requirements of migrants living in Ireland.

Fáilte Isteach's work with Monaghan Integrated Development to develop a pilot programme Ways to Work begun in September 2018. It aims to upskill migrants and improve their employability. Specifically, the programme offered 12 candidates, selected through an application process, the opportunity to enhance their skills to obtain work. Fáilte Isteach played an integral part within the pilot, with conversational classes focused on the language of work running weekly alongside workshops.

**Mary Gilsenan and Sinead Roche are joint volunteer coordinators of Fáilte Isteach Dundalk. Mary describes the programme and what it achieves.**

*"I became involved two years ago. I had been a primary school teacher, taught children from many countries, many coming with not a word of English. I saw at first-hand how their skills developed and the difference it made. Also, I realised at the parent-teacher meetings that while many of the fathers had some English through their employment, the mothers' English in some cases was non-existent which impacted on their integration."* she said.

Fáilte Isteach classes are held in the local Pastoral Centre, where an average 14 volunteer tutors, offer classes to 20-25 students ranging in age from 20s-40/50s, with migrants predominantly female. Classes are held once a week and the student intake sounds like a league of nations with people from Vietnam, Somalia, Sudan, the Middle East, some Eastern European countries, as well as nearer neighbours from Holland, Italy and Spain.

What does Mary enjoy most of her role? *"Just like my teaching days, I see people relaxing, gaining in confidence, I see the*



A Fáilte Isteach class in action.

*friendships developing between the students, that is all very rewarding.” She talks about the extracurricular activities offered such as in trips to the National Museum in Dublin, visiting the buskers in Grafton Street. “I remember we were all walking down the street together talking normally. That trip was the hit of the year”.*

Sinead Roche works in the local tourist office, and Mary said Sinead is a one-woman guide for the students on many aspects of Irish life, and they know if they drop in to her with a question they will be given a warm welcome.

Mary feels the Fáilte Isteach programme benefits integration nationally. *“For the migrant, the class is a great starting point, you take the first step to learn the language, and discover there is a whole wide world out there. For the native population to see the interaction between volunteer and student on the streets of Dundalk, when we would be chatting away to each other, is very important. We are not setting ourselves up as role models, it all happens very naturally.”*

Finally, what does she believe the state needs to do to make life better for migrants? *“The Citizenship Ceremony is excellent and the free language classes provided by the government are superb. There is a lot of acceptance and integration behind the scenes, for example, I brought a student with a severe eye condition to hospital in Dublin recently, and saw how a translator was provided and how well the patient was treated. We need bottom-up development as well as top-down. The Irish people have to take ownership of this situation. Schools have a vital role in changing attitudes and fostering integration, we have achieved a lot, but there is a lot more to do.”*



Fáilte Isteach Dundalk.

programmes



Live Well... AgeWell



## agewell

AgeWell is an example of the benefits of modern technology to connect older people with peer and community resources. Researched and introduced in 2017, AgeWell is Third Age's newest programme.

AgeWell is a peer-to-peer befriending service where trained AgeWell Companions conduct home visits to older people, providing social engagement and, if necessary, acting as a link to local health and community services. AgeWell is being delivered in partnership with the HSE, the Meath pilot is part of AgeWell Global, and among the first such programmes in Europe.



In late 2017, Third Age began introducing the programme to local Primary Care Teams, Community Services, Gardaí and others who could nominate older people as beneficiaries. An in-house recruitment campaign and training programme was also developed.

Recruitment began in winter 2017. Training for the first group of Companions took place in January 2018, and AgeWell was launched in February, initially in south Meath. Each AgeWell Companion visits clients weekly and monitors their health and wellbeing using a specially designed 20 Question app.

The aim of the programme is to respond to situations and potential issues before they evolve into something more serious. AgeWell supports people to maintain, improve and manage their physical and mental wellbeing. It also supports older people to live in their own homes and communities by reducing isolation and loneliness, promoting health and connecting older people to appropriate care providers, social services and community resources.

By summer 2018, AgeWell had eight Companions visiting a total of 45 older people. A second round of recruitment and training was completed in August with a further 10 Companions trained. By September, the programme had expanded to west and north Meath, and Third Age appointed a co-ordinator to assist the manager in her role.

By December 2018, 75 clients had received the service. Service recipients may be frail, isolated and vulnerable older people, many are socially and geographically isolated. Clients typically deal with a range of social issues including loneliness, bereavement, isolation, complex family dynamics, the threat of homelessness, cognitive impairment, mobility issues, illness, mental health issues, and depression.

