

# Ageing and Older People: POSITIVE STEPS

**2007 Initiative**

Lord Mayor of Dublin

Cllr. Vincent Jackson



## VISION

Dublin will be a city where all older people can live in an inclusive, safe environment, accessible, and appropriate to all needs; where respect and trust are underlying values and where civic and social participation are fundamental tenets; where personal dignity and the right to choose are acknowledged by each of the statutory agencies in their flexible delivery of care and services.

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## LORD MAYOR'S FOREWORD



The wisdom of age is a precious jewel; a jewel whose value can fluctuate from community to community. Dubliners have always put a high value on the currency of age. Our challenge in Dublin city today is to ensure that in an age of changing values, information highways and extraordinary pace of life, that the position of older people continues to be respected and cherished.

I have made it a priority of my year in office to focus attention on our responsibility and duty towards those who have devoted their lives to shaping our city, making us what we are and

giving us what we have today. My intention is that this will not be a one year wonder, but rather that the principles behind this initiative will be sustained and deeply ingrained in our culture for the coming generations of Dubliners.

I have sought to develop this initiative in a structured, planned and logical way so that its foundations are sound, enabling the work we have initiated here to be carried on with confidence. In the past few months alone, Dublin City Council has completed senior citizens' units in Fr Lemass Court, Ballyfermot, Brookfield Court on the North Road in Finglas - 74



units in all for older people with over 250 more units due to come on stream in the coming year. These facilities show the breadth of Dublin City Council's vision in providing for its older citizens and I think we can be justifiably proud of our achievement.

I have received tremendous co-operation from a Dublin City Council cross party committee in devising this policy. Officials of Dublin City Council have shown commitment and creativity from the beginning, with the result that a number

of age friendly projects will be launched shortly, ensuring that Dublin City is positioned as a leading advocate for ageing and older people. My thanks to those who have worked with me on the initiative; I hope that its benefits will have a lasting impact on Dublin City and that our vision will benefit future generations.

**Cllr. Vincent Jackson**  
Lord Mayor of Dublin

## THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS



### **The Committee Members:**

**Back Row (LR)** *Cllr. Mary Freehill, Brendan Kenny,  
Grace Maguire, Mary Hanlon, Ronan O'Donnell*

**Front Row (LR )** *Cllr. Eibhlin Byrne,  
Lord Mayor Cllr. Vincent Jackson, Cllr. Naoise Ó Muirí*

**Not pictured:** *Peter Finnegan, Robert Chester, Sean Fallon*

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## MESSAGE FROM CLLR. EIBHLIN BYRNE, CHAIRPERSON

This policy on Ageing and Older People in the city marks a very important point in the development of Dublin as a city and as a community. The policy is a result of widespread consultation and examination of international best practice.

It is internationally acknowledged that a society which plans to grow old can afford to grow old. In planning for an ageing city we are seeking to promote quality of life for all who live in Dublin.

A particular emphasis in this document is the desire of Dublin City Council to promote a city of opportunity for all ages.

We acknowledge the enthusiasm of youth and the experience of age. Dublin City Council will now actively engage with statutory and voluntary bodies to bring to life the important principles of this document.

Our policy, initiated by Lord Mayor Jackson, is but a start. In implementing this policy the power lies with the people. It is for every individual living in Dublin to ensure that we truly become “A city for all ages”.

**Councillor Eibhlin Byrne**  
Chairperson Policy Group

## MESSAGE FROM JOHN TIERNEY, CITY MANAGER

Dublin is a vibrant and inclusive City embracing all ages and new cultures. Ageing is a natural process and as people grow older they have an absolute right to experience that period of their lives with dignity and respect.

We in Dublin City Council share the vision, as set out in *Towards 2016, Ten Year Framework Social Partnership Agreement 2006 – 2015*. This vision will necessitate that supports are provided, where necessary, to enable older people maintain their health and well-being as well as to live active and full lives, in an independent way in their own homes and communities as long as possible.

As City Manager I welcome and endorse this initiative undertaken by Lord Mayor, Cllr. Vincent Jackson and am looking forward to working with other agencies to ensure that issues in respect of ageing and older persons remain at the core of what we do in Dublin City Council.

