



# Age Friendly Strategy & Action Plan 2024-2027

Consultation Document

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**Mid & East  
Antrim**  
Borough Council





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## 1.0 Introduction

The World Health Organisation has long recognised that age-friendly environments foster healthy and active ageing. They enable older people to age safely in a place that is right for them, be free from poverty, continue to develop personally and to contribute to their communities while retaining autonomy, health and dignity. Because older people know best what they need, they are at the centre of any effort to create a more age-friendly world. The physical and social environments in our towns, villages and communities are powerful influences on the experience of ageing and the opportunities that ageing affords.

The Institute of Public Health report *Ageing and Public Health* notes that people worldwide are living longer than ever, with life expectancy in NI having risen by several decades in the last 100 years. The number of people in NI aged 65 or more rose by over 60,000, to almost a 25% increase from 2011 and demonstrates the scale of population change due to ageing (NISRA 2022)

### Age Friendly Profile in Mid and East Antrim

Mid and East Antrim has a population of almost 140,000 people, covering an area of just over 400 square miles. A detailed illustration of the population of Mid and East Antrim Borough is available through NINIS, however among the socio-economic characteristics of the area, the following are particularly relevant to older people and the development of an Age Friendly society:

Census 2021 data calculates the Mid and East Antrim population aged 65+ at 19.7% compared to a NI average of 17.1%. Total borough population was 138,994, an increase of 1.3% from 2015 with the 65+ age group experiencing a 1.6% increase from 2015 (18.1%)

### Health

Residents aged 65+ in MEABC reporting:

Very good health	16.5%
Good health	36.4%
Fair health	32%
Bad health	11.3%
Very bad health	3.8%

- 11.6% of residents aged 65+ provide unpaid care
- 4.8% of residents aged 65+ years have a mobility or dexterity difficulty that requires the use of a wheelchair

Residents aged 65+ in MEABC reporting long-term health problem or disability which limits day-to-day activities:

Limited a lot	24.77%
Limited a little	29.16%
Not limited	46.07%

### Projected Population

NINIS projects that the population of Mid and East Antrim aged 60+ is expected to rise to 46,768 by 2043.

### Life Expectancy

Life expectancy for males in Mid and East Antrim for 2017-2019 was 79.1 years, and females was 82.7 years, broadly in line with the NI average.

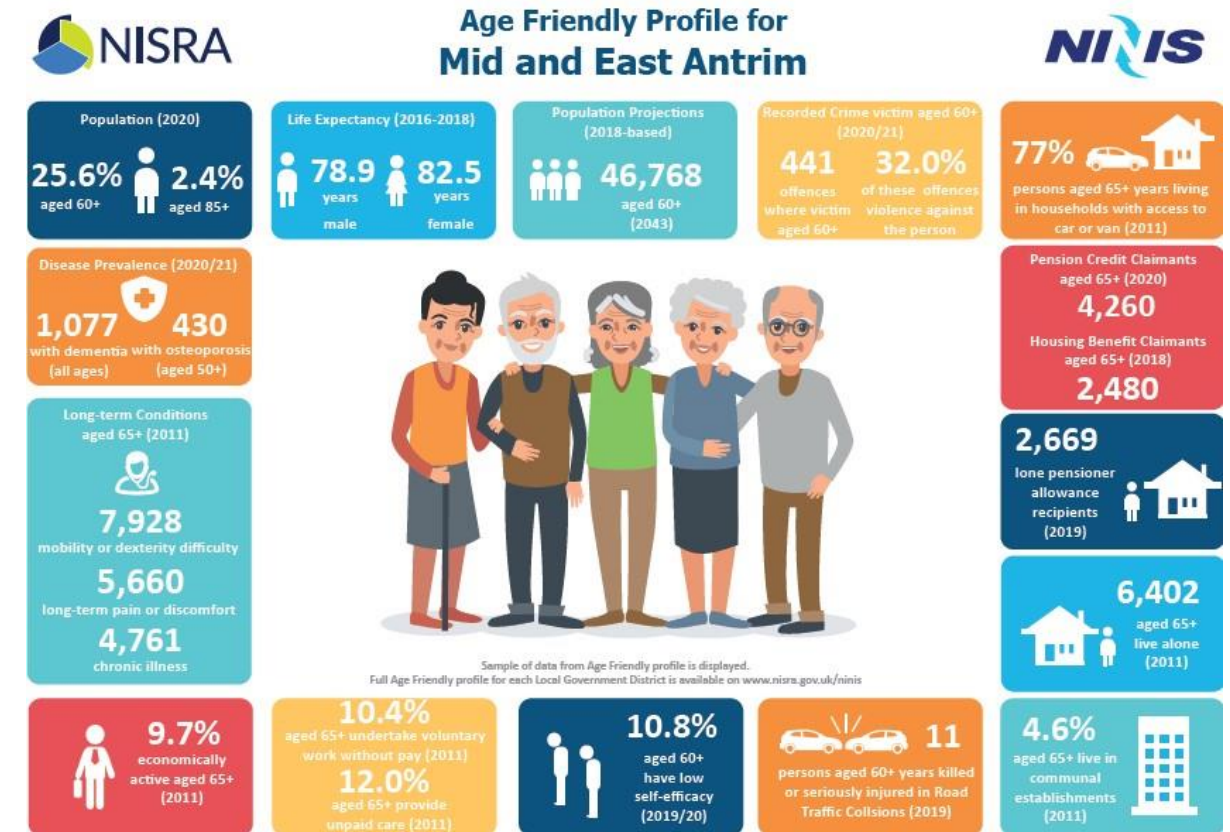


Figure 1: NINIS Age Friendly Infographic Profile for MEABC

Source [www.nisra.gov.uk/ninis](http://www.nisra.gov.uk/ninis)

[https://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/download/Infographics/AFP\\_All.pdf](https://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/download/Infographics/AFP_All.pdf)

The production of an Age Friendly Strategy for Mid and East Antrim is a key step to ensuring that our borough aligns with the WHO vision of an age friendly environment, where we can celebrate vibrant, inclusive and cohesive communities, where our people feel safe and our older people live healthy, active lives.

Within our borough, we have strong and proud communities with a tradition of helping each other as well as supporting themselves. Our Community Plan, 'Putting People First', outlines a long-term vision for Mid and East Antrim where our borough will be a strong, vibrant, safe and inclusive community where people work together to improve the quality of life for all.

The vision detailed in this document derive from the thoughts and opinions of older people in this area but also aligns with the strategic aims of the World Health Organisation, the NI Executive's Active Ageing Strategy, the DHSSPS Making Life Better ten-year Strategy 2013 and Mid and East Antrim's Community Plan.

This Age Friendly Strategy and Action plan aims to engrain the inclusion of older people in all aspects of community life, ensuring our people feel safe in their community, have a sense of belonging to the area and ensuring that Mid and East Antrim is an enjoyable place for older people to live.

The strategy development was commissioned by Mid and East Antrim Borough Council (MEABC) with support from the Public Health Agency (PHA) and informed by consultation with both older people and stakeholders across the sector. It provides a framework for working in partnership, recognising the cross-cutting nature of the Age Friendly agenda, impacting across sectors and remits.

The action plan will be taken forward by a Borough wide Age Friendly Affiliation which will take ownership of the strategy and provide direction on implementing actions. Council will adopt the role of civic facilitator, working in partnership with Age Friendly Affiliation members on strategy implementation to ensure co-ordination of energy and resources. This strategy is not the sole responsibility of one body but rather provides a collective framework for pooling experiences and skills. It recognises both the benefits of an Age Friendly borough for all citizens and the work already underway in establishing that vision.

The strategy also aligns with the World Health Organisation's eight Age Friendly domains and sets out its action plans accordingly, recognising the value in the strategic nature of the WHO approach. The baseline report accompanying this strategy and action plan provides a robust body of evidence for strategic intervention and recognises the value and significance of work undertaken to date, including by Mid and East Antrim Agewell Partnership (MEAAP) as the local Age sector interagency based partnership, in addition to bodies such as Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT) and PHA.

It seeks to build on the work undertaken and achievements to date, providing a framework for further action that aligns with, and compliments the WHO Age Friendly model, established regional networks and policy context at a local level, including Mid and East Antrim's Community Plan.

The co-design of a three-year action plan provides opportunity alongside the establishment of an Affiliation to add value, strengthen engagement with and on behalf of older people and avoid duplication of resources. Through an Age Friendly Affiliation of equal partners, older people across Mid and East Antrim will be supported to lead healthy, rewarding and active lives to the benefit of all citizens.

## 2.0 Context for the Age Friendly Strategy

### 2.1 Defining Age Friendly

An Age-friendly environment is an environment (such as the home or community) that fosters healthy, active ageing by building and maintaining intrinsic capacity throughout the life-course and enabling greater functional ability in someone with a given level of capacity.

Age-friendly cities and communities are designed to meet the needs of the wide diversity of older people, promote their health, autonomy, inclusion and contributions in all areas of community life, respect their decisions and lifestyle choices, and anticipate and respond flexibly to ageing-related needs and preferences.

\*Source: National Programme for age-friendly cities and communities. A Guide. World Health Organisation

### 2.2 Impacting Policy Areas

Given the cross-cutting nature of Age Friendly work, it is recognised that many policy areas and priorities are impacted on in order to develop an Age Friendly society. The Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan needs to connect with other strategies and policies so that it is supported by a wide range of organisations and that they consider the needs of older people in everything they do. This section of the Age Friendly Strategy considers some key policies and strategies relevant to Mid and East Antrim, while recognising that the Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan will impact across a much broader policy agenda at regional level and beyond. The policies outlined below provide a sample of the wider policy environment across both Mid and East Antrim and NI.

The sample illustrates the all-embracing nature of Age Friendly work, its ability to impact across policy areas and the value of collaboration in programme development and implementation. The Age Friendly strategy and action plan for Mid and East Antrim, by aligning with both the WHO domains and the Mid and East Antrim Community Plan, will ultimately contribute to a wide range of policy objectives and Programme for Government outcome areas.

### 2.3 World Health Organisation Age Friendly Communities Framework

The World Health Organisation (WHO) Age Friendly Communities framework comprises eight domains to address in order to improve structures and services to meet older people's needs and those of an ageing population. The Framework was developed by the WHO in consultation with older people and is evidenced based to support healthy and active ageing, supporting organisations to make their areas and communities good places to grow old in.

The eight domains are interlinked to some degree and, by identifying and addressing barriers to the wellbeing and participation of older people, they cover all aspects of community life to be considered in developing plans and projects.



These include:

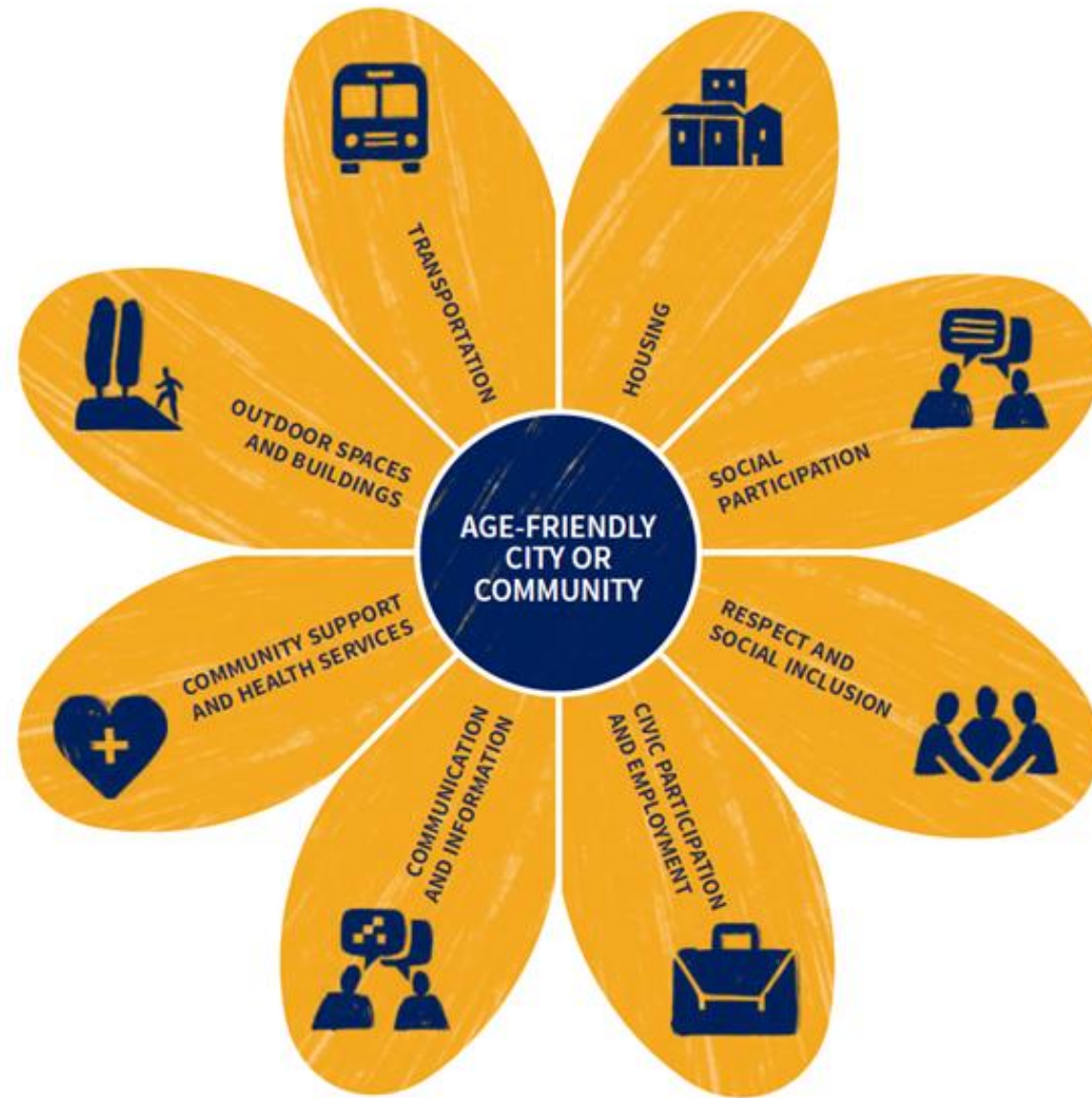


Figure 2: Age-friendly City/Community Domains of Action  
 Source: National Programme for age-friendly cities and communities.  
 A Guide: World Health Organisation

These domains are cross-cutting in nature, as is the Age Friendly concept itself, and designed to help to identify and address barriers to the wellbeing and participation of older people.

The Framework recognises that Age Friendly environments are created through the development and promotion of accessible, inclusive, safe and supportive communities which provide people-centred services. They are communities where age is not a barrier to living well and where the environment, activities and services support and enable older people.

These contributions can only be achieved if the health and participation of older people is encouraged and promoted - implementing an Age Friendly agenda recognises the crucial role older people play in their communities through a variety of forms which can include paid or volunteering work, sharing of experience and knowledge.

#### 2.4 Programme for Government, NI Executive

The Programme for Government Draft Outcomes Framework 2021 contains nine strategic outcomes which an integrated Age Friendly strategy and action plan can play an active part in contributing to, including the following:-

- We have an equal and inclusive society where everyone is valued and treated with respect
- We all enjoy long, healthy, active lives
- We have a caring society that supports people throughout their lives
- Everyone feels safe - we all respect the law and each other

Older people are identified as a priority, the framework recognising the need to consider the health and social care needs of an ageing population, promote positive attitudes to older people and tailor support to enable them to enjoy better health and active lifestyles.