AgeWell collaborates with Community Health Nurses, Social Workers, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Gardaí and community services such as Meals on Wheels, transport initiatives, and active retirement associations, as required by clients. The programme provides a coordinated approach to encouraging clients to participate in community life.

All AgeWell clients are assessed prior to entering the programme and are periodically reassessed at various stages of involvement. Ongoing assessments in 2018 reflected an improvement in client physical and emotional well-being. AgeWell Companions meet fortnightly with staff at Summerhill, and these meetings confirm anecdotally the results of the independent assessments.

Clients look forward to the Companion visits, clients are more socially engaged and say they have more to look forward to in life. During the year, AgeWell was invited to submit an abstract on demonstrating integrated healthcare to an International Foundation of Integrated Care Ireland.



### an agewell companion

#### ITA HEALY

Ita Healy is a qualified nurse with a diploma in Social Care. She returned to Ireland some years ago to nurse her mother who had contracted dementia and worked in St Joseph's Hospital, Trim. *'The community aspect of caring for older people has always appealed to me, the idea of supporting people in their own homes, rather than offering a programme only when they come to day care,'* she said.

She has been a very active citizen, representing HSE on the Age Friendly Trim Steering Group who conducted a 'Walkability' audit of the town regarding people with mobility difficulties. This led to a meeting with day service clients to discuss the issues raised. Ita serves on the Older People's Council and Later Life Network. Ita is also a member of the Age Friendly Alliance sitting alongside representatives from the HSE, Third Age, the local authority, Meath Partnership and others.

*'The AgeWell programme has brought together a lot of what I have been doing. It was a good fit for me. The training was very good. There were some areas I was already familiar with, but as you know we monitor our client's health through the use of an app, and we had to learn this technical aspect. Everything was very well thought through, the back-up we would need entering someone's home, all health and safety aspects, and our own Information Manual,'* she said.

Ita visits six clients each week, and phones them between visits. Clients range in age between 80 and 95, some have families nearby, others have less support. *'I tend to visit in the afternoons, and our contact can vary between personal chats and more substantive issues when a client may have a problem and want to discuss it. We don't give advice as such, but we can talk through options, and point clients in helpful directions. I am usually with the client on my own, but I also try to see the families and would leave a leaflet or other information they would find helpful. Families are generally appreciative.'*

The Companions meet weekly as a group with AgeWell staff. Ita says these meetings are very important and were particularly valuable at the start of the programme when everything was new. *'There is a serious element to what we do. The early meetings were extremely reassuring, we had lots of questions, we shared our experiences. We received phenomenal support from AgeWell and we still do.'*

*'You get a great deal of satisfaction from the work. Do we make a difference? The best way to say it is I think our clients would be horrified if they felt we weren't coming back! They get great value out of it, everything from helping with substantive issues to the lady that said to me last week "I look forward to your coming. I love the chat!"'*



AgeWell Companions at recruitment meeting.

programmes

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# third age

local & regional  
initiatives



# local and regional initiatives

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## impact

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The Summerhill menu of activities is ever-growing based on the emerging needs of the local older population. Quarterly group meetings are held to discuss potential new projects and to respond to suggestions and ideas from members.






















The local centre provides older people with access to health services, health screening and monitoring, activities, transport, information, holidays and outreach. Third Age creates opportunities for older people to connect socially and build friendships and supports with peers.

Third Age, Summerhill welcomed new members during 2018. New programmes introduced included an intergenerational walking initiative with the local primary school, chaerobics, poetry reading and drama afternoons. The local Men's Shed group now use the centre facilities for their weekly meetings. Local members partnered with the Transition Year students to record their oral histories. Young and old also participated in the delivery of a Digital Skills programme in Summerhill.

In 2018, 331 older people were fitted with socially monitored alarms under the Senior Alert Scheme. Funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development, Pobal provides funding for this service that enables older people to live securely in their homes with confidence, independence and peace of mind.

Third Age continues to work with St. Joseph's Hospital, Trim and Beaufort Nursing Home. The long stay residents from these facilities are hosted by Third Age where they participate in activities and events alongside older members of the local community.

