



**ACTIVE**  
RETIREMENT IRELAND



# Strategic Plan

2020-2024



# Foreword

**ARI presents its strategic plan for the five year period 2020- 2024 to a background of changing demographics and lifestyles. In 2016, there were approximately 624000 people over the age of 65 living in Ireland, representing 13.2% of the overall population.<sup>1</sup> It is estimated that by 2046 this number will increase to be 1.4 million. Life expectancy in Ireland has increased by over 2 years in the past decade.**

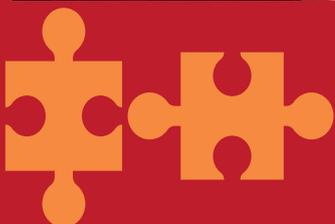
But in some cases older people are still faced with neglect and negative stereotypes. The movement of older people into segregated communities, an undervaluing of their contributions to society, and negative media portrayals, foster the growth of a gap between generations and a general lack of empathy towards people of different age-groups. In 2020 Ireland was hit by the world wide Covid-19 pandemic which impacted hugely on

older peoples' lives. Regardless of the evolving situation, the Active Retirement Ireland strategy is set within a context of active and positive ageing. The concept of active ageing aims at enhancing the physical and mental well-being of people ultimately contributing to their ability to be less dependent on and contribute more to society. Through the concept of active ageing Active Retirement Ireland aims to change the ongoing paradigm from policies that merely provide for older people to that of empowerment. This vision is bigger than one organisation; a political and legal framework in which older people could take responsibility for their own quality of life and well-being has to be created. However, policies on active ageing should not discount a need to provide for frail older persons as part of this ongoing development.

<sup>1</sup> CSO 2016.Census of Population 2016.



< Board 2020



# Recognition, Respect and Voice of older people



## Recognition, Respect and Voice of older people **in the community**

### **Older people as volunteers and health producers**

Older people are an integral part of the community. Many older people provide entrepreneurial contributions, care giving, or volunteering and community work. Overall within their communities and society at large, older people act as invaluable sources of knowledge on history and society. With regard to volunteer work, older people often make important contributions in the unpaid sector. Volunteering is mutually beneficial because it adds immeasurably to different communities, while also permitting older people to utilize their knowledge and skills.

#### **Expected results**

##### **Better Social inclusion**

Stronger social networks that will be crucial to pursue a process of active ageing and social inclusion; such as volunteering within communities and developing local activity projects that foster community cohesion and independence.

##### **Better Health promotion**

The promotion of preventive health measures through information and programmes is essential for allowing people to age healthily. This may also involve awareness-raising programmes that inform about the positive effects of a physically active life style and a healthy diet.

## Recognition, Respect and Voice for Older people **as consumers**

Older people contribute to the economy as consumers and their needs and preferences stimulate new markets for goods and services across a range of sectors. These needs and preferences evolve with age and changing levels of health and functional ability.

Healthy older people might prefer engaging in tourism and cultural activities, stimulating services in these fields. Those experiencing declining health and the onset of disabilities may be more likely to seek out housing adaptations,



assistive devices and technologies that enable them to remain independent for longer. The healthcare industry, ageing at home and independent-living products and services, technology and online products and services are Silver Economy sectors with high growth potentials

### Expected results

The rapidly growing “silver market segment” is still largely unexplored. To realize its potentials, the needs of older people have to be better understood to ensure that innovations and services are relevant. Research on the needs and preferences of older people and participatory processes that involve them as consumers in the design, testing and evaluation of new technologies, goods and services can address this gap.

## Recognition, Respect and Voice of older people in Reframing ageing

A gradual change in language can be noted in international frameworks from “ageing tsunamis” and “demographic time bombs” that would threaten welfare state sustainability and intergenerational solidarity to a more positive vision of ageing societies. Older people are not a burden on the public expenditure or their families but they contribute – as producers and consumers, volunteers and caregivers – and their contribution is increasingly recognized.

### The potential of living longer

Identifying and realizing the potentials of a longer life by moving emphasis from the limitations and weaknesses of older people to their capacities and potentials, and promoting them, is to the benefit of the everyone, the community and society as a whole.

Collaborative efforts of individuals, civil society, businesses and the state are needed to realize the potentials of living longer:

### Expected results

The opportunities of longer life will be better realized if people are enabled to lead healthier lifestyles and receive the treatment and care they need, seek out and seize lifelong learning and training opportunities, volunteer more and provide care and support to their families and communities over the entire life course.