Other relevant action areas include:

- Promoting positive attitudes towards mental health and wellbeing
- Address issues that lead to inequality and disadvantage in terms of health and healthcare
- Tackling issues that lead to inequality and disadvantage in terms of welfare and poverty, and providing support where it is needed in both urban and rural communities

The multiplicity of outcomes and priorities applicable to the Age Friendly strategy and action plan illustrate the cross-cutting nature of the topic and its impact across a wide range of sectors and strategic priorities, highlighting value of a partnership approach in project development and delivery.

#### 2.5 Active Ageing Strategy (Department for Communities November 2020)

*“Our vision is one of Northern Ireland being an age friendly region in which people, as they grow older, are valued and supported to live actively to their fullest potential; with their rights respected and their dignity protected.”*

The Active Ageing Strategy seeks to transform attitudes to, and services for, older people. It aims to increase the understanding of the issues affecting older people and promote an emphasis on rights, value and contribution. It recognises the positive contribution older people make to society and seeks to provide an active ageing framework which welcomes and values older people as diverse individuals with their own views, experience, values, beliefs and rights to inclusion and equality. It recognises that the number of older people in Northern Ireland is



increasing and will continue to do so. The strategy aims to provide a focal point for positive policies towards older people across government, recognising that the issues facing older people are cross cutting in nature.

As a cross-cutting Executive Strategy, it is reliant on contributions from a number of departments, as reflected in its identified outcomes as follows:

1. Older people live independently for as long as they can, free from poverty and in suitable, safe homes
2. Older people are involved in their family and community and in civic life
3. Older people are healthier for longer
4. Older workers remain in employment for as long as they wish or need to
5. Older people participate in cultural, educational and physical activity
6. Older people's dignity and human rights are effectively safeguarded

## **2.6 Making Life Better 2013 -2023: Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety**

Making Life Better is the strategic framework for public health designed to provide direction for policies and actions to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Northern Ireland and to reduce health inequalities.

The strategy has set the following vision and aims:-

*“Through strengthened co-ordination and partnership working in a whole system approach, the framework will seek to create the conditions for individuals and communities to take control of their own lives and move towards a vision for Northern Ireland where all people are enabled and supported in achieving their full health and wellbeing potential.*

*The aims are to achieve better health and wellbeing for everyone and reduce inequalities in health.”*

Key thematic areas such as “Creating the Conditions” and “Empowering Communities” seek to address the wider structural, economic, environmental and social conditions impacting on health at population level, and within local communities.

“Developing Collaboration” considers strengthening collaboration for health and wellbeing at regional and local levels. In particular, an Age Friendly society will benefit from the following themes and outcomes:-

### **Theme: Equipped Through Life**

Through outcomes relating to life-long learning and participation and healthy active ageing, this theme includes initiatives which encourage and engage people at any age in social, cultural, sport and leisure activities, impacting on both physical and mental health and wellbeing, as well as on such issues as creativity, social inclusion, and good relations.

Actions can also support inter-generational working. The strategy recognises that participation in such interests offers lifelong enjoyment and fulfilment and is an essential part of healthy living. In addition, it notes the value of volunteering which benefits individuals, communities and wider society with the potential to build capacity, capability and self-esteem in the young, and also promote social inclusion and intergenerational activity.

### **Theme: Empowering Communities**

This theme seeks to promote healthy and thriving communities at local level, with a particular focus on disadvantaged areas, through

- maximising collaboration to tackle determinants of health
- increasing access to and use of sports, arts and other leisure programmes
- maximising land/green space/woodlands use at local level to promote outdoor activities
- increasing access to public facilities for use by the local community

## **2.7 Commissioner for Older People NI (COPNI) Corporate Plan 2022 - 2024**

The COPNI corporate plan has been developed in the knowledge that NI has a growing population of older people and heightened life expectancy.

Under the Overarching Priority of Tackling Ageism, COPNI has established six priority issues:

1. Better Health and Social Care
2. Impact of Covid 19: Call for a public enquiry into care homes
3. Affordable energy
4. A Programme for Government that prioritises older people
5. Loneliness and Social Isolation
6. Crime Against Older People

## **2.8 Northern Area Loneliness Framework 2021 (NHSCT)**

This framework for tackling loneliness and social isolation across the generations was produced by the Health and Wellbeing Manager Lead for Loneliness and Social Isolation in the Northern Trust. It notes that loneliness has been recognised as a public health priority with damaging effects on health and wellbeing. The framework takes the view that tackling loneliness is most effective when delivered in a strategic partnership approach and that this will require innovative and imaginative approaches.

*“Whilst ‘loneliness’ and ‘social isolation’ are often used interchangeably they do not mean the same thing although isolation is frequently but not always a trigger for loneliness. They are two distinct concepts and initiatives should not be designed to address social isolation and loneliness but rather one or the other.”*

Northern Area Loneliness Framework



The establishment of the Loneliness Networks within the Northern area are cited as examples of good practice. The framework identifies ten priority areas for action, including: Reducing the stigma of loneliness; Creating all-inclusive environments; Promoting health wellbeing and confidence; Removing barriers to participation; Volunteering and Progressing Loneliness Networks. These highlight the importance of working with NHSCT and its partners in progressing both the framework and the emerging strategy and action plan for Mid and East Antrim.

The Northern area loneliness framework also has much in common with the WHO Age Friendly domains, including recognising that older people should be able to work for as long as they want to promote their wellbeing and maintain a good standard of living and that they have a wealth of knowledge, skills and experience to share.

## 2.9 Mid and East Antrim Community Plan

‘Putting People First’ is the community plan for Mid and East Antrim Borough for the 2017 - 2032 timeframe and following review in 2022 identifies four key themes:

- Tourism and the Economy
- Good Health and Wellbeing
- Progress in Education and Employment
- Community Safety and Cohesion



Within the community and cohesion theme, the key strategic priority is to ensure that our older people live healthy, active lives in their community. Mid and East Antrim Borough Council recognises there are particular challenges faced by its older people and their families, and many issues, such as transport, participation and access to services (particularly for rural communities) are cross-cutting in nature.

In addition, the demographics of the borough are recognised: Census 2021 data calculates the Mid and East Antrim population aged 65+ at 19.7% compared to a NI

average of 17.1% with the 65+ age group experiencing a 1.6% population increase from 2015.

Community Planning provides a valuable platform for Council (as lead partner in community planning) to plan and promote activities, including joint working with Community Planning partners to ensure best use of resources and alignment of outcomes.

Responding to the borough’s ageing population is identified as a strategic priority within the Community Plan and has included progress towards making the borough Dementia Friendly as a key priority. This includes plans to roll out Dementia Friendly Town training and connect dementia groups in towns and villages throughout the Borough.

Through its commitment to an Age Friendly strategy and Action plan, Council is best positioning the borough to provide environments and opportunities for its older residents to have meaningful engagement with valuable contributions for individual, family and wider community benefit.

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council’s vision is that of adopting the role of civic facilitator of the Age Friendly strategy and Action plan. Council recognises the importance of co-design and co-delivery of the strategy by older people, as well as statutory agencies and organisations in the community, voluntary and private sectors all of which have a role in supporting older people. This would involve Council convening an Age Friendly Affiliation with representation from statutory, voluntary and community sectors to implement the Age Friendly strategy and action plan.

By providing a framework for collaboration on Age Friendly actions, the action plan recognises the work undertaken to date with the Borough’s older citizens through the Community Plan as well as organisations such as Mid and East Antrim Agewell Partnership (MEAAP). This is an established age sector network of more than ten years’ standing. As such, Council, through the Age Friendly Affiliation will work closely with MEAAP and other stakeholders as equal partners to ensure co-ordination and added value.

## 2.11 Mid and East Antrim Ageing Well Model

This is a Council-led partnership to obtain services for Ageing Well in the borough. The model is based on a community planning led partnership approach to support and promote longer, independent and quality living for older people.

It supports positive ageing with assistance, where *‘our older people are active, respected and supported in their community’*.

The Ageing Well Model is an evolving model and requires that partners continue to work together and also continue to engage with older people in the local community to identify and meet needs using approaches which are both innovative and responsive.



The Mid and East Antrim Agewell Partnership are currently delivering this contract on behalf of Council. Through the Ageing Well Model, MEAAP currently provides the following services:

### Good Morning Telephone Calls

A telephone support scheme which allows for daily contact:

- The telephone support scheme also promotes key health messages, raising awareness and promoting healthy lifestyle choices
- Referring Elderly People to Relevant Programmes
- Progression strategies are in place, both to reduce the number of telephone calls provided (i.e. from five days a week, down to one or two phone calls a week) and exit from the service by supporting and linking elderly people to other community activities and programmes.

### Handyman Service

- The Handyman service supports older people to remain in their homes by completing necessary, small maintenance jobs
- This can include an odd jobs service such as path clearing, decorating, general maintenance and minor works.

### Home Security

- A Home Security Scheme which includes home safety checks, provision and installation of equipment i.e locks, security lighting and other appropriate security devices
- A home security calendar has been produced to provide older people with home safety tips.

### Community and Social Engagement

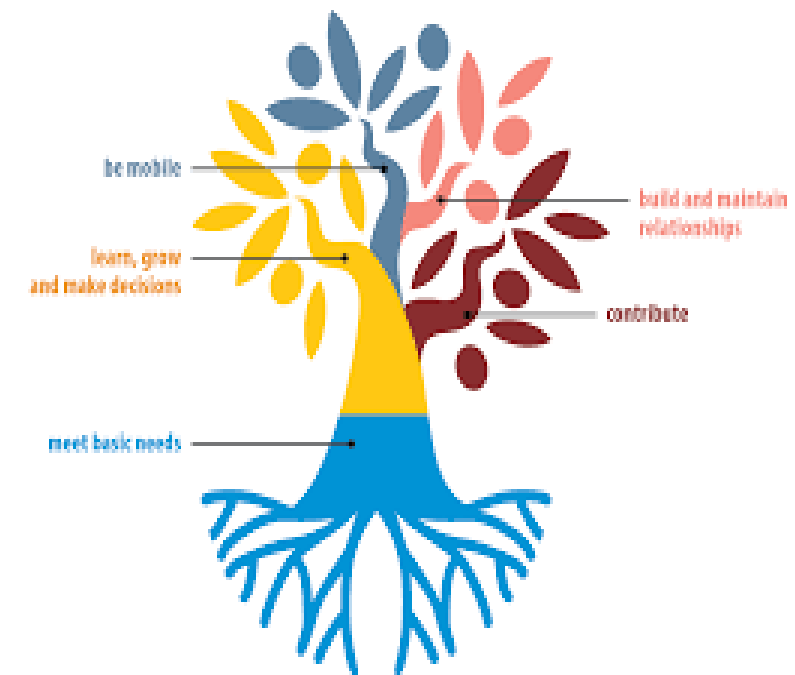
- Promoting and supporting volunteering opportunities for older people and providing a link to support groups
- Providing training and ongoing technical support that encourages older people to use information and communication technologies such as mobile telephones, internet-enabled TVs and computers
- Mid and East Antrim Council will continue to work collaboratively with the Agewell partners to ensure that our older people continue to be supported and that they receive the services that they need. With 18% of the Borough's current population being 65 and over it is vital that the Ageing Well Model continues to provide for our older people.

## 3.0 The journey so far

The Age Friendly Strategy, alongside our Community plan, will build upon the existing work in the sector and the solid foundation of existing relationships, partnerships and programmes already in place to further its aspiration of becoming an Age Friendly Borough where citizens have opportunity to live, long, healthy and fulfilling lives.

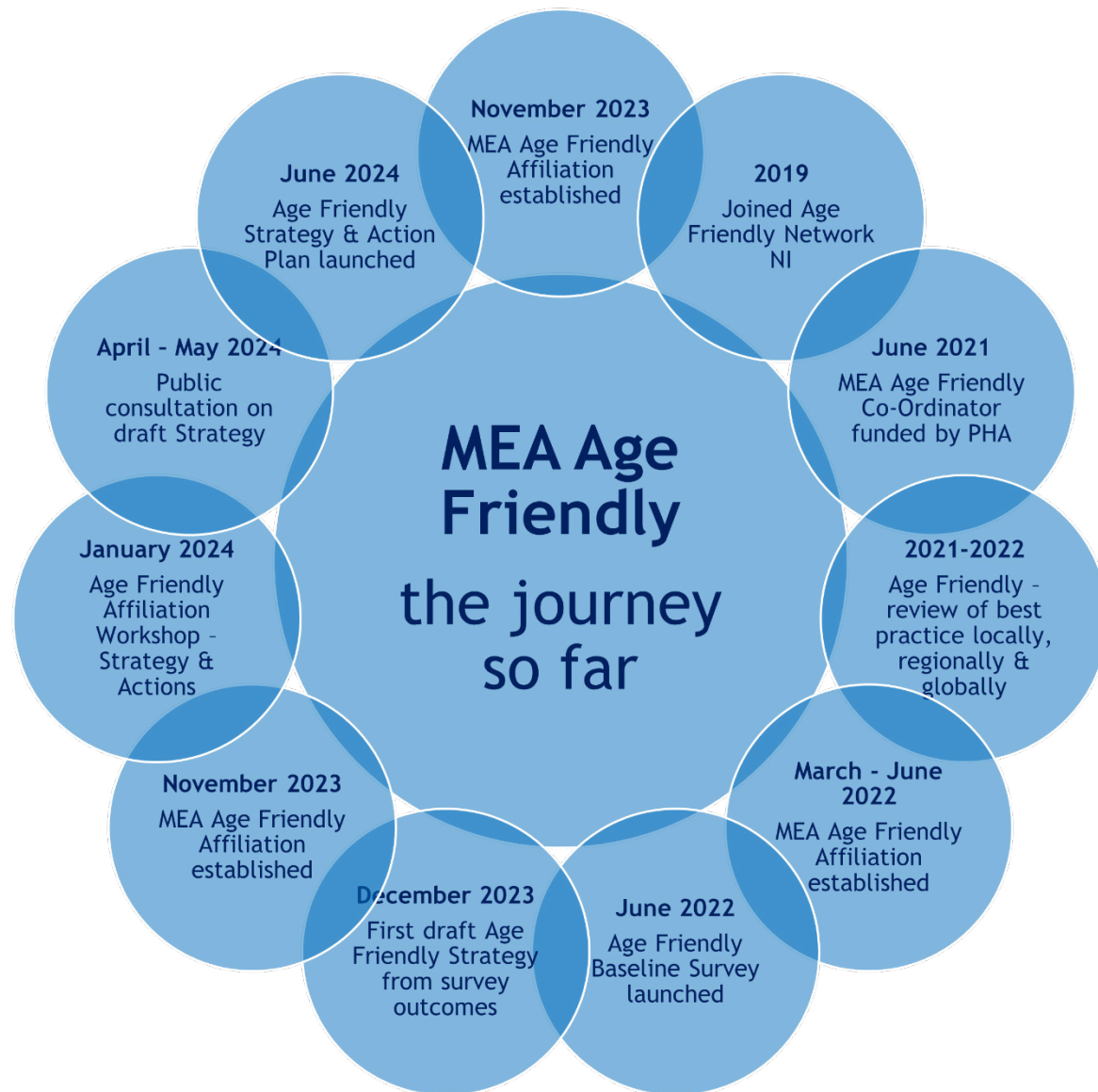
Notable achievements to date include working with MEAAP and the Loneliness Network to provide support to the borough's older residents, including during the pandemic. This work has been vital in developing an Ageing Well model for the Borough and has highlighted the benefits of partnership working to encourage innovative service development and delivery. Through MEAAP, Community Planning has actively supported and resourced an Ageing Well model, engaging with older people in a variety of ways to reduce isolation and promote health and wellbeing.