### A-Z of established activities and services in 2018 includes:

 Access to Socially Monitored Alarms Scheme	 Computer Classes	 Movement to Music
 Aromatherapy	 Counselling	 Movie Mornings
 Art & Drama	 Drop-in Centre	 Outings
 Audiologist	 Holidays	 Reflexology
 Beauty Therapy	 Knitting Group	 Resource Centre
 Bridge Classes	 Library	 Socials
 Chiropody	 Little Jobs Project (community service)	 Transport Service

## events

- Members participated in a Trinity College Dublin survey on the links between access to transport and older people's mobility and activities. This was facilitated by Assistant Professor on Social Policy, Doctor Catherine O'Dare.
- The local Mens Shed group worked with Third Age in creating a permanent wooden crib for Christmas.
- Members had mini breaks to The Talbot Hotel Wexford and The Fitzwilton Hotel Waterford.
- 'The Way We Were' exhibition group visited Schoil Naomh Eoin, Navan and discussed artefacts with the pupils.
- Day outings for members included a visit to Knock Shrine, Co. Mayo, Belvedere Gardens Mullingar, Kilkenny City, Streamstown House & Gardens, Roscommon, Powerscourt House, Co. Wicklow, Bettystown, Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin Cemetery & Museum, and Hodson Bay Hotel, Athlone.
- Members enjoyed lunch outings to The Hamlet Court Hotel, Meath, The Castle Arch Hotel, Trim, Brogans Hotel Trim, Bloomfield Hotel, Mullingar, and shopping trips to Blanchardstown and Navan.
- Third Age played host to a Summer Garden Party, and held an annual Mass for deceased members. The Knitting Group produced hats, scarves, gloves and tea cosies, and brushed up their skills with a visit to the Knitting & Stitching Show at the RDS Dublin.

## fundraising

Third Age Summerhill organised a number of fundraising events during the year. These included a cake and bring and buy sale, raffles at Easter and Christmas, lunch and socials with music provided by T R Dallas and Frankie McDonnell Band and an Evening of Song in Dangan Church with the Third Age choir and special guest, Father Ray Kelly.



## digital skills 2018

In 2016 Third Age was funded to participate with other agencies in a new Digital Skill Scheme, part of the Government's 'Getting Citizens Online' programme. Our involvement has continued in 2018 when we trained 353 new people in Counties Dublin, Kildare, Meath, Offaly, Westmeath and Wicklow.

The free training course is a 10-hour programme over five weeks, two hours per week, 10 participants per course. The programme covers introduction to the Internet, Internet security and safety, email, search engines and websites, online government services, conducting everyday transactions, online voice and video calls and use of apps.

### 2018 course locations were as follows:

<b>DUBLIN &amp; CO. DUBLIN</b>	Castleknock, Clondalkin, Dublin City University, Lucan, Navan Road, Raheny, Skerries
<b>CO. KILDARE</b>	Broadford, Carbury, Clane, Johnstown Bridge, Kildare Town, Maynooth, Naas, Newbridge
<b>CO. MEATH</b>	Ashbourne, Dunboyne, Dunshaughlin, Enfield, Kells, Navan, Summerhill, Trim
<b>CO. OFFALY</b>	Edenderry
<b>CO. WESTMEATH</b>	Kinnegad, Mullingar
<b>CO. WICKLOW</b>	Wicklow Town

Transition Year students from local schools in Cabra, Dunboyne, Kilcock, Lucan, Navan, North Dublin added fun and an inter-generational flavour to the learning.

*'The social element of the classes - always important - really came into its own this year, and some participants tell us doing the course helps them get up, get out and gives a new purpose to the day. A number come with family encouragement. Attending the course helps participants move on with technology. Many families, for example, want their older relatives to have a smart phone as that allows inter-family contact via an App group and gives relatives feelings of comfort as they are better able to keep in touch.'*

*'This year too we informed participants about RB Digital – recorded books that one can download on to devices. This meant going to the library, registering as a member and it also gave access to magazines on fashion, cookery, nature - a wide array of subjects. In this way, the digital skills course was a springboard for participants to join the library and become involved in other community activities. We were able to use it as a crossover activity – online activity leading to offline involvement'*

**YVONNE KEANE** is Third Age Digital Skills  
Administrator & Tutor



*'He was getting treatment and doing fine, so his death came as a terrible shock.'*

*'Sean had looked after the financial aspects of the household, much of it online. Sean was a teacher, very organised and managed all the business side of things. He had bought me a tablet, but I used it mainly to play cards and for pictures of the children and grandchildren.'*

*'After Sean died I was plunged into everything - bills, insurance, documents. I was terrified of using the computer, of pressing something, and losing everything and not able to get it back. I had thought of going on a course but something always came up to stop me. Then I saw a notice in the Mass leaflet and decided to attend. I was helped by meeting a friend who told me she had enrolled also.'*