**John Tierney**  
City Manager

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1 Ageing is a privilege and a societal achievement. It is also a challenge. Managing that challenge will impact on all elements of our planning for a 21st century society in Ireland. With falling birth rates and improvements in healthcare, the number of older people in the population is increasing. By 2036, the proportion of people in Ireland aged 65 years or older is due to grow to 23.9% of the overall population, while one in four of the population will be over 65. The actual number of persons in Ireland over 65 will increase from its current level of 436,001 to over 1.1 million.
- 2 The **Lord Mayor's Initiative on Ageing and Older People** examines how Dublin City Council should address this challenge of ageing among its citizens, in the light of the predicted demographic changes. The initiative outlines a policy indicating what Dublin City Council will do in terms of its own service provision and how it can provide facilitative leadership to other agencies and key stakeholder organisations in integrating joint responses to the needs of older people. This policy has evolved through a process of formal and informal consultation with various partners, statutory and non-statutory agencies and voluntary bodies, who were asked to focus on the requirements of an ageing population.
- 3 An **age-friendly city** is a city that promotes and enables all its citizens to embrace opportunity as they grow older and to be active throughout the process of ageing. The age friendly city should also promote a positive understanding and attitude to ageing among people of all ages through acknowledging the need for “positive ageing” policies. Dublin City Council believes that older people make a valuable contribution to the life of the city as active citizens, volunteers, employees, neighbours and carers. Older people have the same rights and responsibilities as younger adults to contribute to the city as “active citizens” in its community life and within its institutions.
- 4 Dublin City Council wants the policies, services and structures around the physical and social environment to reflect the values of an **age-friendly** city so that older people in Dublin are enabled to "age actively" - that is to live in security, enjoy good health and continue to participate fully in society throughout each phase of their older lives.

5 The United Nations agreed cut off point for defining the older population is 60+ years. However, it is widely accepted that the period of transition to older age is a more gradual process as people begin to reassess work/life balance at an earlier age. For the purposes of our policy, the age limit will be 55+ years.

6 **Dublin, an age-friendly city:  
our vision and values**

Our vision is of a City where all older people can live in an inclusive, safe environment, accessible, and appropriate to all needs; where respect and trust are underlying values and where civic and social participation are fundamental tenets; where personal dignity and the right to choose are acknowledged by each of the statutory agencies in their flexible delivery of care and services.

7 The values underpinning our vision will be people centred, inclusive, promoting equity and equality with a spirit of partnership, clarity and mutual respect.



The key elements of our policy embrace all areas of activity within the remit of the City Council and will be implemented under the following headings:-

- ◆ Housing
- ◆ Health and well-being
- ◆ Education and lifelong learning
- ◆ Access, mobility and transport
- ◆ Environment and personal safety
- ◆ Leisure, arts and culture

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

### Dublin City Council will:

- 1 Establish an Office for Ageing and Older People led by a senior City Council Official.
- 2 Set up on a permanent basis a policy sub-committee on ageing and older people as part of the City Council's Strategic Policy Committee on Housing, Social and Community Affairs.
- 3 Establish a multi-agency task group attached to the Dublin City Development Board (D.C.D.B.).
- 4 Develop a City Charter for ageing and older people that will commit Dublin City to the principles of an age friendly city.
- 5 Formalise a cross-agency support structure in each of the 13 local area offices to focus on the needs of the older person.
- 6 Appoint a designated officer in each of the 13 local City Council area offices with particular responsibility for the needs of older people and who will generally serve as a special advocate for older people.
- 7 Develop a database of volunteers in the 13 local area offices utilising the skills of existing older people or those transitioning from the work force towards retirement.

- 8 Ensure in the preparation of future City Development Plans, local area plans and framework plans, that appropriate policies and development control standards are considered in all new developments to take account of the specific access requirements and needs of older people.

### Housing

#### Dublin City Council will:

- 1 Develop best practice in the design of Dublin City Council housing for older people in consultation with older people.
- 2 Apply lifetime adaptable design models to our new developments and encourage private developers to incorporate it in their designs.
- 3 Promote the integration of Sheltered Housing developments with other residential accommodation in the area and encourage intergenerational contact.
- 4 Develop targeted and community-based initiatives for older people so that they can choose to live in their own homes with appropriate personal care and other supports.

## Health

### **Dublin City Council will:**

- 1 Collaborate with the Health Service Executive in the implementation of Home Care packages for City Council tenants ensuring that effective integration of services takes place.
- 2 Collaborate with Health Service Executive personnel in the delivery of health care programmes, including fire prevention training initiatives, fall prevention training and accident prevention programmes to older people's groups in the community through local area offices.
- 3 Acknowledge the essential role of carers and the need to support them in their caring role.

### **Dublin City Council will advocate for:**

- 1 Independent living for older people in the community through collaboration with all agencies, both statutory and voluntary at local level.
- 2 An accessible and people-centred community healthcare system; which will adapt to the diverse and changing health needs of the ageing city population.
- 3 Provision of new and alternative care services to replace the decrease

in care traditionally provided by family members through increased liaison and collaboration with Health services.

## Education and Lifelong Learning

### **Dublin City Council will:**

- 1 Prioritise action in the area of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) through access and connectivity. Facilitate the development of ICT skills for older people, raise awareness of the potential of ICT and how it can be used to assist every older person in their home, social and work lives.
- 2 Empower older people to access education and utilise information to improve their quality of life through developing community-based skill interventions for older people.
- 3 Work with all stakeholders to ensure that older persons disadvantaged by social exclusion, marginalisation, location or disability have access to education.
- 4 Promote awareness and foster self-esteem in older people throughout the city, through hosting an annual exhibition event of lifelong education projects and services for older people in the city.