Through practical support such as Good Morning calls, Handyman service and home security measures, the Ageing Well model has impacted positively on the wellbeing of the borough's older people. MEAAP has also facilitated community engagement and activities such as Inter-generational Parliaments funded by NIHE which provided a platform for discussion and development of community connections. This grass roots engagement further highlights the benefit of a community planning led partnership model of delivery.





## Continuous Improvement Cycle

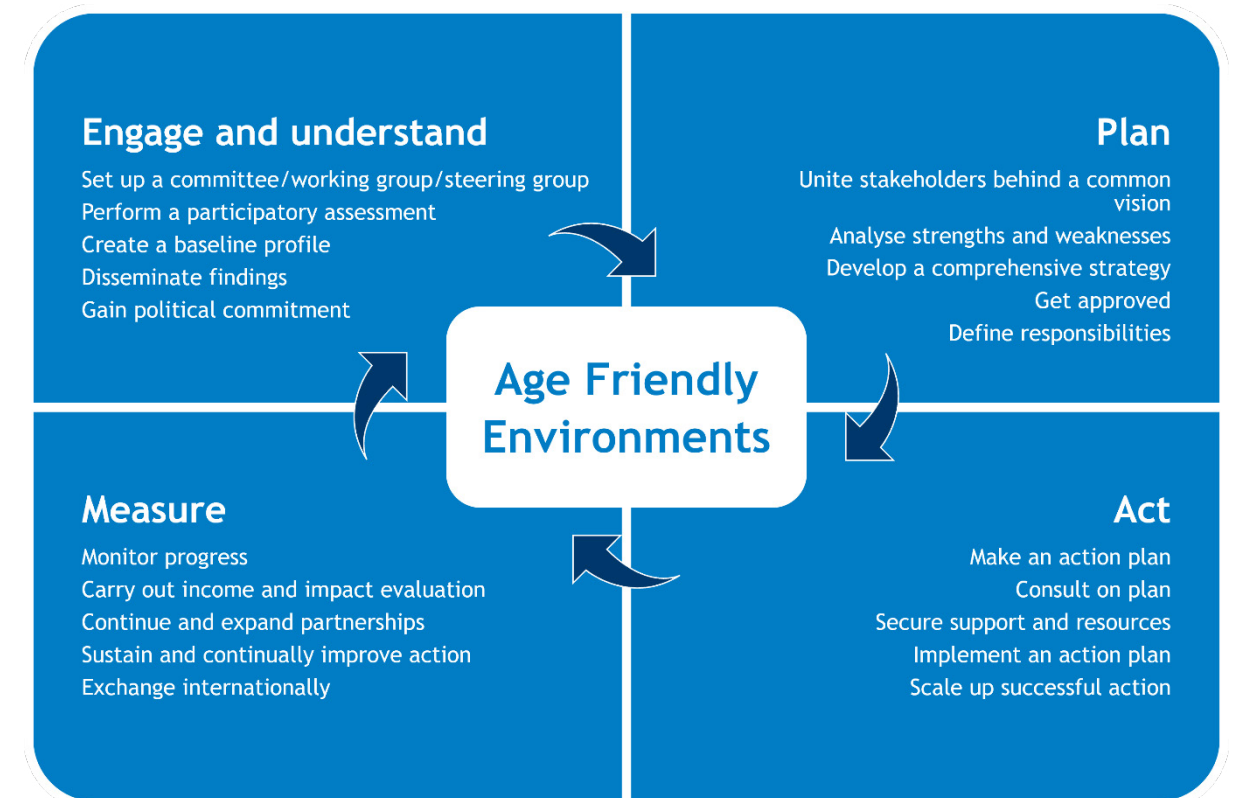


### So far we have

- Launched both Chatty cafés and benches alongside MEA Loneliness Network
- Assisted the consultation process for Department for Communities (DfC) Active Ageing Strategy, Department for Infrastructure (Dfi) Concessionary Fares Review and Age NI Pensioner's Parliament
- Facilitated bookings for several Council events for those not on-line
- Delivered Positive Ageing Month
- Established MEA Age Friendly Internal Working Group, delivered Awareness Training to Group and completed Service Self-Assessments with recommendations made .
- Facilitated Age Friendly events such as Tea Dances, Movie Screening

- Provided advice to residents and made referrals to partner agencies
- Developed Age Friendly Awareness Reflective Training/Toolkit with MEA Agewell Partnership
- Met with Commissioner for Older People NI Eddie Lynch
- Promoted kindness post box project alongside MEA Loneliness Network

The process of developing an age friendly society is one of a cycle of continuous improvement.



An effective Age Friendly strategy and action plan will provide older people and their stakeholders with the tools needed to tackle issues associated with growing older, better enabling them to play a full role in society where their contributions are recognised and valued. This includes older people being empowered to participate in community life through removal of barriers and making meaningful contributions to decision making about issues which impact them.

Development and implementation of an action plan will better enable service providers to respond to the needs of older people and improve access to services through directing resources and adopting Age Friendly practices to delivery.

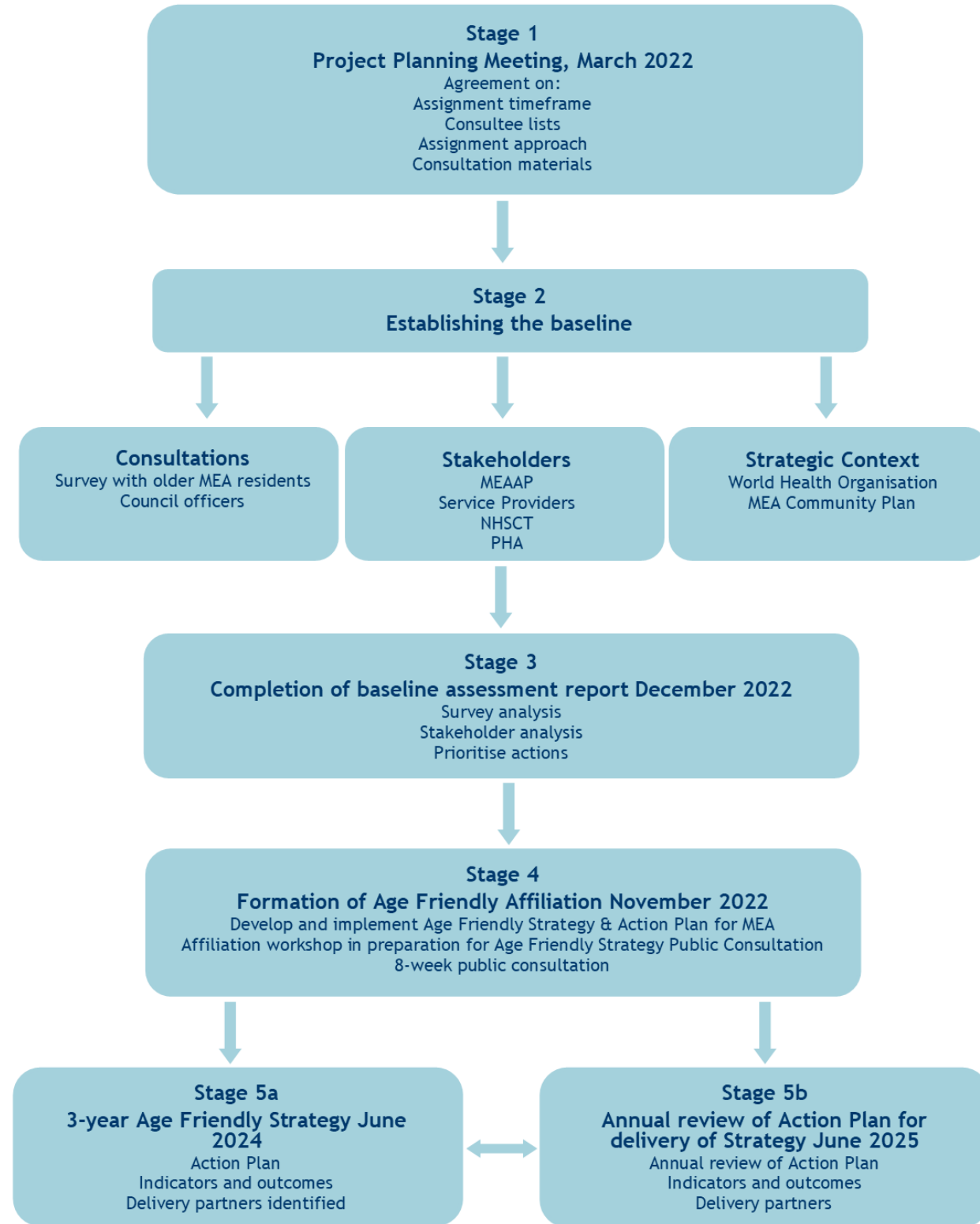
Key to the success of this strategy, however, is monitoring and review. By evaluating outcomes, measuring progress and identifying gaps, the strategy will remain nimble and relevant to the overarching vision of growing an age friendly society.



## 4.0 Process and Implementation

### 4.1 Strategy Development Process

The diagram below outlines the approach undertaken in development of the Age Friendly strategy and action plan for MEABC to ensure a user informed process:



### 4.2 Implementing the Strategy

Council's role in strategy implementation is that of civic facilitator, co-ordinating Age Friendly actions through a multi-agency Affiliation. Whilst this may result in Council having the role of chair or co-chair of the Affiliation, it will not be the sole delivery body and will work with all members as equal partners with responsibility for making an Age Friendly borough possible.

The action plan underpinning the strategy is the key driver for establishing commitment to an Age Friendly borough from a range of local and regional organisations and agencies and for collectively delivering improvements in the provision and co-ordination of services to support older people in response to local needs. The action plan will be a collaborative and responsive process subject to ongoing reflection, review by the Affiliation itself and with input from older person engagement and, as necessary, adaptation.

#### The Age Friendly Affiliation

Creating Age Friendly communities involves older residents, local groups, community and voluntary sector, health partners, statutory agencies and businesses working together. The role of the proposed Age Friendly Affiliation is that of directing the Age Friendly agenda across Mid and East Antrim, taking ownership of the Age Friendly strategy and action plan. This model provides for all stakeholders in the Age Friendly sector to combine their collective skills, experiences and energy in taking forward Age Friendly actions in a strategic and co-ordinated manner, avoiding duplication and adding value to the sector at every opportunity. Terms of Reference will establish clear roles and responsibilities of members and be subject to review within the period of the action plan.

Implementation will also be in line with Mid and East Antrim's Community Plan to ensure consistency with Community Planning outcomes; as far as possible indicators will reflect those used for measuring Community Plan progress. Regular consultation with stakeholders including PHA and NHSCT in addition to older people themselves (for example via MEAAP and an Older Persons Forum) will be undertaken to ensure ownership of the strategy and action plan, affording the ability to address any issues which may arise during implementation. Regard will also be taken of any work being undertaken at a regional level which can provide direction, consistency and opportunities for collaboration that will ultimately ensure the best local decisions and maximise resources for local delivery outcomes.

The strategy and action plan process commenced with a baseline assessment in order to understand the current situation and identify those areas where future resources and energy should be focused. This baseline assessment considered the eight World Health Organisation (WHO) Age Friendly domains (see below), consulting with older people and stakeholders across the public, community and voluntary sectors with a remit/responsibility for older people in addition to a review of both the policy and socio-economic environment. A baseline assessment is fundamental to developing an Age Friendly model, guiding actions, informing service delivery and supporting partnership working over the coming years.

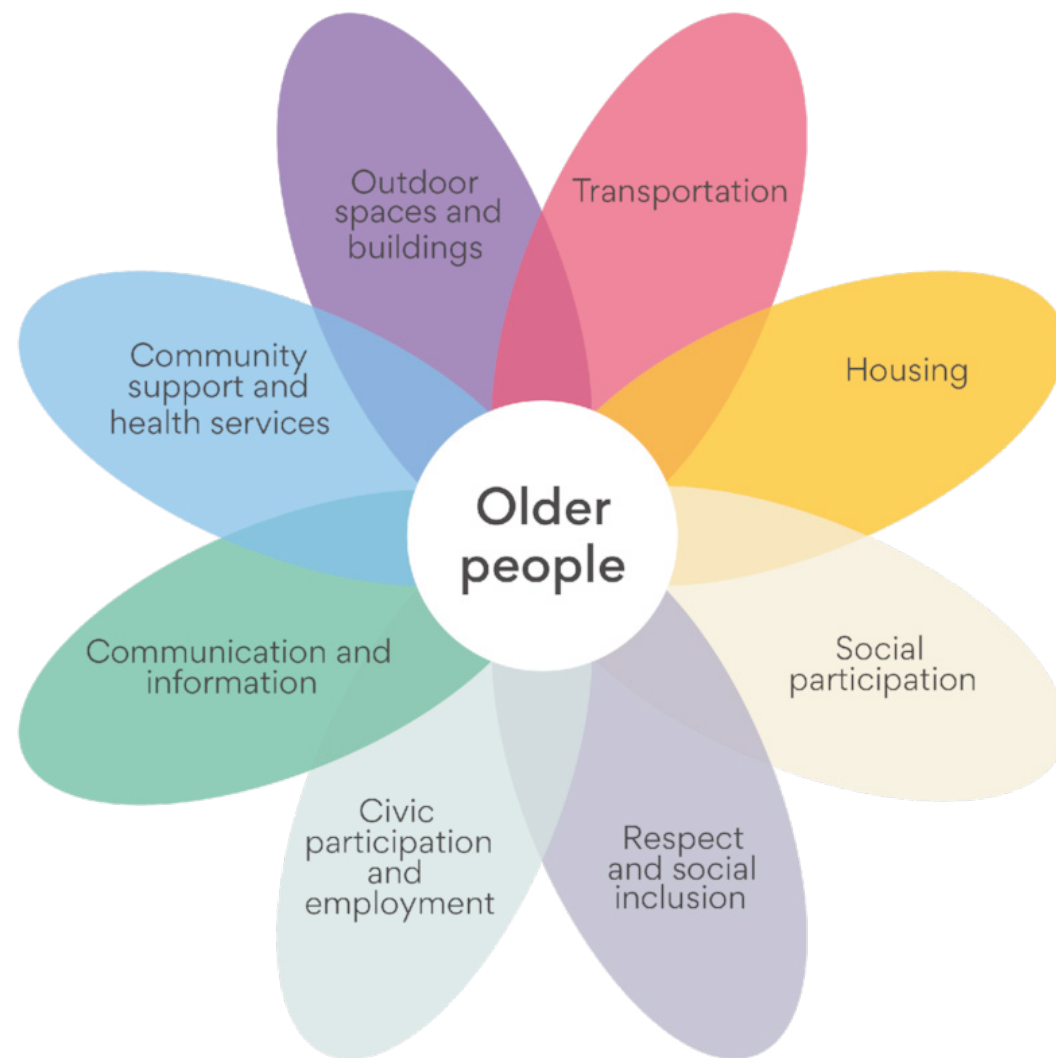


## 5.0 Baseline Report Summary

The Age Friendly Strategy has been informed by robust consultation which has involved older people organisations with an Age Friendly remit and/or working with older people and MEABC officers. It included a survey (circulated in electronic and hard copy) to older people across the borough in addition to stakeholder organisations and groups across June - August 2022.