The Active Retirement Ireland strategy sets out a five year vision for the organisation from local to national level that will copper-fasten relationships and partnerships that support a joint vision on how Ireland should age well.

More importantly it articulates the values and principles that will guide and shape our progress and realise our vision of reaching out to all older people to end loneliness through friendship and support.

**Kay Murphy**  
*President*

**Maureen Kavanagh**  
*CEO*

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# Policy Picture –

## Ageing In Ireland

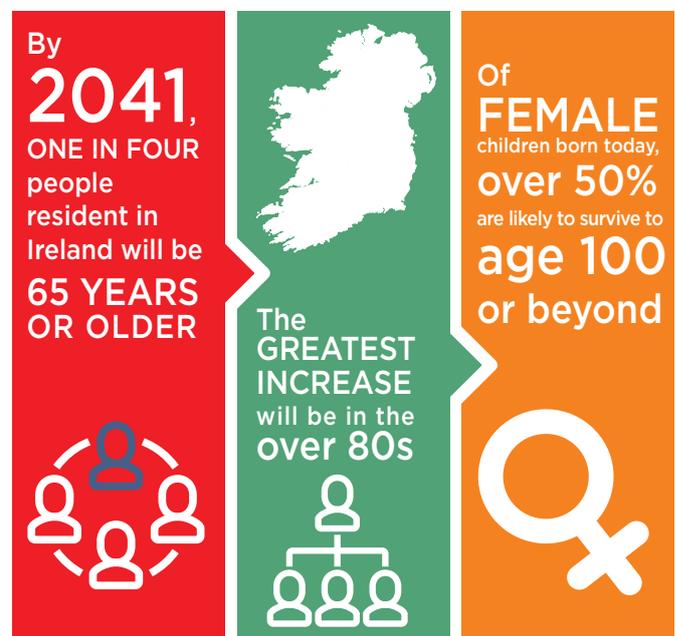
- By 2041, one in four people resident in Ireland will be 65 years or older
- The greatest increase will be in the over 80s
- Of female children born today, over 50% are likely to survive to age 100 or beyond<sup>2</sup>

Ireland, while still among the youngest countries in Europe, is ageing. By 2041, approximately one quarter of the Irish population will be over 65 and almost a twelfth will be over 80<sup>3</sup>. This is an increase in the population over the age of 80 of 250%. In order to cope with this change, Ireland needs a plan. While there has been a Healthy Ageing Programme in place in Ireland since 1998<sup>4</sup>, and the National Positive Ageing Strategy (NPAS) was published in 2013, there remains a massive gap in government policy around older people, ageing in place and active ageing. Faced with this vacuum, the onus has fallen on the community and voluntary sector to represent the interests of older people in an increasingly ageist society<sup>5</sup>. The work of Ireland's Age Friendly Cities and Counties Programme has been successfully embedded in many local authorities, and on a very local level it is Glór groups, Active Retirement Associations and other groups of volunteers that are at the forefront of the struggle to represent older people's interests.

Despite the positive reception given to the NPAS upon its publication, the implementation of the strategy has not been optimal<sup>6</sup>, nor is there sufficient valid and reliable monitoring of the strategy's effect in society<sup>7</sup>. While some individual government departments have begun a comprehensive implementation programme, others have not been seen to carry out the necessary steps. This is, on the whole, down to a lack of leadership at cabinet level – with a junior minister dividing time between older people and mental health. As such, and despite an all of government approach, the issue of active ageing in Ireland is still positioned squarely within the Department of Health.

Active Retirement Ireland, therefore, has to place older people front-and-centre in every government department, highlighting the contribution older people make to the economy, to their communities and to society as a whole; as consumers, taxpayers, carers, citizens, and individuals. Active Retirement Ireland seeks to end loneliness, as loneliness is a contributor to poor health outcomes in older people<sup>8</sup>. In order to make loneliness a thing of the past, Active Retirement Ireland has a role to play in creating a future for older people in Ireland – a future that respects older people for what they have achieved and for what they have yet to achieve. Active Retirement Ireland will not do this alone; we will work with our partner NGOs and relevant stakeholders to build this future.