## Key Recommendations contd.../

### Environment and Personal Safety

#### Dublin City Council will:

- 1 Place more benches at critical and safe locations throughout the city to create an environment where older people are happy to visit.
- 2 Work with businesses to create seats in shops reserved for older people and older people with disabilities.
- 3 Install appropriate pedestrian lights timings to allow for "safe" crossing for older people.
4. Ensure that pedestrian crossings are constructed to Mobility Impaired and Disabled standards (MID).
- 5 Deliver more education focused presentations to older people in the city about the correct use of pedestrian crossings.
- 6 Facilitate the enhanced involvement of the community Garda with older people in the community, through contact with local area offices.

### Arts, Leisure and Sports

#### Dublin City Council will:

- 1 Co-operate with the Arts Council, national and local arts agencies and groups of older people to develop policy and best practice for working at a creative level with older people in the City.
- 2 Work with existing organisations to increase participation by older people in sport, recreation and leisure, and promote awareness about the benefits of participation in exercise.
- 3 Ensure that opportunities for participation by older people will be promoted by the City Council Sports and Recreation Officers.
- 4 Address the requirements of older people in the design and management of public parks within Dublin City Council areas.

### Conclusion

Dublin City Council wants the policies, services and structures around the physical and social environment to reflect the values of an age-friendly city so that older people in Dublin are enabled to "age actively"; to live in a secure safe environment, to enjoy good health and to continue to participate fully in society throughout each phase of their older lives.



## INTRODUCTION

**Ageing is a privilege and a societal achievement. It is also a challenge. Managing that challenge will impact on all elements of our planning for a 21st century society in Ireland. With falling birth rates and improvements in healthcare, the number of older people in the population is increasing.**

- ◆ The proportion of people in Ireland aged 65 years or older is due to grow to 23.9% of the overall population by 2036, while one in four of the population will be over 65.
- ◆ The actual number of persons in Ireland over 65 will increase from its current level of 436,001 to over 1.1 million.
- ◆ Older people in Ireland are also living longer, although men's life expectancy is still shorter than that of women. By 2025, life expectancy is expected to be 83.5 for men and 86.9 for women in Ireland.
- ◆ It is predicted that the number of persons over 80 in Ireland will double by 2030 and more than triple by 2050 in Ireland.
- ◆ By 2030, every region in Ireland will have experienced an increase in the older age population, with Dublin seeing one of the most significant increases. (+140.5%).

The Lord Mayor's Initiative on Ageing and Older people examines how Dublin City Council should address this challenge

of ageing among its citizens, in the light of the predicted demographic changes. The initiative outlines a policy indicating what Dublin City Council will do in terms of its own service provision and how it can provide facilitative leadership to other agencies and key stakeholder organisations in integrating joint responses to the needs of older people.



## WHAT IS AN AGE-FRIENDLY CITY?



Cities are the hub of human activity and progress. Cities are also trend-setters for their countries. The convergence of rapid demographic ageing and rapid urbanization makes it critical to design cities to support and enable the massive increase of older residents. The World Health Organisation advocates that Age Friendly cities should put in place processes and programmes “for optimising opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age”.

The United Nations (UN) Active Ageing Principles take into account the impact of biological, psychological, behavioural, economic, social and environmental factors during a person’s life to determine health and well-being in later years. Because ageing is a natural process, affecting everyone from the moment of birth; making cities age-friendly is one of the most effective policy approaches for responding to the challenge of demographic ageing.

## WHAT IS AN AGE-FRIENDLY CITY? contd.../

An age-friendly city is a city that promotes and enables all its citizens to embrace opportunity as they grow older and to be active throughout the process of ageing.

The age-friendly city should also promote a positive understanding and attitude to ageing among people of all ages through acknowledging the need for “positive ageing” policies.

For the purposes of this policy we will focus on two key milestones on the human journey, when ageing takes on a special significance partly due to the changing balance between work and life.

1 Many people begin to look towards retiring from full time work from the age of 55 onwards. It is particularly important that they would have a positive view of the ageing process at this time of their lives and plan for active involvement in leisure and other activity; all of which can be enabled through a city wide age-friendly focus on their needs.

2 It is widely accepted that people leave full-time work and are “retired” by the time they are 65. Society generally regards them as “older people” and they qualify for a range of senior citizen entitlements.

These milestones should be regarded as an opportunity by older people; a time of new beginnings. It should enhance and expand individuals’ capacity to develop, to be involved in and contribute to their communities, to the economy and to society as a whole.

Some older people may also have special needs because of the physical realities of ageing. As a result, there is an increased need for supports to ensure dignity and independent lifestyles for these particular people as they move into this phase of their lives.

Consequently, when devising age-friendly policies for an age friendly city, we must be mindful of the diverse requirements of its older constituents.

We will review our policy at regular intervals in order to ensure that these needs are being met.