The survey was an opportunity to identify key issues facing older people and how best actions can be developed and delivered to address these and engage those most in need. It is noted that during the consultation timeframe concerns in relation to cost of living were growing.

The consultation informed the development of a baseline report which accompanies this strategy and action plan; key findings for each WHO Age Friendly domain are summarised below and further developed in the baseline report.



### Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

In general respondents reported feeling safe about leaving their homes and spending time in outdoor parks and open spaces while public buildings and their staff were viewed positively, in terms of both helpfulness and accessibility.

Consultation informing this domain identified accessibility and safety issues to be addressed, such as cars parking on pavements and pavements in need of maintenance. While it was considered that there are good levels of accessible outdoor places in the Borough, these could be improved through increased provision of accessible toilets and seated outdoor areas. Additional actions can include accessibility audits/walks combined with resources such as the Flush App (online toilet finder tool) with results mapped online for residents and visitors to assist in planning journeys and activities.

Areas for action also included addressing a lack of disabled spaces for parking, while concern was also expressed about levels of anti-social behaviour in public areas which can prove intimidating for older people.

### Transport

Access to services by rural communities as a priority was highlighted, particularly by stakeholder consultation. Aligned to this, survey responses found that more information on Community Transport would be welcomed while also expressing the view that public transport links were poor outside of the main towns in the Borough. Scope for an initiative such as volunteer driver scheme was also put forward as an action to address transportation challenges among older people.

### Housing

There is much good practice underway currently under this domain, with high levels reported for older people feeling safe both in the home and locality. In addition, almost three quarters of respondents stated they have neighbours who can be contacted in an emergency. Accessibility in the home was reported to be very good among baseline respondents.

Actions under this domain should seek to build on support already available such as MEAAP's Handyman scheme and MEABC's Energy Efficiency advice service. These services are still very much in demand, as reflected by consultation identifying that awareness raising is needed in relation to home maintenance or safety adaptations sources of support. In addition, responses to the baseline found serious concerns among older people about heating their home and noted demand for advice on making the home more energy efficient, reflective of the current cost of living crisis.

### Social Participation

Encouraging levels of community engagement and social participation were recorded across the Borough with strong support for participation opportunities such as luncheon clubs and Good Morning services. This highlights the point that sustaining such services is key to social participation. Consultation also found

scope to develop more opportunities for older people to become more involved in community life. This could take the form of Age Friendly Ambassadors or Champions, roles which enable the individual to commit what time they wish to the role and may compliment work already underway in this area.

Aligned to this, the need to address venue accessibility was noted, while other challenges to participation included not being aware of activities, timing of activities and mobility/health problems. These demonstrate the need for service providers to view activity provision through an Age Friendly lens in order to ensure that older people have every opportunity for social participation.

## Respect and Social Inclusion

Consultation found that promotion of inter-generational activities should be undertaken in pursuit of this domain objective, building on work already carried out through bodies such as Linking Generations and MEAAP. This will enable greater value to be placed on the input/contribution of older people, portraying them in a positive light - an area in need of action as identified by baseline consultation. This could include actions which provide greater opportunity for older people to share their skills and experience (also cited under Civic Participation and Employment) and could include roles outlined above such as Age Friendly Ambassadors or Champions.

Respect and social inclusion can be achieved through more proactive consultation by both public bodies and community and voluntary groups on the needs of older people, also identified as an area of action by feedback informing the baseline with respondents again stressing the importance of not relying on online communication and the value of in-person contact. Council already undertakes annual pop-up events which have proved popular and provide a further opportunity to both raise awareness of council services and develop personal connections with beneficiaries, such as older people and their families.

## Civic Participation and Employment

Scope under this theme exists to promote participation in civic activities and community connections, which can include a greater awareness of volunteering opportunities for older people and celebrating volunteers. This is supported by the finding that older people are keen to share their skills and knowledge, opening up potential actions in this field of participation.

Increased engagement and consultation by public bodies with older people to hear their views was highlighted, with digital exclusion being considered a risk to older people - almost half of respondents were of the view that too many services and activities are online which can result in many not being aware of opportunities as a result.

In terms of sustaining the sector, there are concerns around succession planning for groups and attracting new members with many respondents stating that they would not like to join a local group/ Age Sector network to represent older people or become more involved in local groups and committees.

## Communication and Information

The baseline survey found that almost one fifth of those responding do not use online services, highlighting the importance of ensuring ongoing accessibility for non-internet users to avoid the threat of digital exclusion. The importance of non-online information sources, such as a “one stop shop” central information site/point where all relevant information could be co-ordinated was suggested as a consideration under this domain. Given the strategy’s role in promoting an Age Friendly society and working practices, this accessibility should be taken into consideration in development of any Age Friendly communication strategy and action plan.

Ongoing work in relation to internet safety and support to address the threat of scams delivered by MEAAP (with Community Planning Partnership support) was considered to be very effective in the baseline report, highlighting the importance of continuing such work and recognising the potential of initiatives such as MEAAP’s “My Easy App” in building digital skills and confidence with scope to link with other providers, including Council.

## Community Support and Health Services

Feedback in relation to issues such as healthy eating were encouraging; however, a lack of affordable health and fitness programmes/activities for older people was identified as an area for action to support greater participation in physical activity classes.

Concerns were also noted in relation to health and community service facilities not generally being considered to be fully accessible for older people. Consultation informing the baseline identified scope to improve access to information on community and health services for health and wellbeing, including awareness of home care services in the Borough. Work in this area should also recognise the role of MEAAP as an established age sector network and delivery body for the IMPACTAgewell community development integrated care project in addition to the Community Navigator project which includes a signposting service.

## What Does This Tell Us?

The baseline report reflects many of the issues identified by the Commissioner for Older people in NI as priorities across Mid and East Antrim, highlighting the importance of partnership working and collaboration to share best practice from across the Borough and beyond.

In summary, the key findings identified from the baseline consultation and strategy development process can be summarised as follows:

- It is recognised that there is much good practice already underway across the borough which should be supported and enhanced, avoiding duplication of energy and resources
- Succession planning will need to be addressed in order to support Age Friendly groups and sustain the sector



- Ensuring access and participation by older people in rural communities is key in building an Age Friendly society in Mid and East Antrim
- Transport and access to services impacts many of the identified issues, in particular health and community services
- More robust and meaningful consultation with older people is required to inform both policy and project development
- Older people have much to offer society and are willing to share their skills and experience; these contributions should be recognised and encouraged, including through inter-generational work
- Many issues identified are cross cutting in nature, impacting on several thematic areas and, therefore, requiring input from a range of sectoral partners - Community Planning can be a conduit for this work.

## 6.0 Action Plan

**Creating Age Friendly communities involves older residents, local groups, community and voluntary sector, health partners, councils and businesses working together.**

In Mid and East Antrim, an Age Friendly Affiliation has been formed with partners from different sectors with different expertise including older people's representatives, community groups and statutory agencies. It is likely that the Affiliation will continue to grow as more organisations see the value of working together to make life better for older people.

The work of the Age Friendly Affiliation is funded through the Public Health Agency, which supports an Age Friendly Co-ordinator who is based in Mid and East Antrim Council.

During 2022/23 research was carried out with older persons to identify what makes Mid and East Antrim a great place to grow old in. We spoke to a range of older people in our towns and villages and also carried out desktop research into what has worked well in age friendly communities. We asked our Age Friendly Partners to share examples of good practice.

Themes have been aligned with those identified by the WHO, namely:-



The Age Friendly Affiliation came together during a workshop to reflect on the information gathered. As we learned what matters most to local people or where they would like to see greatest improvement, we drafted, consulted and refined the strategy and action plan, cross cutting themes and actions.

## **Aim**

The Action Plan serves as an implementation tool in establishing Mid and East Antrim as an Age Friendly Borough.

## **Implementation, monitoring and review**

The Age Friendly Affiliation will provide strategic direction and leadership in the delivery of the action plan.

The Action plan for the Age Friendly Affiliation recognises the work and contribution of MEAAP and others in promoting an Age Friendly Borough in Mid and East Antrim - through the Age Friendly Strategy and associated action plan, the Age Friendly Affiliation aims to work in partnership with all stakeholders to add value to existing work in the sector, avoid duplication of energy and resources and recognise the experience and expertise which already exists within the borough.

This Age Friendly Strategy and action plan is based on what local people told us matters most in their lives. The Affiliation is committed to continuing to engage with people in a meaningful way so that what they say helps shape how we deliver the actions in the action plan.

To enable the action plan to reflect and align with regional priorities and changing local circumstances in terms of both resources and older peoples' needs, it is proposed that consultation on intended actions is undertaken on an annual basis. This will allow for ongoing engagement and the practical review of actions and ensure that resources and energies are directed towards those outcomes that have priority and are achievable within any given twelve-month period.

The following pages provide a number of action plans, containing various levels of detail, namely;

- A final draft co-designed year 1 action plan - comments are invited on the content of this particular plan which will come into effect from 30 June 2024
- A draft year 2 action plan - this is for information only and illustrates what actions considered necessary from the findings of the baseline assessment that remain outstanding could be taken forward in the second 12-month period. The year 2 action plan will not be confirmed prior to review by the Age Friendly Affiliation in line with the continuous improvement cycle
- A draft year 3 action plan - this is for information only and similarly will be subject to review by the Age Friendly Affiliation to ensure that actions identified remain fit for purpose.



# **MEA AGE FRIENDLY AFFILIATION Action Plan (draft working document) 2024-2027**





## THEME: Transport

Transportation, including accessible and affordable public transport, is a key issue for people in later life. People’s ability to move about in their locality will impact on their participation in and access to services. Transport infrastructure and services are integral to creating an Age Friendly Community.

### Achievements to Date - Building on Foundations

While the baseline report found that public transport was viewed positively in terms of both safety and easy to find information, there is scope for improvement on timetabling and routes. The baseline also identified a trend across the borough toward using one’s own transport among those responding.

Issue identified	How the Age Friendly Affiliation might achieve this	Indicators	Outcomes
Access to services, including rural communities	<p>Share information and undertake a mapping exercise to see what public and community transport is available and where.</p> <p>Focus on engagement work, exploring how to add value to existing transport provision and work in partnership to address gaps.</p> <p>Support community transport organisations to build capacity.</p>	Information sharing and mapping exercise in borough undertaken.	<p>Older persons benefit from integrated, accessible and sustainable transport.</p> <p>Older persons are able to participate meaningfully in community life.</p>

## THEME: Housing

Safe, good quality homes are integral to maintaining and supporting health and wellbeing and community connections. This requires provision of housing to enable people to grow older in comfort and safety in the community of their choice, supported by co-designed health and well-being solutions.

### Achievements to Date - Building on Foundations

Support for home safety and security schemes has impacted positively on older people as evidenced during consultation on the baseline report. Projects such as the Handyman service delivered by MEAAP, NIHE Energy Advice Line, AgeNI Independent living advice and Volunteer NI warm space initiative illustrate the work underway to date under the Housing domain and highlight the need to avoid duplication/displacement.

These schemes should continue, especially given the borough’s ageing population and provide a framework for further work on home safety and energy efficiency given current cost of living challenges, building on work undertaken through the Affordable Warmth Scheme, NIFRS smoke alarm checks and Council’s Energy Efficiency Advice Service.

Issue identified	How the Age Friendly Affiliation might achieve this	Indicators	Outcomes
Home energy costs/ cost of living concerns	Explore partnership Initiative to connect older people to range of services to support them to make their home more energy efficient.	<p>% increase in uptake of energy efficiency advice</p> <p>% increase in uptake of grant schemes</p>	Older persons are supported to live independently in their own homes for longer.
Home maintenance and safety	Explore partnership initiative to better connect older people to range of services which can support them to make their home safe.	<p>% increase in uptake of home safety visits</p> <p>% increase in uptake of Agewell Handyman and home security scheme.</p>	Older persons are supported to live independently in their own homes for longer.

## THEME: Civic Participation and Employment

Age Friendly communities provide opportunities for people in later life to continue to contribute to their communities. Those options can include community and local based interventions to engage the ageing population such as volunteering, mentoring or employment.

### Achievements to Date - Building on Foundations

Progress under this theme can be achieved through promotion of re-skilling and training opportunities currently available to older people and Council is already undertaking relevant actions such as the Economic Development Department’s digital and technical skills programmes. The work of other agencies can also contribute to civic participation and employment e.g. promoting awareness of Libraries NI’s ICT resources (access, training and staff assistance).

Issue identified	How the Age Friendly Affiliation might achieve this	Indicators	Outcomes
There is a need for an Age Friendly Alliance/ Partnership to take ownership of the Age Friendly Agenda within Mid and East Antrim	<p>Convene an Age Friendly Affiliation with representation from statutory, voluntary and community sectors to implement the strategy and action plan, including appointing Age Friendly champions/ambassadors across the borough.</p> <p>All AF Affiliation members to work together to ensure full engagement and ownership and commit to actively participate to ensure action plan delivery.</p>	<p>Establish an Age Friendly Affiliation, develop Terms of Reference and a schedule of meetings.</p> <p>All members to sign agreed Terms of Reference.</p>	As we get older, we are heard, valued and respected and involved in decisions that affect us.

## THEME: Social Participation

Social participation is strongly connected to good health and wellbeing; it is important to enable people to feel connected and have a sense of belonging with the ability to maintain or establish supportive and caring relationships. Enabling accessibility, particularly for those with mobility issues, is also key to supporting social participation.

### Achievements to Date - Building on Foundations

Valuable progress has been undertaken to date in the form of Good Morning and luncheon clubs as participation tools in addition to initiatives such as Chatty Benches and Chatty Cafés. The action plan is an opportunity to sustain and further develop these actions, recognising the impact they have had on our older population.

Issue identified	How the Age Friendly Affiliation might achieve this	Indicators	Outcomes
Inclusion	<p>Evaluation of existing initiatives such as Warm Centres, Kindness Post box, Chatty benches, chatty Cafes, chatty walks, especially in rural areas.</p> <p>Mapping of current sites and initiatives.</p>	Scheme evaluations and mapping exercises completed.	Our older people are able to participate meaningfully in community life through accessible and welcoming public spaces.
Accessibility	Share “See things from my age” resource to all Affiliation members to raise awareness of Age Friendly.	Resource circulated to all members.	Our older people are able to participate meaningfully in community life through accessible and welcoming public spaces.



## THEME: Respect and Social Inclusion

An Age Friendly community enables people of all backgrounds to actively participate and treats everyone with respect, regardless of age with intergenerational activities being one way for different generations to learn from one another and develop connections.

### Achievements to Date - Building on Foundations

Inter-generational work provides a valuable mechanism for inclusion and building respect across generations. Initiatives such as Linking Generations Intergenerational Parliaments (facilitated by MEAAP/NIHE) demonstrate the impact of this work and should continue to be supported as part of a social inclusion model. Avoiding duplication by working in partnership with established bodies such as MEAAP will ensure best use of resources and maximising opportunities for building respect and social inclusion.

The important of meaningful consultation processes by public bodies with older people to identify need and identify the barriers to participation which face older people was identified through baseline consultation informing this domain.