This strategic plan outlines the ways in which Active Retirement Ireland will highlight the work of its Active Retirement Associations, Regions and volunteers at all levels, as well as the efforts of a professional staff team that seek to make Ireland a country in which retirement is seen as an opportunity, rather than a burden.



<sup>2</sup> Barrett A, Savva G., Timonen V, Kenny RA. Fifty Plus in Ireland 2011: First Results from The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing. Dublin: Trinity College Dublin; 2011. [http://tilda.tcd.ie/publications/reports/pdf/w1-key-findings-report/Tilda\\_Master\\_First\\_Findings\\_Report.pdf](http://tilda.tcd.ie/publications/reports/pdf/w1-key-findings-report/Tilda_Master_First_Findings_Report.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Barrett, A., Burke, H., Cronin, H., Hickey, A., Kamiya, Y., Kenny, R. A., ... & Mosca, I. (2011). Fifty plus in Ireland 2011: first results from the Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA).

<sup>4</sup> O'Shea, E. (2006). Developing a healthy ageing policy for Ireland: The view from below. *Health policy*, 76(1), 93-105.

<sup>5</sup> Cardinali, R., & Gordon, Z. (2002). Ageism: No longer the equal opportunity stepchild. *Equal Opportunities International*, 21(2), 58-68.

<sup>6</sup> McGlinchey, E., Taaffe, C., Maguire, T., Carroll, B., Shannon, M. S., Brennan, M. C., & O'Callaghan, M. D. (2018). POSITIVE AGEING INDICATORS 2018.

<sup>7</sup> Gibney, S., & Ward, M. (2018). Developing an age-friendly urban environment index for Ireland: an exploratory factor analysis. *European Journal of Public Health*, 28(suppl\_4), cky213-110.

<sup>8</sup> Gibney, S., Moore, T., & Shannon, S. (2019). Loneliness in later life: a cross-sectional survey analysis of place-based factors in Ireland. *Quality in Ageing and Older Adults*.



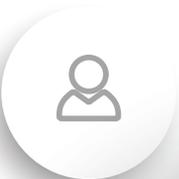
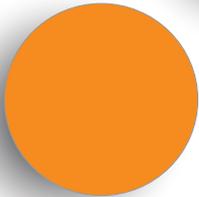
## Mission

Active Retirement Ireland will **end loneliness** by extending the hand of **friendship** through its national network of local, **community-based associations**.



## Vision

Active Retirement Ireland is Ireland's **largest community-based organisation for older people**; working to end loneliness and ensure older people in Ireland are treated with the **respect, dignity and equality** they deserve, as equal partners in a country for all ages.



## Values

Active Retirement Ireland believes **all older people are equal** and entitled to be treated with respect. We recognise that all older people have different interests and needs. **All older people are welcome to join Active Retirement Ireland**, to have fun and have their voices heard regardless of age, gender or culture.



# Strategic GOALS

## RECOGNITION

The contributions of older people are valued and respected in all aspects of society



2020-2024

## VOICE

Older people are listened to on matters of policy, and they play a full and active role in their communities



## RESPECT

Older people are seen as equal partners in a country for all ages



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## Strategic Goal 1:



# RESPECT

Older people are seen as equal partners in a country for all ages.

What will Active Retirement Ireland do:



## Growth and Development

- Active Retirement Ireland will continue to develop member-led systems and structures to ensure older people are at the centre of the organisation.
- ARI will grow a strong cohort of volunteers to take on leadership roles within the organisation, enshrining respect for older people in the structures of the national network
- ARI will support local groups to be as democratic and member-led as possible, through its network of development teams



## Communication

- ARI will influence policy relating to older people, with an attitude of “nothing about us without us”. The organisation will work with all parties in Dáil Éireann to achieve a better Ireland for older people
- ARI will share stories of older people in their own words and with the dignity and respect due to them



## Sustainability

- ARI will strengthen its regional structures in order to improve the experience for local associations through evaluation, training and celebration
- ARI will build the resources of the organisation in line with organisation development
- The ARI development team will support existing local groups to implement best practice, and will continue to grow the national network of Active Retirement Associations



## Trust

- ARI will develop programmes and resources to support member-led local associations to be transparent and trustworthy
- ARI will develop the capacity of the organisation at all levels to be open, honest and accountable

## Strategic Goal 2:



# RECOGNITION

The contributions of older people are valued and respected in all aspects of society.