*'At the start I was very quiet, but as the weeks went by, and we all began to tell our stories, I said why I was there, it was great to speak together in that way. Another good thing was that we had Transition Year students from the secondary school and each of us had a TY buddy. I sometimes didn't know what I had done wrong and my buddy would tell me. It was lovely listening to the young people talking and getting to know them. I still see them round the town and we wave at each other, an unexpected bonus.'*

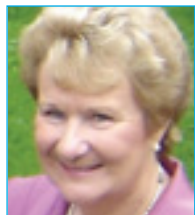
*'I recently bought a new larger tablet, I can use the computer now, I have much more confidence. I know I will carry on and continue to learn. People have said I am so brave to go on a course, but I am delighted I did. When we started to tell our stories, you learn what other people are going through and you don't feel so much on your own'.*

**YVONNE M<sup>C</sup>RORY** is a Dunboyne participant. Yvonne joined the course after a very traumatic eighteen months. Her husband Sean was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in December 2017 and died in August 2018.



## farewells

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### Mary Nally

Mary Nally, the founder of Third Age, retired in February 2018. Mary began the organisation in Summerhill in 1988 and oversaw its development for many years. Established to offer services and activities to older people in the village and wider catchment area, Third Age began to acquire a national profile by training older people as supports for their peers across national programmes.

SeniorLine - originally Senior Help Line, was born to provide a telephone support service to people at home. Fáilte Isteach came into being to offer free language classes to Ireland's emerging migrant population. Other local programmes, such as 'The Way We Were', continues to bring history to life for school-children. The Summerhill Service office offers a wide range of weekly programmes, services and activities, adding to the quality of life for local older people.

Mary has received several awards for her work, including an Ashoka Fellowship, (a global organisation of social entrepreneurs), and The Rehab People of the Year Award.

Mary resigned as CEO in 2013, but remained as Head of Local Services. In 2014, she saw her long-term efforts come to fruition with the opening of new national headquarters in Summerhill, replacing an ancient pre-fab with modern offices, meeting rooms, kitchen and patio garden.

In 2013, Aine Brady, former Minister of State for Health Promotion and Older People, was appointed CEO of Third Age. The organisation has continued to develop nationally, and the village of Summerhill continues to benefit from our presence. We wish Mary and her family every happiness in her retirement.

### Ruth Loughran

Ruth Loughran retired in March having worked with us as a Business Strategy Executive. Ruth was a driving force behind many fundraising and marketing events, developed our Gingerbread Village Christmas fundraiser, helped us to forge a number of important new alliances and also worked on our Digital Skills programme. Ruth became a grandmother this year and we wish her well in her new role.

### Natasha Bagnell

Natasha left during the year to take up another appointment. We will remember her for her warmth, can-do approach and caring attitude towards our Fáilte Isteach students.

## milestones

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### Claire Dalton

Clare and her husband Eamon had a baby boy Tom during the year, a brother for big sister, Anna.