Issue identified	How the Age Friendly Affiliation might achieve this	Indicators	Outcomes
Hearing older people's voices	Establish and promote an Older Persons' Forum with representatives across the borough, supporting them to build capacity to represent the voice of older people.	Establishment of an Older Persons' Forum, develop Terms of Reference and a schedule of meetings.	Our older people are heard, valued and respected plus involved in decisions that affect them.
Inclusion and respect	Develop a simple accreditation scheme for premises to become Age Friendly to include staff training, age friendly assessments, JAM cards and accessible toilet facilities.	Accreditation Scheme Developed with view to roll out in year 2.	Older persons are able to participate meaningfully in community life.

## THEME: Communication and Information

Staying connected with events and people and receiving relevant information to meet personal needs is vital for active ageing. It is important that information is up to date, practical and accessible to all.

### Achievements to Date - Building on Foundations

Ongoing work in relation to internet safety and support to address the threat of scams delivered by MEAAP with support from Community Planning was identified as being very effective in the baseline report. It is important that such work continues, alongside Age Friendly awareness raising and facilitation with Council departments which has been delivered by MEAAP.

In addition, MEAAP's "My Easy App" is an important tool in building digital skills and confidence.

Issue identified	How the Age Friendly Affiliation might achieve this	Indicators	Outcomes
Communicating Effectively with older persons	Focus group with Older persons eg. Through Older Persons' Forum to hear their views on digital transformation and recognising the threat of digital exclusion.	Number of older people participating in focus group.	As we get older we are well informed about things that matter to us.
Staying connected	Affiliation members to contribute to and share online directories such as Population Plus to raise awareness of the network of support, services and providers within the borough.	% increase in organisations actively contributing to and sharing online directories.	As we get older we are well informed about things that matter to us.

## THEME: Community Support and Health Services

Community support is linked to good health and wellbeing throughout life, alongside accessible and affordable health care services. Access to and availability of services is crucial to maintain health and independence and sustainable communities.

### Achievements to Date - Building on Foundations

Through its IMPACTAgewell community development integrated care project, MEAAP has undertaken much work in this domain, working with older people through a range of actions including social prescribing using a hub health delivery model in partnership with NHSCT and Community Pharmacies. In addition, MEAAP operates the Community Navigator service in partnership with NHSCT, offering a signposting service for people aged over 50. This model and experience should be considered and inform any future plans for community support and health services.

Issue identified	How the Age Friendly Affiliation might achieve this	Indicators	Outcomes
Health programmes	Promotion of affordable health and fitness programmes/activities for older people, including physical activity classes and mental health projects.	Number of older people participating in focus group.	As we get older we are well informed about things that matter to us.

## THEME: Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

The outside environment and public buildings have a major impact on the mobility, independence and quality of life for people in later life. Characteristics of the built environment aligned with Age Friendly include public access and safety, green spaces, pavements and road crossings, parking, outdoor seating and accessible buildings.

### Achievements to Date - Building on Foundations

In general people reported feeling safe about leaving their homes and spending time in outdoor parks and open spaces while baseline report findings also indicated positive experiences in relation to public buildings and staff being considered accessible and welcoming, providing a solid foundation from which to roll out further actions across the borough.

Issue identified	How the Age Friendly Affiliation might achieve this	Indicators	Outcomes
Concerns raised by older people in the development of public realm schemes in relation to the provision of drop kerbs, resurfacing of footpaths, seating and lighting, cars parked on footpaths	<p>Work with Delivery partners on mechanism for consulting with older people eg. method of consultation on capital works, public realm proposals and policy decisions.</p> <p>Secure commitment of Alliance partners to define assessing the age friendliness of their facilities, public spaces and services.</p> <p>Share Age Friendly Self-assessment guidance and where appropriate work in partnership to take action to address issues.</p>	<p>% of older people/ representatives on consultee list.</p> <p>Effective engagement of older persons forum with AF Alliance.</p> <p>Number of premises who receive copy of Age Friendly Self-Assessment Guide.</p> <p>Number of officers/agencies with increased awareness of Age Friendly good practice (include training statistics).</p>	<p>Older people feel better included, benefitting from accessible and inclusive facilities.</p> <p>Policy makers benefit from hearing the voice of older people.</p> <p>Age friendly affiliation encourages Good relations, civic pride and a sense of belonging by creating vibrant, shared, cohesive and inclusive communities across the borough.</p>



**THEME: Transport**

Transportation, including accessible and affordable public transport, is a key issue for people in later life. People’s ability to move about in their locality will impact on their participation in and access to services. Transport infrastructure and services are integral to creating an Age Friendly Community.

**Achievements to Date - Building on Foundations**

While the baseline report found that public transport was viewed positively in terms of both safety and easy to find information, there is scope for improvement on timetabling and routes. The baseline also identified a trend across the borough toward using one’s own transport among those responding.

Issue identified	How the Age Friendly Affiliation might achieve this	Indicators	Outcomes
Access to Services including rural communities	Liaison with transport operators on routes and timetabling to enhance access to health facilities.  Raise awareness of free public transport and how to apply.	Biannual review with operators.  Uptake stats.	Our older people can participate meaningfully in community life.  As we get older we are well informed about things that matter to us.

**THEME: Housing**

Safe, good quality homes are integral to maintaining and supporting health and wellbeing and community connections. This requires provision of housing to enable people to grow older in comfort and safety in the community of their choice, supported by co-designed health and well-being solutions.

**Achievements to Date - Building on Foundations**

Support for home safety and security schemes has impacted positively on older people as evidenced during consultation on the baseline report. Projects such as the Handyman service delivered by MEAAP illustrate the work underway to date under the Housing domain and highlights the need to avoid duplication.

These schemes should continue, especially given the borough’s ageing population and provide a framework for further work on energy efficiency given current cost of living challenges, building on work undertaken through the Affordable Warmth Scheme and Council’s Energy Efficiency Advice service.

Issue identified	How the Age Friendly Affiliation might achieve this	Indicators	Outcomes
Home maintenance and safety	Advice and information on how to be prepared for emergencies.	Number of older people accessing advice plus number of awareness raising initiatives delivered.	Older persons feel safe and are supported to live independently in their own homes for longer.  As we get older, we are well informed about things that matter to us.

## THEME: Social Participation

Social participation is strongly connected to good health and wellbeing; it is important to enable people to feel connected and have a sense of belonging with the ability to maintain or establish supportive and caring relationships. Enabling accessibility, particularly for those with mobility issues, is also key to supporting social participation.

### Achievements to Date - Building on Foundations

Valuable progress has been undertaken to date in the form of Good Morning and luncheon clubs as participation tools in addition to initiatives such as Chatty Benches and Chatty Cafés. The action plan is an opportunity to sustain and further develop these actions, recognising the impact they have had on our older population.

Issue identified	How the Age Friendly Affiliation might achieve this	Indicators	Outcomes
Inclusion	Promote opportunities for older people to become more involved in community life through information events and taster sessions to address loneliness.	Attendance by older people at events/ taster sessions; % older people	Older people feel better included.
Accessibility	Highlight importance of accessibility to venues encouraging participation by older people. Circulate best Practice guidelines and examples to Age Friendly alliance/ Partnership Members.	Number of venues contacted to raise awareness/request commitment to become Age Friendly. Number of Partners committing to increase accessibility and AF environments and services.	Older people benefit from accessible and inclusive facilities. Older people within the borough are active, respected and supported in their community.

## THEME: Respect and Social Inclusion

An Age Friendly community enables people of all backgrounds to actively participate and treats everyone with respect, regardless of age with intergenerational activities being one way for different generations to learn from one another and develop connections.

### Achievements to Date - Building on Foundations

Intergenerational work provides a valuable mechanism for inclusion and building respect across generations. Initiatives such as Linking Generations Inter generational Parliaments (facilitated by MEAAP/NIHE) demonstrate the impact of this work and should continue to be supported as part of a social inclusion model. Avoiding duplication by working in partnership with established bodies such as MEAAP will ensure best use of resources and maximising opportunities for building respect and social inclusion.

The importance of meaningful consultation processes by public bodies with older people to identify need and identify the barriers to participation which face older people was identified through baseline consultation informing this domain.

Issue identified	How the Age Friendly Affiliation might achieve this	Indicators	Outcomes
Hearing older people's voices	Community and voluntary groups are proactive in asking older people how best to meet their needs (activities, accessibility etc) through consultation with the Older Person's Forum. Roll out of simple accreditation scheme for premises to become Age Friendly to include staff training, age friendly assessments, JAM cards and accessible toilet facilities.	% of older people consulted. No of premises accredited.	As we get older, we are heard, valued and respected and involved in decisions that affect us. Policy makers benefit from hearing the voice of older people. Older persons are able to participate meaningfully in community life.



## THEME: Civic Participation and Employment

Age Friendly communities provide opportunities for people in later life to continue to contribute to their communities. Those options can include community and local based interventions to engage the ageing population such as volunteering, mentoring or employment.

### Achievements to Date - Building on Foundations

Progress under this theme can be achieved through promotion of re-skilling and training opportunities currently available to older people and Council is already undertaking relevant actions such as the Economic Development Department's digital and technical skills programmes. The work of other agencies can also contribute to civic participation and employment e.g. promoting awareness of Libraries NI's ICT resources (access, training and staff assistance).

Issue identified	How the Age Friendly Affiliation might achieve this	Indicators	Outcomes
Opportunities for employment and volunteering	Encourage uptake of Centre for Ageing Better UK Age Friendly Employer Pledge	Number of employers signed up to Age Friendly Employer Pledge	Our older people can participate meaningfully in community life.
Sustainability of community groups	AF Affiliation to consider hosting a series of volunteer roadshows to promote volunteering. Devise guidance on succession planning for groups to build capacity to maintain sustainability, recruiting new members and wider sharing of responsibilities.	Number of roadshows and numbers attending roadshows. Guidance produced.	Older people within the borough are active, respected and supported in their community.

## THEME: Communication and Information

Staying connected with events and people and receiving relevant information to meet personal needs is vital for active ageing. It is important that information is up to date, practical and accessible to all.

### Achievements to Date - Building on Foundations

Ongoing work in relation to internet safety and support to address the threat of scams delivered by MEAAP with support from Community Planning was identified as being very effective in the baseline report. It is important that such work continues, alongside Age Friendly awareness raising and facilitation with Council departments which has been delivered.

In addition, MEAAP's "My Easy App" is an important tool in building digital skills and confidence.

Issue identified	How the Age Friendly Affiliation might achieve this	Indicators	Outcomes
Effective communication	Devise reference guidance for organisations to ensure that communications materials and methods, language, signage, font size etc are age friendly.	Number of organisations provided with a copy of reference guidance.	As we get older, we are well informed about things that matter to us.

## THEME: Community Support and Health Services

Community support is linked to good health and wellbeing throughout life, alongside accessible and affordable health care services. Access to and availability of services is crucial to maintain health and independence and sustainable communities.

### Achievements to Date - Building on Foundations

Through its IMPACTAgewell community development integrated care project, MEAAP has undertaken much work in this domain, working with older people through a range of actions including social prescribing using a hub health delivery model in partnership with NHSCT and Community Pharmacies. In addition, MEAAP operates the Community Navigator service in partnership with NHSCT, offering a signposting service for people aged over 50. This model and experience should be considered and inform any future plans for community support and health services.

Issue identified	How the Age Friendly Affiliation might achieve this	Indicators	Outcomes
Accessibility	Liaise with service providers to lobby for health and community service facilities and routes to be more accessible.	Number of meetings held, number of facilities/routes with improved accessibility.	As we get older, we are heard, valued and respected and involved in decisions that affect us.  Older people within the borough are active, respected and supported in their community.
Information and awareness	Improve access to information on community and health services, including home care services and awareness raising about violence against older people.	Number of initiatives to raise awareness of services available.	As we get older, we are well informed about things that matter to us.

## THEME: Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

The outside environment and public buildings have a major impact on the mobility, independence and quality of life of people in later life. Characteristics of the built environment aligned to being Age Friendly include public access and safety, green spaces, pavements and road crossings, parking, outdoor seating and accessible buildings.

### Achievements to Date - Building on Foundations

In general people reported feeling safe about leaving their homes and spending time in outdoor parks and open spaces while baseline report findings also indicated positive experiences in relation to public buildings and staff being considered accessible and welcoming, providing a solid foundation from which to roll out further actions across the borough.

Issue identified	How the Age Friendly Affiliation might achieve this	Indicators	Outcomes
Accessibility of outdoor spaces	Accessibility/ walkability audits of public spaces eg. Parks, shopping areas, mapped seating/WC's.	Audit template development and applied to 4 schemes per year.	As we get older, we are heard, valued and respected and involved in decisions that affect us.  Policy makers benefit from hearing the voice of older people.  Older people within the borough are active, respected and supported in their community.



**THEME: Respect and Social Inclusion**

An Age Friendly community enables people of all backgrounds to actively participate and treats everyone with respect, regardless of age with intergenerational activities being one way for different generations to learn from one another and develop connections.

**Achievements to Date - Building on Foundations**

Inter-generational work provides a valuable mechanism for inclusion and building respect across generations. Initiatives such as Linking Generations Intergenerational Parliaments (facilitated by MEAAP/NIHE) demonstrate the impact Of this work and should continue to be supported as part of a social inclusion model. Avoiding duplication by working in partnership with established bodies such as MEAAP will ensure best use of resources and maximising opportunities for building respect and social inclusion.

The importance of meaningful consultation processes by public bodies with older people to identify need and identify the barriers to participation which face older people was identified through baseline consultation informing this domain.

Issue identified	How the Age Friendly Affiliation might achieve this	Indicators	Outcomes
Community engagement	Development of intergenerational programmes, including rural outreach.	Number of programmes delivered and attendance. % of rural participants	Policy makers benefit from hearing the voice of older people. Older people within the borough are active, respected and supported in their community.

**7.0 Next Steps**

In terms of next steps in taking forward the Age Friendly strategy and action plan, the following are proposed:

- Establish Age Friendly Affiliation and agree Terms of Reference
- Facilitate workshop for Age Friendly Affiliation to review and approve draft strategy and action plan
- Circulate strategy and action plan for stakeholder/public consideration
- Review findings of public consultation
- Plan soft launch of Age friendly Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2027
- Schedule meetings agreed for Age Friendly Affiliation
- Implement Action plan
- Ongoing monitoring and regular review of progress, including seeking beneficiary feedback on a regular basis (at least annually)

It is proposed that these steps are undertaken across 2024/25 year, with a continual review and improvement cycle, to provide scope to respond to any emerging issues in the interim. This will ensure that actions and resources are tailored to need and best placed to support older citizens across Mid and East Antrim lead fulfilling, active and rewarding lives.



## APPENDIX 1 BASELINE SURVEY



### 1.0 Introduction

This baseline report has been developed as part of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council's mission to establish an Age Friendly Borough using the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Age Friendly Cities and Communities model.

Council received support from the Public Health Agency to deliver an Age Friendly Strategy and three-year action plan to build upon existing work and the vision of establishing an Age Friendly Borough whose residents can live, long, healthy and fulfilling lives.

The baseline has been developed in consultation with local residents and groups in addition to stakeholders developing and delivering services to older people across the borough. It has been further informed by reviewing the demographics for the borough and the policy environment at both regional and local level.