What will Active Retirement Ireland do:



## Growth and Development

- ARI will ensure that the contributions of volunteers are recognised and appreciated within the organisation
- Volunteers will feel respected, valued and appreciated for their contributions to the Active Retirement experience
- ARI will strengthen the organisation locally to respond to the increasing ageing population



## Communication

- ARI will be a world leader in promoting the contribution of older people to society at large
- Older people will see ARI as a member-led, inclusive organisation that truly values the volunteer spirit and contribution of its members
- ARI will embed our work within national strategies and frameworks  
Slaintecare  
Healthy Ireland,  
Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered  
Communities strategy  
Age Friendly Programme



## Sustainability

- ARI will deliver programmes that recognise the importance of and celebrate volunteering
- At regional level, ARI will grow the capacity of its volunteers
- The ARI development team, in tandem with the staff, will support existing local committees to enshrine best practice and improve the delivery of local events and activities
- ARI will work with stakeholders to influence policies that provide for older people to policies that empower older people.



## Trust

- ARI will ensure that the experiences and knowledge of older people will remain the cornerstone of all our work.
- ARI will employ environmentally sustainable practices across the organisation in a cost effective and environmentally conscious way

### Strategic Goal 3:



## VOICE

Older people are listened to on matters of policy, and they play a full and active role in their communities.

*What will Active Retirement Ireland do:*



### Growth and Development

- ARI will ensure that its lobbying and political campaigning is member-led and focused on outcomes that benefit older people
- Members will be proud of Active Retirement Ireland, an organisation that stands up for their rights and entitlements
- ARI will develop leadership programmes to ensure the governance of the organisation is membership led
- ARI will work tirelessly with other Age sector NGOS to build a cohesive sector



### Communication

- ARI will be a tireless champion of older people in the public eye and with politicians and stakeholders from all sectors
- ARI will remain true to the message of older people being recognised, respected and heard in all its communications
- ARI will build capacity through information and training of its members to be effective advocates on local decision making structures



### Sustainability

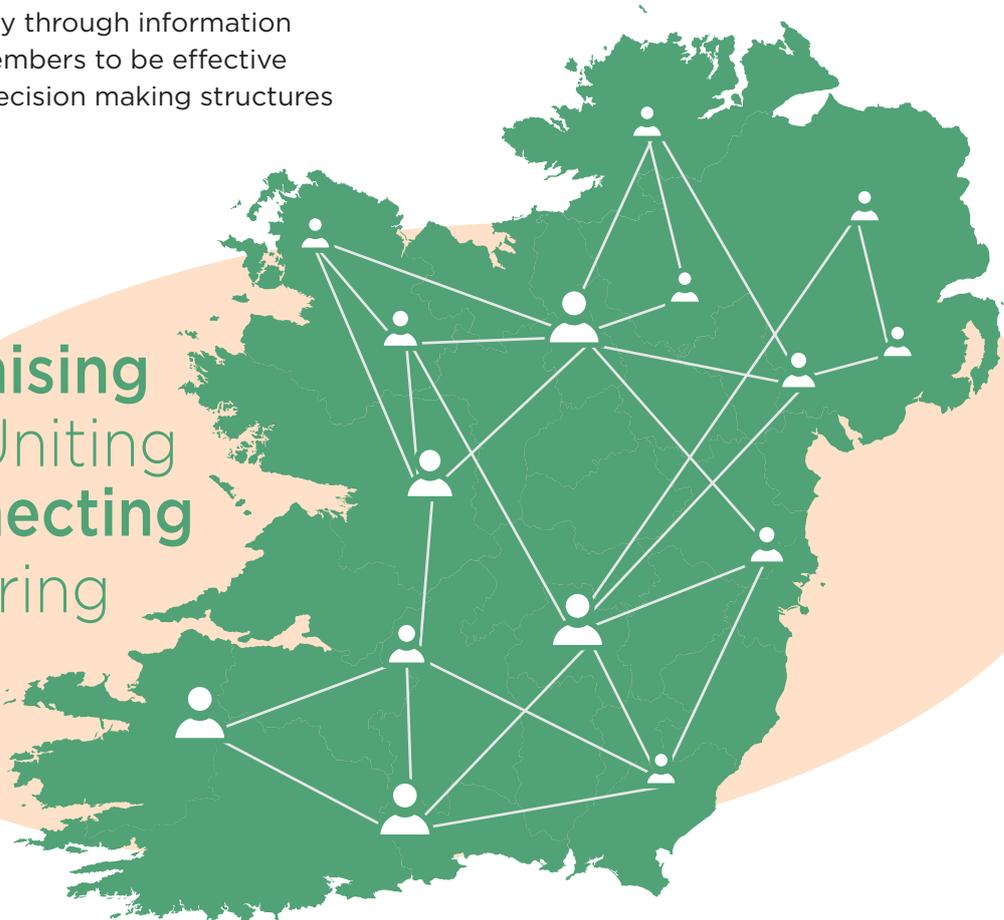
- ARI will seek funding from a variety of sources without compromising its integrity and honesty as a representative of older people in Ireland
- ARI will showcase the lived experience of older people through our communication work ( website, blog, social media, media campaigns)