## WHO IS 'AN OLDER PERSON'?

Agreeing upon a threshold for old age is not easy because there is no general agreement on the age at which a person becomes old. Most developed world countries have accepted the chronological age of 65 years - the age at which pension benefits are received - as a definition of 'older' person. At the moment, the United Nations agreed cut-

off point for defining the older population is 60+ years. However, it is widely accepted that the period of transition to older age is a more gradual process as people have begun to reassess work/life balance at an earlier age. For the purposes of Dublin City Council's policy, the age will be 55+ years.



## DUBLIN CITY: THE CURRENT SITUATION

Dublin City Council is one of the primary providers of services, facilities and resources that affect the lives of older people in the city. It is also charged with the governance and democratic leadership of the city. A major part of its role will be to influence and act as advocate with other statutory bodies, businesses and organisations so that Dublin can be an age friendly city.

The Dublin City Economic, Social and Cultural strategy, *Dublin, a City of Possibilities, 2002-2012* from the Dublin City Development Board together with the *Dublin City Development Plan*, provide the economic, social and cultural context within which the physical development of the city is framed. These publications:

- ◆ Emphasise the importance of inclusion in relation to older people in our society and outline priority actions in relation to the needs of older people.
- ◆ Undertake to ensure the provision of new and alternative care services to replace the decrease in care traditionally provided by family members.
- ◆ Acknowledge the need to address independent living for the older community, through the implementation of the National Health Care Strategy and through facilitating co-operation between statutory and community and voluntary organisations.





## HOW HAS OUR POLICY EVOLVED?



This policy has evolved through a process of formal and informal consultation with various partners, statutory and non-statutory agencies and voluntary bodies who were asked to focus on the requirements of an ageing population under a number of headings:

- ◆ Their vision for an ageing city.
  - ◆ The principles underpinning any policy on ageing.
  - ◆ The challenges and opportunities inherent in ageing in the context of the city.
- ◆ The issues relating to health, income, lifestyle, information, participation, relationships, employment and other activities that should be considered.
  - ◆ Specific and practical actions, programmes or services to be taken or developed by Dublin City Council.
  - ◆ The role of other statutory agencies in individually and collaboratively meeting the needs of older people in the city of Dublin.

**OUR POLICY ON AGEING AND OLDER PEOPLE WILL:**

- ◆ Direct the provision of services by Dublin City Council.
- ◆ Assist Dublin City Council's ongoing planning and work in relation to ageing and older people.
- ◆ Create the basis for enhanced inter-agency cooperation around addressing the needs of older people in the city.
- ◆ Strengthen the voluntary and non-statutory support agencies for older people in the city.
- ◆ Recognise and address the economic realities that accompany ageing.
- ◆ Create a positive approach to ageing through the promotion of active and connected lifestyles and living.
- ◆ Provide opportunities for the voice of older people to be heard and their participation in their communities facilitated.
- ◆ Acknowledge the wisdom and contribution of older people.
- ◆ Continue to promote the health and well being of older people in collaboration with the Health Service Executive.
- ◆ Maintain a strong focus on safety and security among older people in partnership with An Garda Síochána.
- ◆ Develop understanding and dialogue across generations.
- ◆ Support and facilitate independent living and personal dignity.
- ◆ Respect differences.

## THE POLICY OUTCOMES WILL:

- ◆ Identify and highlight the needs of older people and their contribution to the City.
- ◆ Reshape the provision of Dublin City Council's services to meet the needs of older people.
- ◆ Reach agreement around shared actions and plans with other statutory and non-statutory agencies to meet the needs of older people and support their contributions.
- ◆ Influence national policy through local example and action, through seeking to address wider concerns such as traffic management and road safety and the provision of advice and information about services in an accessible way.
- ◆ Seek to enable vulnerable older people to remain supported in their own homes with a good quality of life for as long as possible.
- ◆ Ensure the welfare and social inclusion of all older people whether living in social or private accommodation or residential care, in collaboration with the Health Service Executive.
- ◆ Make Dublin a place where older people can live active and fulfilled lives, contributing positively to their communities.



## DUBLIN, AN AGE-FRIENDLY CITY: OUR VISION

Our vision is of a City where older persons can live in an inclusive, safe environment, accessible, and appropriate to their needs; where respect and trust are underlying values and where civic and social participation are fundamental tenets; where personal dignity and the right to choose are acknowledged by each of the statutory, non-statutory and voluntary agencies in their flexible delivery of care and services.

### The values informing our policy:

- 1 **People centred:** where the needs of the older person are at the core of our service delivery.
- 2 **Accessibility:** where older people can live independently and have access to the full spectrum of services as required.
- 3 **Equality:** where our services, facilities and opportunities recognise and support difference.
- 4 **Equity:** where our services, facilities and opportunities are available according to need on an equitable basis across the city.
- 5 **Inclusion:** where older people have the same rights and expectations for civic, cultural, educational and voluntary engagement in the life of the city.
- 6 **Partnership:** where statutory, non-statutory and voluntary agencies adopt an integrated approach in the provision of services to older people in consultation with older people.
- 7 **Clarity:** where information is clearly communicated through easily accessible channels to facilitate the understanding of all older people in the city.
- 8 **Intergenerational:** where ageism is challenged through nurturing mutual respect between older and younger people.
- 9 **Dignity:** Where the fostering of self esteem and conferring dignity and respect form the basis of all our dealings with older people.
- 10 **City-owned:** where the city acts as leader, innovator, implementer and advocate in acting on behalf of all its ageing and older citizens.