## third age is represented on the following bodies



AGE FRIENDLY ALLIANCE MEATH



AGE PLATFORM EUROPE

Alliance of  
the Age Sector  
NGO's

ALLIANCE OF THE AGE SECTOR NGO'S



AONTAS



BEFRIENDING NETWORK IRELAND



BOARD OF THE WHEEL



HIQA ADVISORY GROUPS



NGO FORUM AGE FRIENDLY IRELAND

Telephone  
Helplines  
Ireland

TELEPHONE HELPLINES IRELAND



# 2018 Third Age in Numbers

## INCOME

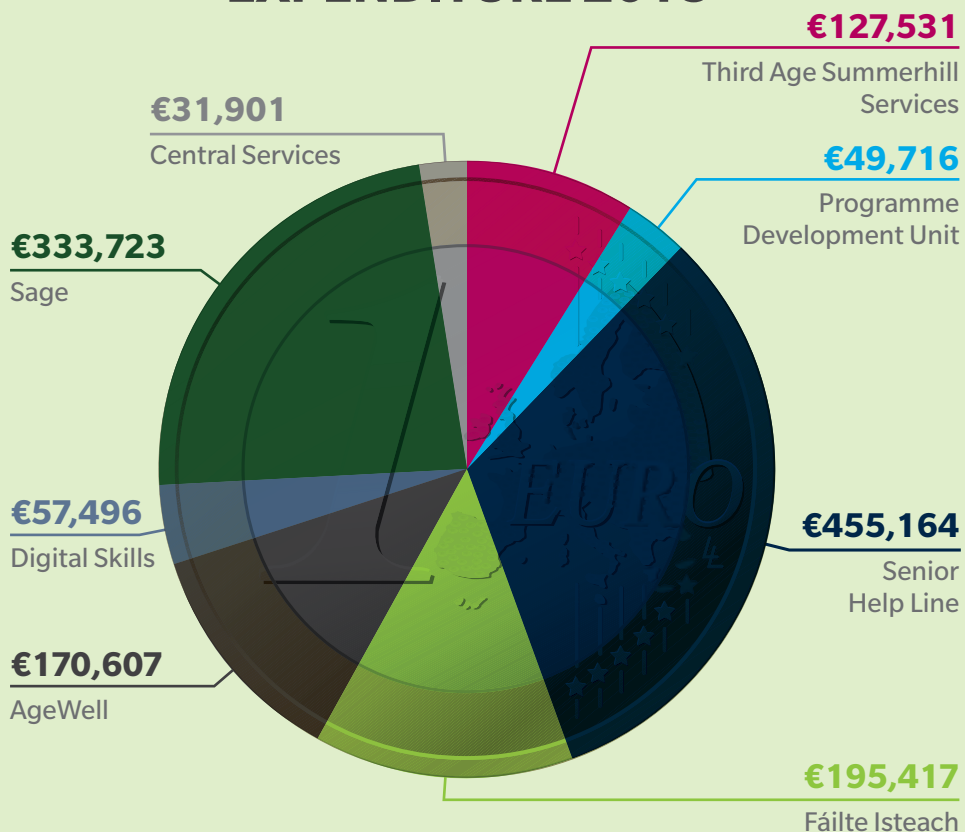
€740,612



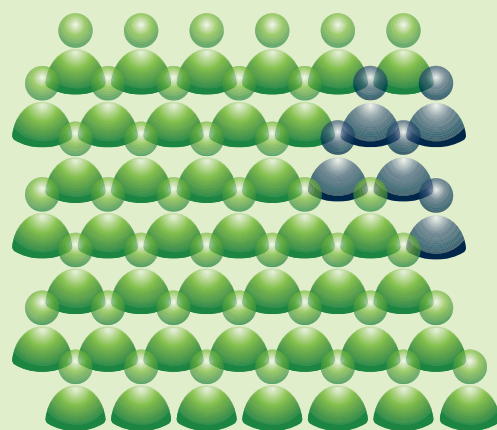
## EXPENDITURE

€1,421,555

## PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE 2018



## SOURCES OF INCOME 2018



In 2018, there were 46 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

Chairman	Tom Dowling
Company Secretary	Maura O'Keeffe
Members	Harry Casey, Tom Collins, Pat Cox, Patricia Rickard Clarke, Anthony Nolan, Amanda Phelan

## seniorline

Chairman	Tom Dowling
Company Secretary	Tom Collins
Members	Pat Cox, Anthony Nolan, Maura O'Keeffe

## staff

## third age



Chief Executive Officer  
Áine Brady

Operations & Finance Manager	Alison Branigan
Communications Manager	Anne Dempsey

## seniorline

Programme Manager	Damian Leneghan
National Office Administrator	Ann O'Brien
Dublin Office Administrator	Beryl Carroll

## fáilte isteach

Programme Manager	Liam Carey
National Development Officers	Claire Dalton, Natasha Bagnall (resigned 2018)



Manager	Avril Hevey
Care Co-ordinators	Paul O'Rourke, Ann Marie Slevin, Monica Ryan

## local & regional initiatives

Founder, Head of Local Services	Mary Nally (retired 2018)
Business Development & Digital Skills Co-ordinator	Ruth Loughran
Digital Skills Administrator & Tutor	Yvonne Keane
Digital Skills Tutor	Louise Coughlan
Third Age Administrators	Rosemary Doyle, Maeve Carton
Third Age Administrative Assistant	Mairead Gillick
Drivers	Joe Gould, John Conlon
Housekeeper (Mar. - Aug.)	Anne Lynch
Housekeeper (Aug. - Current)	Mary Rochford
Carers	Rena Murray, Joan Pratt

## third age - 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

# third age

Responding to the Opportunities  
and Challenges of Ageing in Ireland

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[www.thirdageireland.ie](http://www.thirdageireland.ie)

seniorline | fáilte isteach | agewell | local & regional initiatives