### Trust

- Stakeholders will view Active Retirement Ireland as an honest and trustworthy representative of its membership and of older people in general
- ARI will ensure that all our work is underpinned by good governance and engaged staff and volunteers
- ARI is trusted by its members funders and other stakeholders as a model of good governance by adhering to the Charities Governance code, SORP accounting systems and the Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising from the Public.

Recognising  
Uniting  
Connecting  
Empowering  
Supporting



The population aged

# 65 years and over

increased by 102,174 to 637,567 **(19.1%)** in 2016.



Of the total population aged 65 years and over

156,799 **lived alone** representing **26.7%** of the total.

**There will be 796,484 aged over 65 years in 2021, or 14.1% of the total population**

Positive ageing in  
Europe and from TILDA

## Ireland

ranks among the highest  
of the

**28 European  
member states**



Volunteering and  
Social participation TILDA

18% of  
older adults  
**volunteer weekly**  
while

**56%**

have volunteered  
over the past two years



Volunteering and participation in both **active** and **social** leisure **activities**  
and **organised groups** are associated with

**better quality of life and  
fewer depressive symptoms**



**75%**  
of older adults

participate in **active  
and social leisure activities**  
each week, while

**52%**  
participate in  
**organised groups.**



While **rates of social  
participation are high**,  
efforts to increase  
volunteering and social  
participation among older  
adults should be encouraged  
as **these activities not only  
benefit participants but  
society in general.**

## HEALTHY AGEING

Healthy life expectancy for 65+



**Men**  
= **12 years**  
without  
disability



**Women**  
= **13.2 years**  
without  
disability

## HEALTHCARE

**62%**

over 65s take up  
flu vaccine,

**32%**

of 56+ age group  
take **5 or more**  
medications



## LIFE SATISFACTION

for 56+ ages  
is high at

**86%**

Depression is at

**11%**

and

**anxiety at 4.4%**



Increases in  
**cardiovascular  
diseases**

hypertension 38%,

diabetes 11%

heart attack 6%,

stroke 2%



## HEALTHY BEHAVIOURS

### DIET

54+ age group

**75%**

do **not** get their daily

**5 a day**

of **fruit or vegetables**



**45%**



**of adults  
over 50**

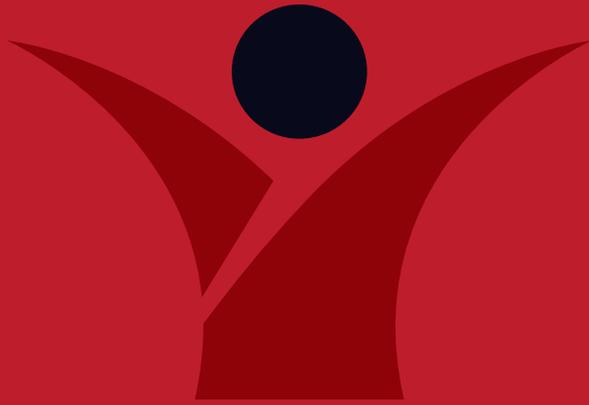
walked **less** than the  
recommended **150**  
minutes per week

There is a decrease  
in the number of people  
who rated their health  
as fair or poor

(aged 50 - 64 years  
decreased from 21% to 16%)  
and

(65 - 75 years from 23% to 16%)

Social engagement  
has a positive impact  
on self-rated health.



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