### Policy Outline

The key elements of our policy embrace all areas of activity within the remit of Dublin City Council and will

be implemented under the following headings:

- ◆ Housing
- ◆ Health and well-being
- ◆ Education and lifelong learning
- ◆ Access, mobility and transport
- ◆ Environment and personal safety
- ◆ Leisure, arts and culture

In its 10 year framework plan *Towards 2006, Ten-Year Framework Social Partnership Agreement 2006 – 2015*, the Government clearly indicates its priorities in relation to meeting the needs of an ageing population.

Our policy embraces these priorities and seeks to deliver our vision of a city which provides the supports, where necessary, to enable older people to lead active and fulfilled lives, maintaining their health and well being while living in their own homes and communities for as long as possible. In order to achieve this vision, we will work together with other statutory service providers in the context of increased longevity and greater expectations for quality of life for all our older citizens.

We will support this integrated approach through undertaking the following

objectives to accommodate efficient, effective service delivery to all our older clients and to ensure that every older person will be encouraged and supported to participate to the greatest extent possible in social and civic life.

In order to drive this initiative, Dublin City Council will:

- 1 Establish an Office for Ageing and Older People led by a senior City Council Official.
- 2 Set up on a permanent basis a policy sub-committee on ageing and older people as part of the City Council's Strategic Policy Committee on Housing, Social and Community Affairs.
- 3 Establish a multi-agency task group on ageing and older people attached to the Dublin City Development Board.
- 4 Ensure in the preparation of future City Development Plans, local area plans and framework plans, that appropriate policies and development control standards are considered in all new developments to take account of the specific access requirements and needs of older people.

## Dublin, an age-friendly city: our vision contd.../

The priority actions arising from these objectives for Dublin City Council will be:

- 1 To develop and implement new protocols for interagency co-operation.
  - 2 To formalise with the Health Service Executive a cross-agency support structure to focus on the needs of the older person in each of Dublin City Council's thirteen local areas.
  - 3 To develop a City Charter for ageing and older people that will commit Dublin City Council to the principles of an age friendly city.
  - 4 To appoint a designated person in each local area office with particular responsibility for the needs of older people, who will generally serve as a special advocate for older people.
  - 5 To develop a database of volunteers in the 13 local area offices utilising the skills of existing older persons or those transitioning from the work force towards retirement.
  - 6 To ensure that information about entitlements and benefits should be clearly set out and communicated to older people.
  - 7 To work with the Equality Authority, Health Service Executive and the National Council on Ageing and Older People to raise public awareness about older persons and to tackle ageism through initiating public information campaigns at local level.
  - 8 To nurture inclusion by creating accessible inclusive neighbourhood spaces (e.g parks, leisure amenities) places (e.g neighbourhood centres) and structures (e.g neighbourhood civic fora) that empower older people to get involved in neighbourhood planning, decision-making and activities.
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## DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL HOUSING AND RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

Dublin City Council has a housing stock of 3,400 Older Persons Accommodation dwellings in 108 separate complexes throughout the City. The City Council provides housing for older persons as well as providing services to enhance their quality of life. The older person unit of Dublin City Council manages these complexes on a day-to-day basis with a team of 33 sheltered housing liaising officers. The team liaise closely with the residents as well as other statutory and non-statutory agencies. They support new residents, visit vulnerable/sick residents and promote community activities and participation as well as liaising with all other services of the City Council. In addition, the City Council provides a comprehensive welfare service to all our tenants.

The City Council also proactively engages with the Religious Authorities in the City on the acquisition of lands for the provision of further new housing for older people.

The introduction of the Financial Contribution Scheme some years ago provided for many older people who were occupying accommodation too large for their needs. It enabled them to obtain more suitable housing, while recovering some of the value of their existing property.

The City Council is currently in the process of implementing a long-term strategy on accommodation for Older People in Dublin City: *A Strategy for Accommodation For Elderly Persons in Dublin City*. This strategy has two elements:

- ◆ Redevelopment of existing complexes replacing bedsits with one /two bedroom apartments.
- ◆ Maintaining a strong focus on enhancing support and care services.

Implementation of this strategy will involve a radical overhaul of housing for older people in the City. There will be greater utilisation of existing sites with intensification of dwellings provided as well as enhanced support services with a mix of respite-type and specially adapted dwellings for people with disabilities. Since 2005, Dublin City Council has completed 165 dwellings for older people. A further 334 dwellings are currently under construction and 427 additional dwellings for older people are at the planning and design stages.