The baseline has provided a robust evidence base across the eight Age Friendly domains established by the WHO and this feedback will inform an Age Friendly strategy and three-year action plan. The baseline, strategy and action plan all recognise the cross-cutting nature of the Age Friendly agenda which impacts across all sectoral areas and highlights the benefits of working in partnership. The baseline also recognises the work achieved to date in pursuit of an Age Friendly borough, including support from the Community Planning Partnership for an Ageing Well model through Mid and East Antrim Age Partnership (MEAAP) and the efforts of local groups across the borough, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In providing a baseline, this report seeks to guide Council in its action planning, service delivery and partnership working over the coming years. The emerging strategy and action plan will provide a framework for development and delivery of Age Friendly actions, seeking to add value to the work and expertise which already exists across the borough.

In development of this work, Council has been clear that it would act as a civic facilitator which will include convening an Age Friendly Alliance with representation from statutory, voluntary and community sectors to implement the Age Friendly strategy and action plan. Council recognises that it is imperative that there is contribution to and ownership of the strategy by older people themselves, in addition to statutory agencies and bodies with a remit for delivering services for older people, as well as organisations in the community, voluntary and private sectors which work with and support older people.



## 2.0 Socio-Economic Profile

A detailed illustration of the population of Mid and East Antrim Borough is available through NINIS. Among the socio-economic characteristics of the area, the following are particularly to older people and development of an Age Friendly society:

### Census 2021

The number of people in NI aged 65 or more rose by over 60,000, to almost a 25% increase from 2011 and demonstrates the scale of population change due to ageing (NISRA 2022)

Census 2021 data calculates the Mid and East Antrim population aged 65+ at 19.7% compared to a NI average of 17.1%. Total Borough population was 138,994, an increase of 1.3% from 2015 with the 65+ age group experiencing a 1.6% increase from 2015 (18.1%)

### Health

Residents aged 65+ in MEABC reporting:

Very good health	16.5%
Good health	36.4%
Fair health	32%
Bad health	11.3%
Very bad health	3.8%

- 11.6% of residents aged 65+ provide unpaid care
- 4.8% of residents aged 65+ years have a mobility or dexterity difficulty that requires the use of a wheelchair

Residents aged 65+ in MEABC reporting long-term health problem or disability which limits day-to-day activities:

Limited a lot	24.77%
Limited a little	29.16%
Not limited	46.07%

### Projected Population

NINIS projects that the population of Mid and East Antrim aged 60+ is expected to rise to 46,768 by 2043.

### Life Expectancy

Life expectancy for males in Mid and East Antrim for 2017-2019 was 79.1 years, and females was 82.7 years, broadly in line with the NI average.

The Institute of Public Health report *Ageing and Public Health* notes that people worldwide are living longer than ever, with life expectancy in NI having risen by several decades in the last 100 years.

## 3.0 Policy Environment

Given the cross-cutting nature of Age Friendly work, it is recognised that many policy areas and priorities are impacted on in order to develop an Age Friendly society. This section of the baseline report considers some key strategies relevant to Mid and East Antrim, while recognising that the Age Friendly strategy and Action Plan will impact across a much broader policy agenda at regional level and beyond.

### World Health Organisation

The World Health Organisation (WHO) Age Friendly Communities framework comprises eight domains to address in order to improve structures and services to meet older people's needs and those of an ageing population. The Framework was developed by the WHO in consultation with older people and is evidenced based to support healthy and active ageing, supporting organisations to make their areas and communities good places to grow old in.

The eight domains are interlinked to some degree and, by identifying and addressing barriers to the wellbeing and participation of older people, they cover all aspects of community life to be considered in developing plans and projects. Appendix 1 provides an outline of each of the eight domains:

- Outdoor spaces and buildings
- Transport
- Housing
- Social participation
- Respect and social inclusion
- Civic participation and employment
- Communication and information
- Community support and health services

### Mid and East Antrim Community Plan

Putting People First is the overarching document for Community Planning in the Mid and East Antrim Borough for the 2017 - 2032 timeframe and identifies five key themes:

- Sustainable Jobs and Tourism
- Good Health and Wellbeing
- Progress in Education
- Community Safety and Cohesion
- Our Environment

Given the cross-cutting nature of Age Friendly activities, Community Planning provides a valuable platform for Council to plan and promote activities, including joint working with Community Planning partners to ensure best use of resources

and alignment of outcomes. Responding to the borough's ageing population is identified as a strategic priority within the Plan and has included progress towards making the borough Dementia Friendly as a key priority. This includes plans to roll out Dementia Friendly Town training and connect dementia groups in towns and villages throughout the borough.

Notable achievements to date include working with MEAAP and the Loneliness Network to provide support to the borough's older residents, including during the pandemic. This work has been vital in developing an Ageing Well model for the borough and has highlighted the benefits of partnership working to encourage innovative service development and delivery. Through MEAAP, Community Planning has actively supported and resourced an Ageing Well model, engaging with older people in a variety of ways to reduce isolation and promote health and wellbeing.

Through practical support such as Good Morning calls, Handyman service and home security measures, the Ageing Well model has impacted positively on the wellbeing of the borough's older people. MEAAP has also facilitated community engagement and activities such as Inter-generational Parliaments funded by NIHE which provided a platform for discussion and development of community connections; this grass roots engagement further highlights the benefit of a community planning led partnership model of delivery.

#### **Mid and East Antrim Corporate Plan 2023 - 2027**

Council's new Corporate Plan was under consultation at time of baseline report development. Those proposed strategic themes most relevant to the Age Friendly assignment included:

- Community Safety and Cohesion
- Learning for Life
- Good Health and Wellbeing

These themes were underpinned by a series of aims which are of particular relevance to developing an Age Friendly Borough and highlight the strategic nature of Age Friendly, reflected in aims such as:

#### **Community Safety and Cohesion**

- Encourage good relations, civic pride and a sense of belonging by creating vibrant, shared, cohesive and inclusive communities across the borough
- Build the capacity of local communities to improve resilience and self-sustainability
- Provide support to vulnerable people who need it

#### **Learning for Life**

- Develop the skills needed to embrace opportunities for a prosperous and more sustainable future
- Promote to stakeholders the benefits of creating volunteer and enhanced work experience opportunities

#### **Good Health and Wellbeing**

- Deliver a coordinated partnership approach to improve the physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing of our residents
- Ensure our residents and visitors have accessible and inclusive Council facilities
- Enable vulnerable groups within our borough to be active, respected and supported in their community

These corporate goals indicate the strategic nature of Age Friendly work and the importance of adopting appropriate Age Friendly thinking and work practices across all Council services. The Age Friendly action plan seeks to contribute to the corporate goals set out above as part of that strategic approach.

#### **Northern Area Loneliness Framework 2021 (NHSCT)**

This framework for tackling loneliness and social isolation across the generations was produced by the Health & Wellbeing Manager Lead for Loneliness and Social Isolation in the Northern Trust. It notes that loneliness has been recognised as a public health priority with damaging effects on health and wellbeing. The framework takes the view that tackling loneliness is most effective when delivered in a strategic partnership approach and that this will require innovative and imaginative approaches.

*“Whilst ‘loneliness’ and ‘social isolation’ are often used interchangeably they do not mean the same thing although isolation is frequently but not always a trigger for loneliness. They are two distinct concepts and initiatives should not be designed to address social isolation and loneliness but rather one or the other”.*

Northern Area Loneliness Framework

The establishment of the Loneliness Networks within the Northern area are cited as examples of good practice. The framework identifies ten priority areas for action, including: Reducing the stigma of loneliness; Creating all-inclusive environments; Promoting health wellbeing and confidence; Removing barriers to participation; Volunteering and Progressing Loneliness Networks. These highlight the importance of working with NHSCT and its partners in progressing both the framework and the emerging strategy and action plan for Mid and East Antrim.

The framework also has much in common with the WHO Age Friendly domains, including recognising that older people should be able to work for as long as they want to promote their wellbeing and maintain a good standard of living and that they have a wealth of knowledge, skills and experience to share.

#### **Programme for Government**

The Programme for Government draft outcomes framework 2021 contains nine strategic outcomes which an integrated Age Friendly strategy and action plan can play an active part in contributing to, including:-



### Outcomes:

- We have an equal and inclusive society where everyone is valued and treated with respect
- We all enjoy long, healthy, active lives
- We have a caring society that supports people throughout their lives
- Everyone feels safe - we all respect the law and each other.

Older people are identified as a priority, the framework recognising the need to consider the health and social care needs of an ageing population, promote positive attitudes to older people and tailor support to enable them to enjoy better health and active lifestyles.

Other relevant action areas include:

- Promoting positive attitudes towards mental health and wellbeing
- Address issues that lead to inequality and disadvantage in terms of health and healthcare
- Tackling issues that lead to inequality and disadvantage in terms of welfare and poverty, and providing support where it is needed in both urban and rural communities

The multiplicity of outcomes and priorities applicable to the Age Friendly strategy and action plan illustrate the cross-cutting nature of the topic and its impact across a wide range of sectors and strategic priorities, highlighting value of a partnership approach in project development and delivery.

### Active Ageing Strategy (DfC Nov 2020)

*“Our vision is one of Northern Ireland being an age friendly region in which people, as they grow older, are valued and supported to live actively to their fullest potential; with their rights respected and their dignity protected”.*

The Active Ageing Strategy seeks to transform attitudes to, and services for, older people. It aims to increase the understanding of the issues affecting older people and promote an emphasis on rights, value and contribution. It recognises the positive contribution older people make to society and seeks to provide an active ageing framework which welcomes and values older people as diverse individuals with their own views, experience, values, beliefs and rights to inclusion and equality. It recognises that the number of older people in Northern Ireland is increasing and will continue to do so. The strategy aims to provide a focal point for positive policies towards older people across government, recognising that the issues facing older people are cross cutting in nature.

As a cross-cutting Executive Strategy, it is reliant on contributions from a number of departments, as reflected in its identified outcomes as follows:

1. Older people live independently for as long as they can, free from poverty and in suitable, safe homes
2. Older people are involved in their family and community and in civic life
3. Older people are healthier for longer
4. Older workers remain in employment for as long as they wish or need to

5. Older people participate in cultural, educational and physical activity
6. Older people’s dignity and human rights are effectively safeguarded.

### Commissioner for Older People NI (COPNI) Corporate Plan 2022 - 2024

The corporate plan has been developed in the knowledge that NI has a growing population of older people and heightened life expectancy.

Under the Overarching Priority of Tackling Ageism, COPNI has established six priority issues:

- Better Health and Social Care
- Impact of Covid 19: Call for a public enquiry into care homes
- Affordable energy
- A Programme for Government that prioritises older people
- Loneliness and Social Isolation
- Crime Against Older People

The baseline report reflects many of these issues as priorities across Mid and East Antrim, highlighting the importance of partnership working and collaboration to share best practice from across the borough and beyond.

### Making Life Better 2013-2023: Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Making Life Better is the strategic framework for public health designed to provide direction for policies and actions to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Northern Ireland and to reduce health inequalities.

The strategy has set the following vision and aims:-

“Through strengthened co-ordination and partnership working in a whole system approach, the framework will seek to create the conditions for individuals and communities to take control of their own lives and move towards a vision for Northern Ireland where all people are enabled and supported in achieving their full health and wellbeing potential. The aims are to achieve better health and wellbeing for everyone and reduce inequalities in health.”

Key thematic areas such as “Creating the Conditions” and “Empowering Communities” seek to address the wider structural, economic, environmental and social conditions impacting on health at population level, and within local communities. “Developing Collaboration” considers strengthening collaboration for health and wellbeing at regional and local levels. In particular, an Age Friendly society will benefit from the following themes and outcomes:-

### Theme: Equipped Through Life

Through outcomes relating to life-long learning and participation and healthy active ageing, this theme includes initiatives which encourage and engage people at any age in social, cultural, sport and leisure activities, impacting on both physical and mental health and wellbeing, as well as on such issues as creativity, social inclusion, and good relations.

Actions can also support inter-generational working. The strategy recognises that participation in such interests offers lifelong enjoyment and fulfilment and is an essential part of healthy living. In addition, it notes the value of volunteering which benefits individuals, communities and wider society with the potential to build capacity, capability and self-esteem in the young, and also promote social inclusion and intergenerational activity.

### Theme: Empowering Communities

This theme seeks to promote healthy and thriving communities at local level, with a particular focus on disadvantaged areas, through

- maximising collaboration to tackle determinants of health
- increasing access to and use of sports, arts and other leisure programmes
- maximising land/green space/woodlands use at local level to promote outdoor activities
- increasing access to public facilities for use by the local community

### Summary

The policies outlined above provide a sample of the wider policy environment across both Mid and East Antrim and NI. The sample illustrates the all-embracing nature of Age Friendly work, its ability to impact across policy areas and the value of collaboration in programme development and implementation. The Age Friendly strategy and action plan for Mid and East Antrim, by aligning with both the WHO domains and the M&EA Community Plan, will ultimately contribute to a wide range of policy objectives and Programme for Government outcome areas.

## 4.0 Community Consultation

The Age Friendly baseline was further informed by a consultation process which included a survey (circulated in electronic and hard copy) to older people across the borough in addition to stakeholder organisations and groups. The survey was circulated across June - August 2022 and completed by 125 respondents.

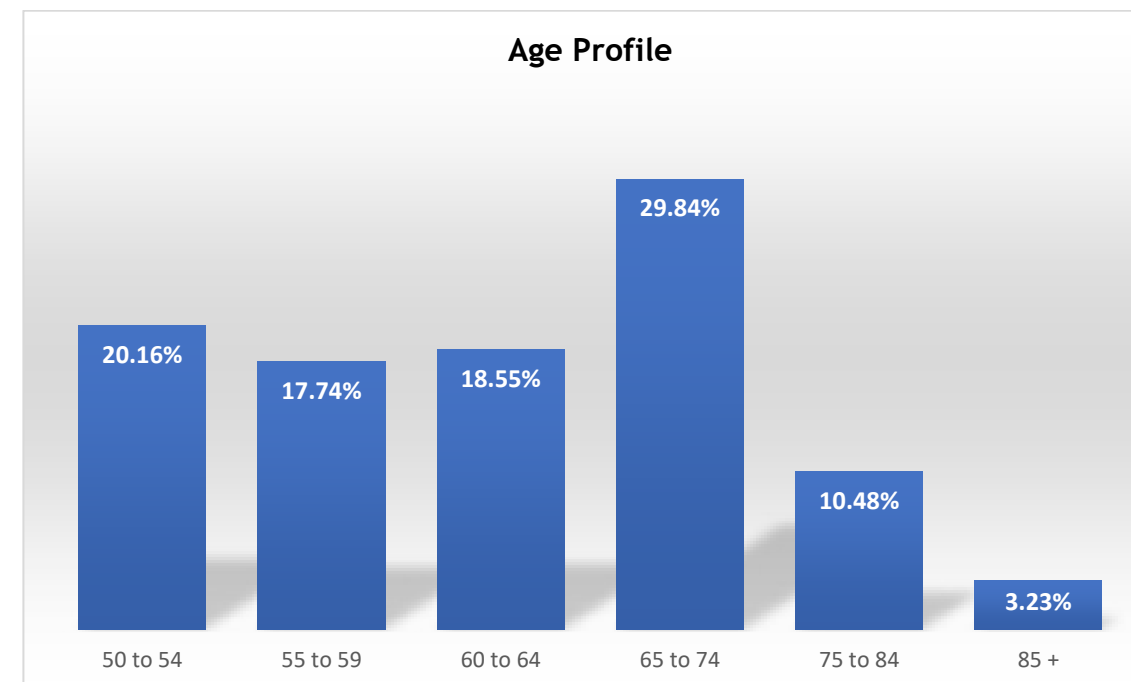
The survey was an opportunity to identify key issues facing older people and how best actions can be developed and delivered to address these and engage those most in need. It is noted that during the consultation timeframe concerns in relation to cost of living were growing.