The greater involvement of the voluntary and co-operative sector in addressing housing needs for older people and expansion of social housing provision should enhance levels of housing provision for older people. Home adaptation assistance is available to

older people in the form of the Disabled Persons and Essential Repairs Grants Schemes and the recent enhancement of these schemes by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government is very welcome. The Rental Assistance Scheme will provide new options for older people, who may spend most of their lives in the private rented sector and would like enhanced security of tenure in their older years.

The outcome of Dublin City Council's housing and residential strategy *Strategy for Accommodation For Elderly Persons in Dublin City* will see best practice, accessible housing for older people, with state of the art support services provided in collaboration with other statutory and voluntary agencies.

**Dublin City Council will:**

- 1 Develop best practice in the design of Dublin City Council housing for older people in consultation with older people. This best practice model will include experts from the Health Service, An Garda Síochána, the Fire Service, technology leaders in smart home development, and key stakeholder organisations representing older people.
- 2 Increase the supply of accessible units suitable for older people under Part V of the Planning and Development Legislation, by working closely with developers who may have a special interest in constructing such accessible housing.
- 3 Apply lifetime adaptable designs models to all our new developments and encourage private developers to incorporate it in their designs.
- 4 Continue to enhance the role of the voluntary and co-operative sector in meeting the associated accommodation requirements.
- 5 Advocate for continual reform of improvements grant schemes for older people in private housing.
- 6 Promote the integration of our Sheltered Housing developments with other residential accommodation in the area and encourage inter-generational contact.
- 7 Apply the most efficient heating systems to Dublin City Council housing for older people and influence developers to extend it to the private housing sector particularly where it involves older people.
- 8 Carry out an analysis of fuel poverty issues affecting older people in Dublin City Council areas, including the private housing sector.
- 9 Develop targeted, community-based initiatives for older people so that they can choose to live in their own homes with appropriate personal care and other supports.

## HEALTH AND WELL BEING

The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing adopted by the Second UN World Assembly on Ageing (2002) emphasises that health promotion activities, disease prevention and equal access of older persons to health care and services, are the cornerstone of healthy ageing. It recommends measures to provide universal and equal access to community-based primary health care as well as the establishment of community health programmes for older persons. It also calls for the elimination of discrimination in access to health care based on age.

While most older people continue to enjoy relatively good health and are active contributors to their communities and families, a number of them require special attention and support in order to maintain health. Consultation with older people consistently points to their desire to maintain their independence. Results of research also shows that the majority of older people prefer to grow older in their own homes, within their own communities and in familiar environments. The proximity, accessibility, cost effectiveness and user-

friendliness of community-based primary health care services are therefore of vital significance to the health and well-being of older persons and their families.

It is our aim to ensure uniformity of service provision throughout the City. A co-ordinated, collaborative approach between local authorities and health services is already under way in some of the local areas and is ensuring that the key elements for the maintenance of health and well-being are in place. Accessible and appropriate health services are being delivered to older people in these local areas. Places and programmes for active leisure and socialisation are being facilitated by the City Council at a local level. Activities, programmes and information promoting general well-being are being delivered separately and independently by both agencies. Existing social supports and outreach programmes of care are being implemented by a combination of Primary health care teams and local authority personnel on the ground. Expanding this process to the rest of the city is key to the implementation of a successful policy.

**Dublin City Council will:**

- 1 Collaborate with the Health Service Executive in the implementation of Home Care packages for City Council tenants ensuring that effective integration of services takes place.
- 2 Collaborate with Health Service Executive personnel in the delivery of health care programmes, including fire prevention training initiatives, fall prevention training and accident prevention programmes to older people's groups in the community through local area offices.
- 3 Acknowledge the essential role of carers and the need to support them in their caring role.
- 4 Collaborate with all agencies, both statutory and voluntary at local level to support independent living for older people in the community.
- 5 Advocate for an accessible and people-centred community healthcare system; which will adapt to the diverse and changing health needs of the ageing city population.
- 6 Collaborate and liaise with the Health Service Executive in the provision of a new and alternative care services to replace the decrease in care traditionally provided by family members.



## EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

There are many opportunities in Dublin City for older people to access further learning opportunities. Educating older people means not only focusing on cognitive, intellectual learning but creating companionship, encouraging creativity, nurturing self-esteem and survival skills through learning. This learning process should involve older people in the role of contributors as much as recipients. Dublin City Council operates a comprehensive city-wide library service which works to ensure that it provides an accessible, client focused service. Libraries are centres for the provision of information but also have the potential to operate as social and cultural focal points for older people as well as for other sectors of society.

- ◆ Senior Reading Groups have been established in some libraries where retired people meet to discuss books and share the experience of reading.
- ◆ Many public libraries organise a wide variety of arts events for and with groups of older people and also encourage the establishment of cultural groups.
- ◆ There are several libraries that work with groups of older people, providing venues for cultural gatherings, or proactively encouraging the establishment of cultural groups.

- ◆ The provision of large print books and of talking books in the form of cassettes and CDs are standard in most libraries.
- ◆ All public libraries now offer internet access to the public with some offering training in the use of technology, with some courses specifically targeted at mature learners.
- ◆ The Mobile Library Headquarters of Dublin City Libraries provides a delivery service to people who are housebound for any reason. The service is free and up to 30 books can be delivered at a time and collected when requested.
- ◆ The Mobile Library Service also visits selected areas on an allocated day each week for those who are not completely housebound but find it difficult to travel a distance to avail of library services.

### Dublin City Council will:

- 1 Prioritise action in the area of Information Communication Technology (ICT) through access and connectivity. Facilitate the development of ICT skills for older people, raise awareness of the potential of ICT and how it can be used to assist every older person in their home, social and work lives.



- 2 Empower older people to access and utilise information to improve their quality of life through developing multi-agency, community-based skill interventions for older people.
- 3 Work with all stakeholders to ensure that older persons disadvantaged by social exclusion, marginalisation, location or disability have access to education.
- 4 Utilise existing civic centres in collaboration with City of Dublin VEC for the development of a range of opportunities for older people to address the idea of life long learning.
- 5 Encourage the concept of intergenerational contact through the engagement of older and younger persons with the Library services and through lobbying the Department of Education and Science to include modules on ageing and older people in the senior cycle curriculum.
- 6 Encourage and support older people to become involved in areas such as family literacy projects, bringing their knowledge and skills to bear in furthering the aims of such projects.
- 7 Develop a city-wide interagency forum of organisations and businesses that will assist with the dissemination of information to older people.
- 8 Promote awareness and foster self-esteem in older people through hosting an annual exhibition event of lifelong education projects and services for older people in the city.

## ACCESS, MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT

Mobility is essential to the quality of life of older people. Affordable, flexible and accessible transport is crucial for maintaining social contacts, preserving independence and accessing goods and services. Lack of access to suitable transport leads to social isolation and a general deterioration in health. Transport provides an essential link to friends, family and the wider community - a vital lifeline in maintaining independence. Research has shown that a lack of mobility can prevent older people from participating in social activities and can lead to low morale, depression and loneliness. It can also impact upon others, such as carers, social services and health agencies. Amongst the largest barriers to mobility are physical difficulties associated with walking and accessing public transport. Common concerns of older people include poor condition of pavements; inadequate crossing facilities; boarding/alighting buses and trains and steps at railway stations.

Public transport often fails to take sufficient notice of the requirements of older people. Isolated stops, badly-lit waiting areas and an intimidating atmosphere on-board can generate feelings of insecurity. Moving off before passengers are seated, insufficient handrails, overcrowding and erratic driving practices can increase the risk - and the perception of risk - of an accident for an older person.

The ability to travel is very important and serves a number of functions, including:

- ◆ **Entertainment** - participants enjoy getting out of the house and often travel "just to see people around" and not because they have a destination in mind.
- ◆ **Participation** - older peoples' societies, swimming and keep fit clubs and community groups. They also go to day centres, classes, theatre and other events.
- ◆ **Independence** – older people do not want to have to rely on friends and family to take them to the shops, bank, etc.
- ◆ **Social interaction** - travelling provides an opportunity to meet friends and neighbours.

Therefore Dublin City Council is committed to work with all the partners to facilitate access, enable mobility and to take into account the special needs of older people in the years ahead.

### Dublin City Council will:

- 1 Design a city that is accessible to all older people and that address the needs of those with difficulties accessing transport, as a consequence of factors of social exclusion and/or ageing.

- 2 Work in collaboration with transport providers to meet the needs of older people.
- 3 Promote dedicated services for older people:
  - ◆ Ensure that dedicated seating be given to older people in City Council Offices.
  - ◆ Consider the creation of a 'Mobility Centre'. This centre should provide (on a lease scheme, means-tested if necessary) a range of equipment, such as guides and maps, manual wheelchairs, powered wheelchairs and powered scooters for people with mobility problems. It could also provide logistical support by means of an escort, delivery and retrieval service for customers.

**Dublin City Council will advocate for:**

- 1 The provision of more accessible transport and travel information to benefit older and less mobile people.
- 2 The provision of assistance to voluntary organisations to initiate a system of community and voluntary transport schemes for older people.
- 3 Improvements in reliability and journey times on local buses, extension of bus lane operations and stricter enforcement of stopping



regulations. All buses should be equipped with wheelchair access and be non-obstructive to the mobility of older persons.

- 4 Provision of priority checkouts in supermarkets for older people.
- 5 Provision of priority check-ins and security checkpoints for older people at Dublin airport.
- 6 Provision of designated seating for older people in major shopping areas and sheltered seating at all bus and LUAS stops.