Survey consultation findings are presented as follows:

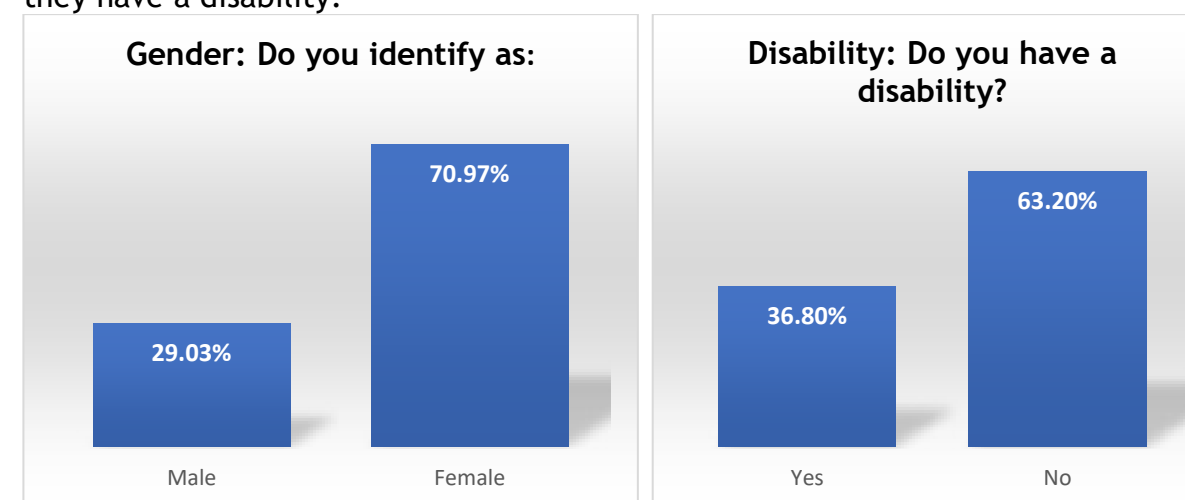
### RESPONDENT PROFILE

#### Age Profile

Respondents were distributed across a wide range of older age brackets, ensuring comprehensive representation of all age categories.



The majority of respondents identified as female while over one third stated that they have a disability:



#### Geographic Profile:

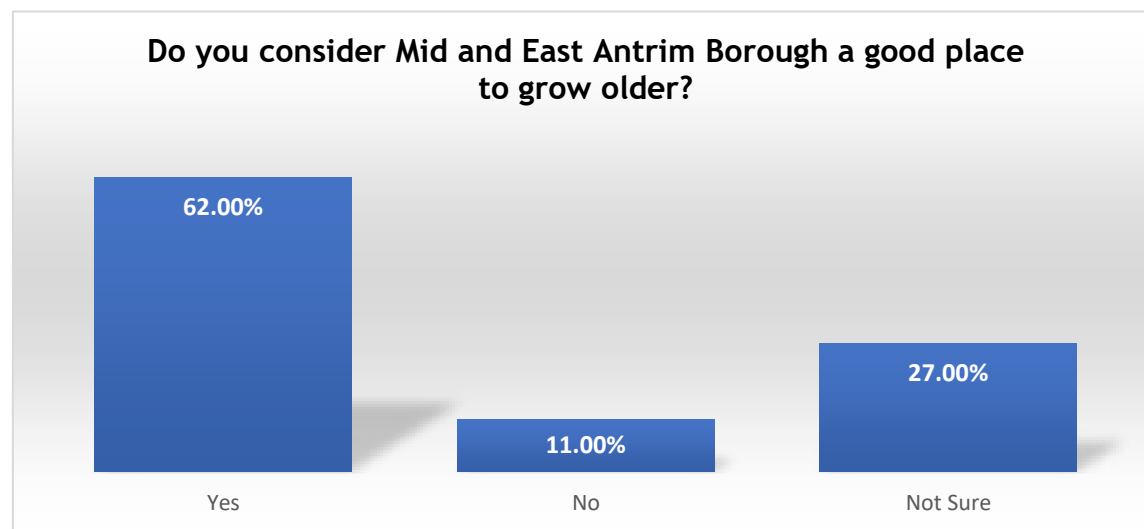
Respondents were drawn from across the Borough and from both rural and urban locations, ensuring a broad range of responses:

Town	53%
Countryside	26%
Village	21%

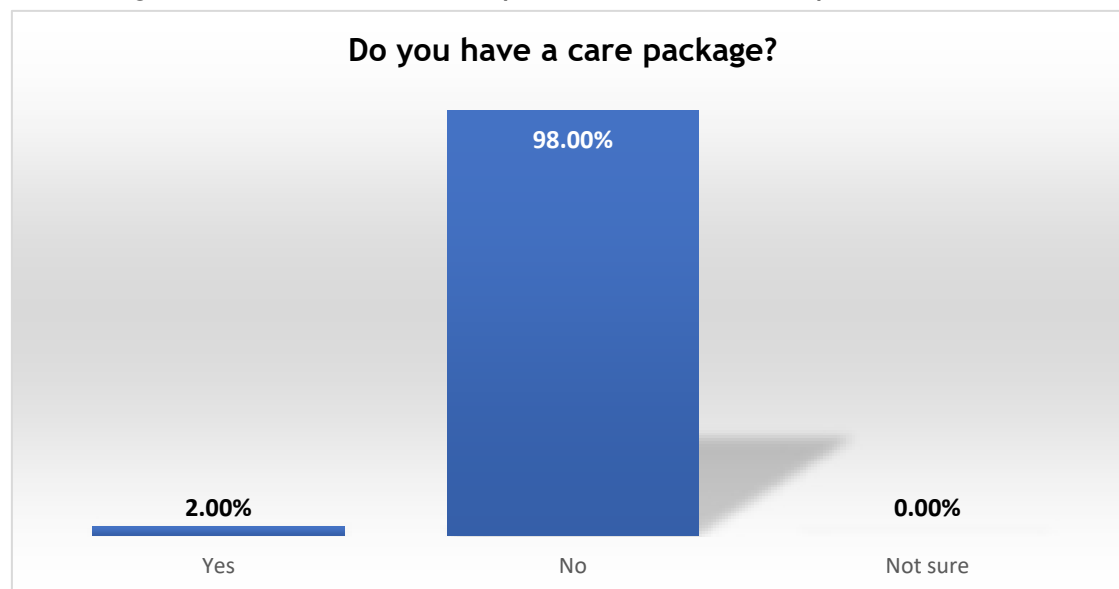
## Household Status

While the majority of respondents lived with others, almost one third live alone. This enables robust conclusions to be drawn about both categories and how best they can be supported.

Do you live...	
With others (family/friends)	64%
Alone	35%
In communal accommodation (such as a residential home, shared or assisted living accommodation)	1%



Almost two thirds of respondents were positive about living in the borough; however over one quarter were unsure, highlighting the importance of the baseline survey to identify potential issues or concerns and consider how best these could be addressed. The overwhelming majority of respondents did not have a care package; however the baseline survey has also been informed by consultation including those in the healthcare profession to cover topics such as this.



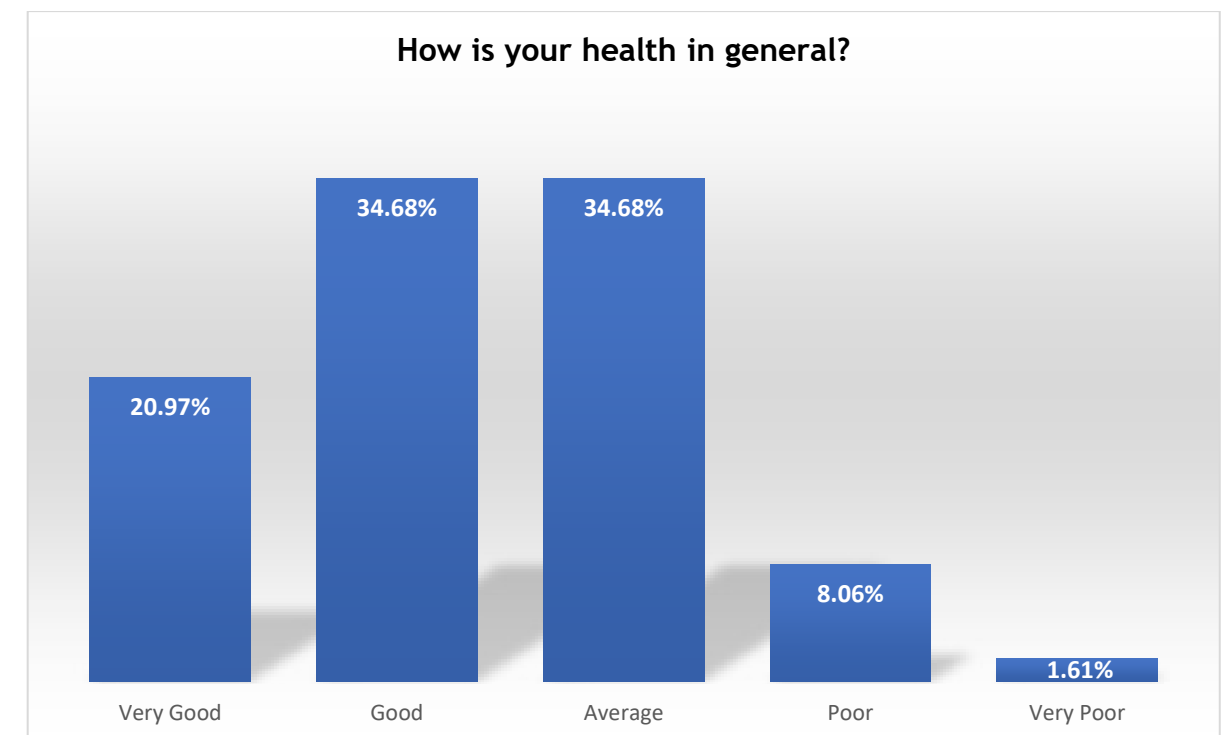
## World Health Organisation (WHO)

The terms of reference for the baseline survey and associated Age Friendly strategy and action plan noted the importance of the WHO domains for Age Friendly and the necessity of aligning with these, namely:

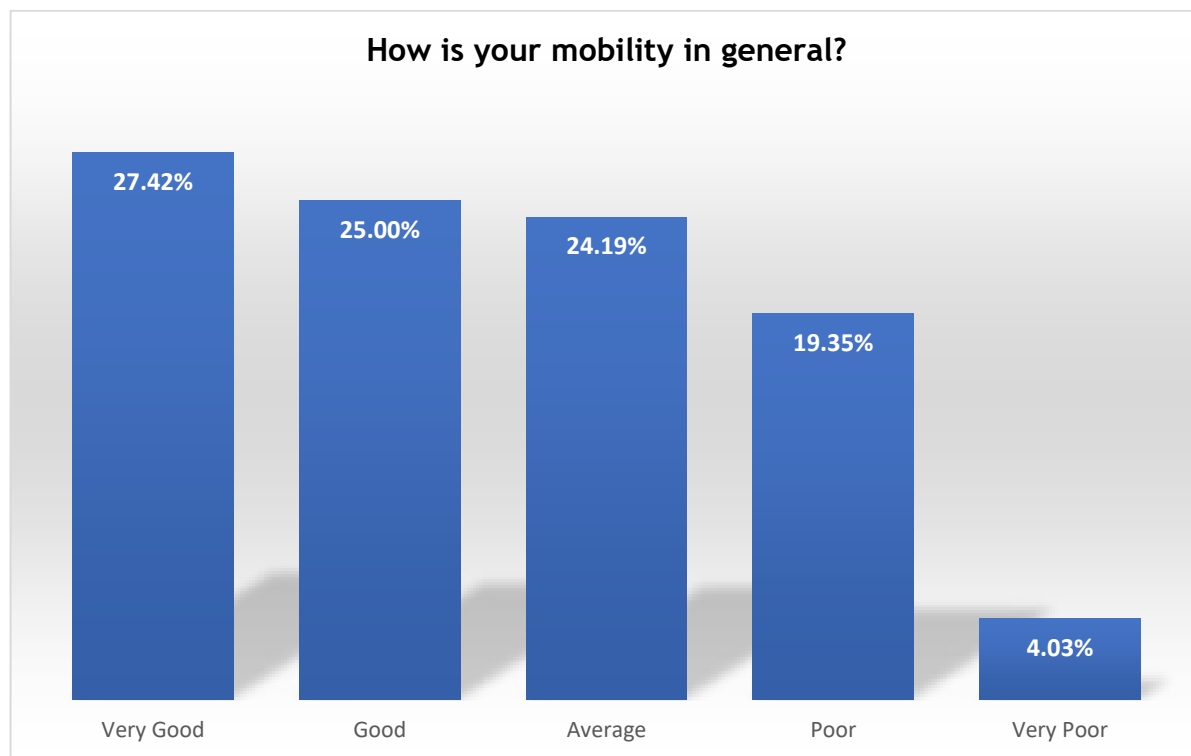
- Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
- Transportation
- Housing
- Social Participation
- Respect and Social Inclusion
- Work and Civic Engagement
- Communication and Information
- Community and Health Services

The survey was developed to cover each of the eight domains and findings are presented under each domain:

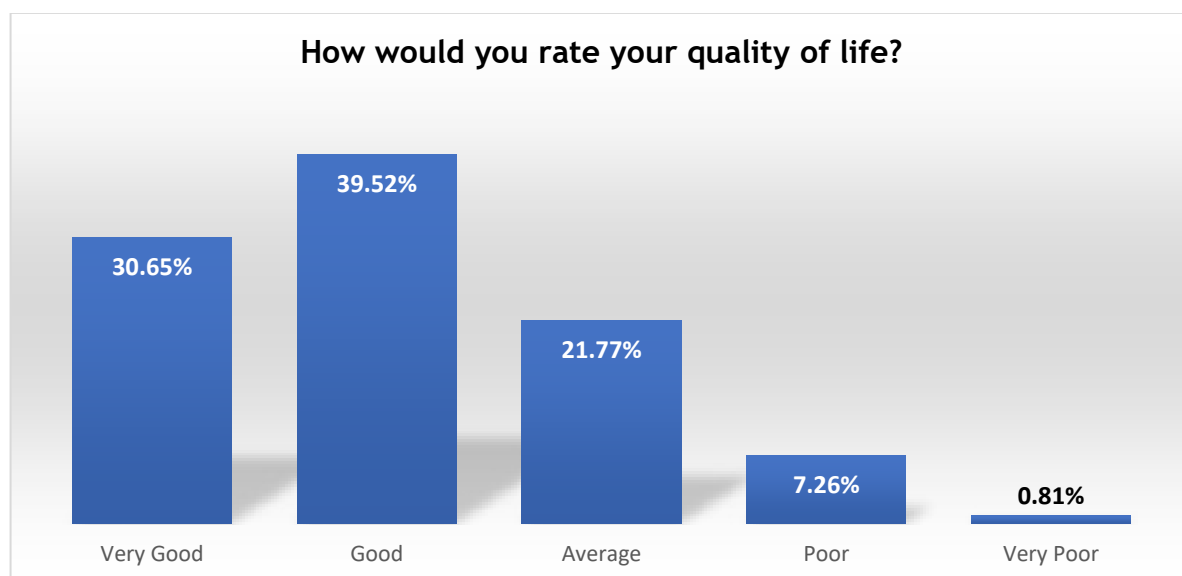
### COMMUNITY AND HEALTH SERVICES







In terms of health, the majority (92%) of respondents stated that their health was average to very good with similar (94%) satisfaction ratings for quality of life. Declining mobility is, however, a concern with almost half reporting it as being average or worse.