## ENVIRONMENT AND PERSONAL SAFETY

Feeling safe as they move around their area is especially important to older people. The fear of crime is also a strong feature of older people's perceptions of the world in which they live. The relationships of buildings to one another, their relationship to roads, pavements and pedestrian crossings can produce environments that minimise opportunities for crime and 'feel' safer to older people moving around in them. A safe environment for an older person will focus not only on personal security but will also include a concern for a safe environment. This will cover everything from level pavements, lowered kerbs at pedestrian crossings, dishing at pedestrian crossings as well as colour contrasts and distinctive textures designed to indicate hazard. Appropriate lighting will reduce the incidence of crime and will also give older people more confidence when moving around after dark.

### Dublin City Council will:

- ◆ Place more benches at critical and safe locations throughout the city to create an environment where older people are happy to visit.
- ◆ Ensure that pedestrian crossings are constructed to Mobility Impaired and Disabled standards (MID).
- ◆ Install appropriate pedestrian lights timings to allow for "safe" crossing for older people.
- ◆ Deliver more education-focused presentations to older people in the city about the correct use of pedestrian crossings.
- ◆ Develop a standardised city-wide system for the use of personal alarms (perhaps combining with Morning call) by older people in all sheltered City Council housing schemes.
- ◆ Facilitate the enhanced involvement of the community Garda with older people in the community through contact with local area offices.



## ARTS, LEISURE AND SPORTS



Dublin City has a wide range of Arts and leisure focused activities located in museums, art galleries, theatres and concert halls across the city. Dublin City Council's Arts Strategy emphasises the critical contribution of the arts to the quality of our lives - providing a creative outlet, illustrating human excellence and enabling communities to develop cohesively. However, fears about safety and affordability, inaccessible venues, concerns about travel and a lack of information can sometimes act as inhibitors to older people participating in these activities.

Arts-based activities have a key role to play in the creation of sustainable communities of which older people are just one component. Creative activity is also becoming an essential and integral feature of health-promotion programmes for older people in some care settings. Research has shown that older people's levels of self esteem and mood can be altered dramatically through exposure to arts-based programmes while creativity can also be used as a tool at an intergenerational level to combat ageism in society.

*The Dublin City Council Sports Strategy* states that priority will be given to promoting sport in a number of categories, including older people,

## Arts, Leisure and Sports contd.../

who are under-represented in sports participation. The obvious benefits of involvement in sport - a healthy lifestyle, self discipline, self esteem, team work, community spirit as well as the fun, enjoyment and companionship of sport – are essential for older people to maintain a good quality of life, health and well being.

A number of ideas are currently being examined: walkways and cycle paths through the city are being developed in partnership with the Director of Traffic. Links to riverside walks and canal towpaths are also being established. In partnership with Fishery Boards and the Inland Waterways Association of Ireland, the canals and rivers of Dublin are being assessed with a view to developing angling and walking as popular forms of recreation. All of these are viable leisure options for older people.

### Dublin City Council will:

- ◆ Co-operate with the Arts Council, national and local arts agencies and groups of older people to develop policy and best practice for working at a creative level with older people in the City.
- ◆ Provide opportunities for older people to be involved as participants and as listeners in arts activity.



- ◆ Encourage older people, including those in care settings, to avail of arts opportunities so that they challenge stereotypical notions about older people and their capacities.
- ◆ Work with existing organisations to increase participation by older people in sport, recreation and leisure, and promote awareness about the benefits of participation in exercise.
- ◆ Develop a comprehensive and sustainable range of community activities which will encourage the participation of older people.
- ◆ Promote opportunities for older people in collaboration with Dublin City Council Sports and Recreation Officers.
- ◆ Address the requirements of older people in the design and management of public parks within Dublin City Council areas.

## CONCLUSION

The United Nations Principles for Older Persons (1991) reaffirm the principles of independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity in relation to ageing and older people. These principles cannot be addressed by the public or private sectors in isolation. Implementing them will require joint approaches and strategies. In our fast-ageing world, older people's expertise will be increasingly in demand and will play a critical role - through volunteer work, transmitting experience and knowledge, helping their families with caring responsibilities and increasing their participation in the paid labour force through a return to work. Society has a responsibility to acknowledge the value of this contribution through ensuring that their requirements now and in the future can be met.

While Dublin City Council's policy specifically targets older people and their needs, ensuring that Dublin is an age-friendly city will benefit people of all ages. Secure neighbourhoods will be safe for children, youth, women and older adults. Families will experience less worry and stress when their older relations have the

services and supports they need. Barrier-free buildings and streets will enhance the mobility and independence of both younger and older persons who are less mobile. The whole community will benefit from the participation of older persons in volunteer or paid work and civic activities, while the local economy will benefit from the patronage of older adult consumers.

Dublin City Council believes that older people make a valuable contribution to the life of the city as active citizens, volunteers, employees, neighbours and carers. Older people have the same rights and responsibilities as younger adults to contribute to the city as "active citizens" in its community life and within its institutions. The City Council wants the policies, services and structures around the physical and social environment to reflect the values of an age-friendly city so that older people in Dublin are enabled to "age actively" that is to live in security, enjoy good health and continue to participate fully in society throughout each phase of their older lives.