While these findings indicate an overall positive picture with regards to health, the survey afforded opportunity to address issues in greater detail:

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
Information on community and health services for my health and wellbeing is easy to find	39%	38%	22%
Health and social services are conveniently located to me	56%	33%	11%
Health and community service facilities are fully accessible for older people	28%	37%	36%
I am able to cook for myself	93%	6%	1%
I eat well and have healthy nutritional meals	89%	8%	3%
There are affordable health and fitness programmes/activities for older people in my area	17%	31%	52%
I attend activity classes for my physical health	18%	78%	4%
I am aware of home care services in my area (such as care visitors)	26%	42%	32%
I find my role as a carer can be challenging	36%	18%	46%

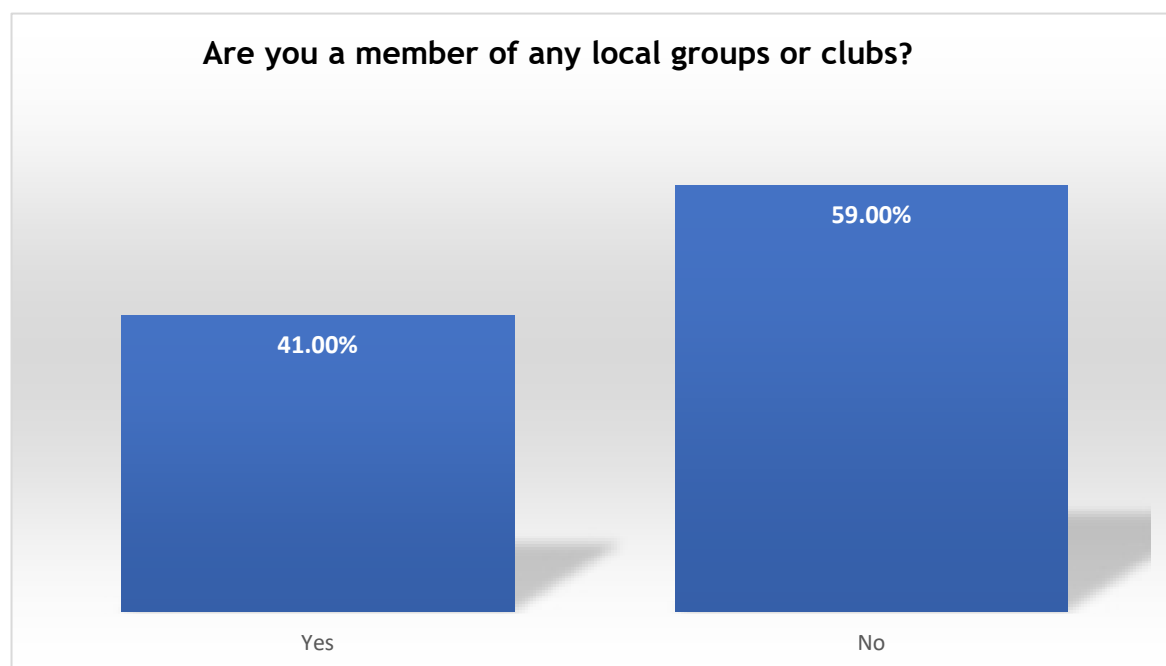
While there are clear positives including high levels of healthy eating and respondents cooking for themselves in addition to over half stating that health and social services are conveniently located, responses set out in the table above highlight some key issues to be addressed in the emerging action plan and strategy:-

- Health and community service facilities are generally not considered to be fully accessible for older people
- Lack of affordable health and fitness programmes/activities for older people is a major concern
- There is an overall lack of awareness of home care services in the borough
- Improvements can be made to accessibility of information on community and health services for health and wellbeing
- Greater participation in activity classes for physical health could be encouraged

### SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

In addition to health and community services, levels of social engagement are vital to a vibrant and healthy age friendly society. The majority of respondents were not members of a local club or organisation, identifying a potential action point for the future strategy. It should be noted, however, that many people simply harbour no wish to join a club and this highlights the importance of ensuring that services

and information are accessible to all citizens, irrespective of club or group membership.



Of those respondents who do use services and activities regularly, the most frequently cited were as follows:

Luncheon club	69%
Good Morning service	69%
Church groups/activities	38%
Befriending service	38%
Attend sporting events/groups	28%
Specialist/ Hobby group(s)	24%
Community Association/group	15%
MEAAP (Mid & East Antrim Agewell Partnership)	14%
Community Transport scheme	6%

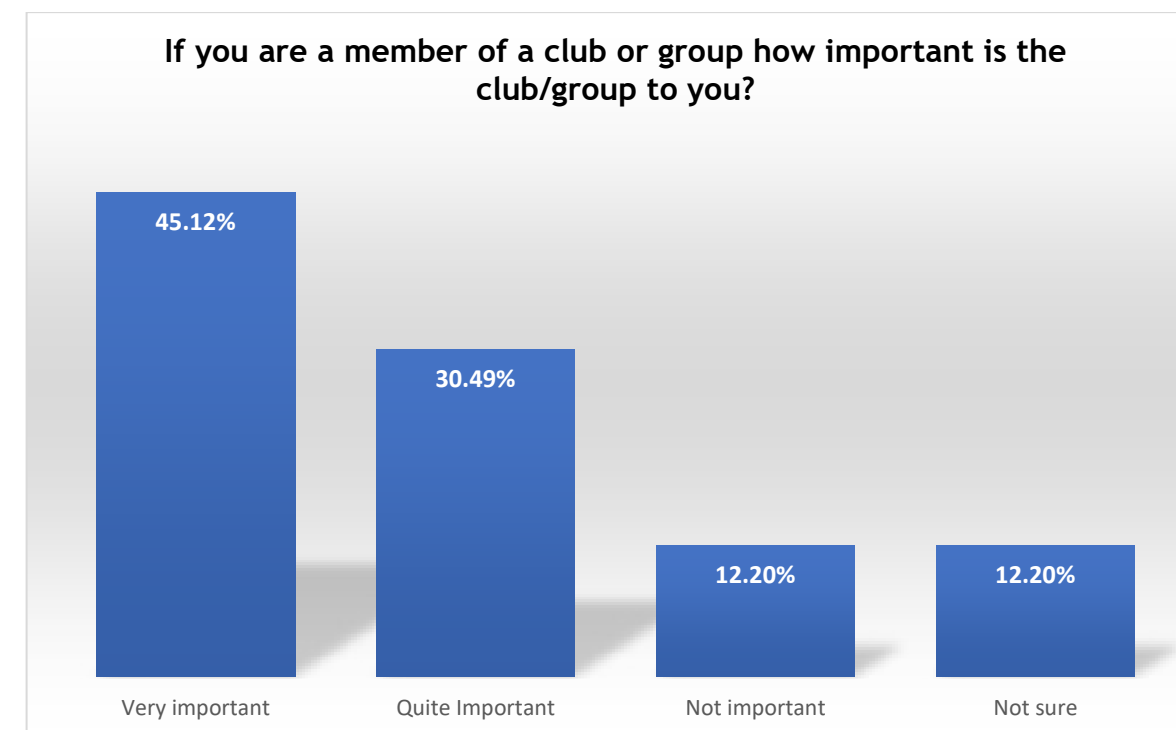
These findings reflect a broad range of groups, interests and services. With regards to luncheon clubs and Good Morning services in particular, sustaining such services is a key issue given the high uptake of both by respondents.

Respondents were asked about the most liked aspects of the activities as follows:

Meeting new people	74%
Helps improve my mental health and wellbeing	49%
I can get involved in activities or programmes	43%
Helps me stay connected with my community	40%
Gets me out of the house for a few hours	34%
Prevents me feeling isolated or lonely	29%
I get some respite from my caring responsibilities	9%

Inclusion and community connections were very important to respondents, highlighting the importance of these in any action plan. Activities were cited as important in meeting new people, addressing isolation and loneliness. Access to and participation in such activities clearly have a significant impact on health and wellbeing, particularly mental health and should be at the core of any emerging strategy.

This is illustrated by the graph which notes that over three quarter of respondents considered clubs/groups to be quite or very important.



Respondents were also given the opportunity to consider social participation in more detail as follows:

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
There is a good variety of activities available in my area to appeal to older people	21%	35%	45%
Venues for events and activities are accessible and well organised	24%	27%	49%
I require transport assistance to attend events and activities	14%	78%	8%
My role as a carer prevents me attending events and activities	21%	49%	30%
I have good contact and visitors/ family who come to my home regularly	69%	29%	1%
I feel lonely	20%	77%	3%
I feel isolated and disconnected from my community	19%	72%	9%
I would like to be more involved in community life in my area	40%	43%	17%
I am aware of possible scams (online and by phone)	95%	2.5%	2.5%

Key points for consideration from social participation feedback above include:

- There is a need to promote/provide a variety of activities to appeal to older people
- Venue accessibility should be considered and promoted to older people to raise awareness
- Opportunities to become more involved in community life should be developed
- Levels of community engagement and social participation across the Borough appear encouraging
- There are good levels of awareness in relation to scams; given the ongoing challenge of scams this support should be maintained

### Challenges to Participation

It is recognised that many citizens will experience challenges to social participation; as indicated by the responses below, these are varied highlighting the importance of a strategic approach and multi-stakeholder engagement. This is particularly important given the cross-cutting nature of the Age Friendly agenda, impacting across many sectors and interest areas.

What stops you from participating in local community activities? Please tick ALL that apply	
Do not know of any activities in the area	43%
Timing of events (e.g. at night or early morning)	30%
Mobility/health problems	28%
Lack of confidence in going to activities	21%
No one to go with	20%
Transport challenges	18%
Not Interested	17%
Cost of attending	14%
Caring responsibilities	12%
Lack of accessible spaces/buildings	1%

Other reasons for non-participation included work and family commitments in addition to a lack of public transport. It was noted that many older people are working thus daytime events/activities are not suitable.

### CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT

The role of older people in civic society and employment and the potential contribution which they can make is recognised by the WHO and Mid and East Antrim Borough Council was keen to explore how this can be developed in the borough. Views were presented as follows:

	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
I currently take part in civic activities that benefit the community (charity, community, church, forums, U3A etc)	35%	59%	6%
I am connected to a local group / community forum / Age Sector network	29%	68%	3%
I volunteer / am interested in volunteering	46%	45%	9%
I would like to become more involved in local groups and committees	36%	45%	19%
I would like to join a local group/ Age Sector network to represent older people	28%	52%	20%
Re-skilling and training opportunities are available to older people	15%	38%	47%
I would like to share my skills and knowledge	43%	30%	27%



Public bodies don't ask/listen to the views of older people	53%	17%	30%
Too many services and activities are online	45%	28%	27%
My role as a carer limits my participation	24%	50%	26%
<b>Other comments on Civic Participation and Employment:</b>			
Respondents again cautioned against the sole use of social media to advertise events/activities, noting that this can result in many not being aware of opportunities as a result. It was also suggested that there should be greater awareness of volunteering opportunities for older people and a celebration of volunteers.			

With regards to Civic Participation and Employment the following points are of note:

- Scope exists to promote participation in both civic activities and community connections
- There is an interest in volunteering which should be developed, recognising that this can be mutually beneficial to both the volunteer and host organisation
- Greater promotion of those re-skilling and training opportunities currently available to older people is required while new opportunities can be provided as required
- Older people are keen to share their skills and knowledge, furthering their civic engagement as a result
- There is a need for public bodies to increase engagement and consultation with older people to hear their views
- Digital exclusion is a risk to older people with almost half of the view that too many services and activities are online (with regards to activities in particular this must be seen in the context of Covid-19 restrictions and a move to remote delivery)
- There are concerns around succession planning for groups and attracting new members. Less than a third of respondents stated they were connected to a local group / community forum / Age Sector network, while over half responded that they would not like to join a local group/ Age Sector network to represent older people. In addition, almost half (45%) disagreed that they would like to become more involved in local groups and committees

## RESPECT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Aligned with social and civic participation is respect for older people and fostering social inclusion for a target group potentially at risk of isolation and exclusion. Responses in the table below would suggest that this WHO domain in particular requires attention in order to improve opportunities for older people:

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
I feel respected in my community	52%	15%	33%
I feel that the input/contribution of older people is valued	34%	39%	27%
Older people are portrayed in a positive manner	28%	45%	27%
There is a variety of activities to bring generations together	17%	47%	37%
There is a variety of activities to bring communities together	24%	32%	44%
Local community and voluntary groups ask older people how groups can best meet their needs	17%	31%	52%
Older people are consulted by public bodies on ways to serve them better	18%	42%	40%
Older people have opportunity to share their experience and skills with others	14%	45%	41%
<b>Other comments on Respect and Social Inclusion:</b>			
Respondents stressed the importance of not relying on online communication and the value of in-person contact.			

Amongst the key issues to be addressed by the action plan are the following findings:

- Placing greater value on the input/contribution of older people and portraying them in a positive light
- Development of inter-generational activity/programmes
- Greater promotion of community engagement activities
- Community and voluntary groups should be more proactive in asking older people how groups can best meet their needs
- Improved consultation by public bodies on the needs of older people (also cited under Civic Participation and Employment)
- Greater opportunity for older people to share their skills and experience (also cited under Civic Participation and Employment)

## HOUSING

The WHO has identified housing as one of its key domains, recognising that provision of accessible and affordable fit for purpose housing is central to society and particularly to the wellbeing being of older people. Feedback was generally encouraging with some scope for future actions identified below:

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
I feel safe in my home	95%	3%	2%
I feel safe in my neighbourhood/local area	92%	3%	5%
My home has been adapted for my needs	34%	58%	8%
My home is easy to get in and out of	90%	8%	2%
I know where to go for any home maintenance or safety adaptations I need	39%	41%	20%
I know who to contact for any home maintenance or safety adaptations I need	36%	42%	22%
I am concerned about the cost of keeping my home warm	82%	14%	4%
I would like advice on making my home more energy efficient	57%	31%	12%
I have neighbours who can be contacted in an emergency	73%	20%	7%
<b>Other comments on Housing:</b>			
Respondents reported being offered advice on keeping warm at home in addition to being kept informed by a sheltered accommodation Scheme Coordinator. Some concern was expressed in relation to bonfire sites.			

- High levels for home and locality safety were recorded which is very encouraging in addition to almost three quarters of respondents stating that they have neighbours who can be contacted in an emergency
- Accessibility in the home is very good (90% in agreement)
- Awareness raising is needed in relation to home maintenance or safety adaptations sources of support
- Reflective of the current cost of living crisis, there are serious concerns about heating home and demand for advice on making the home more energy efficient

## TRANSPORTATION

Accessible and affordable transport is at the core of any service delivery programme and is particularly important for potentially vulnerable groups and communities.

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
I drive and use my own car to get out and about	85%	14%	1%
There is adequate car parking in my local town/area	68%	24%	8%
My family/ friends help me with transport	36%	58%	6%
I use a private taxi to get out and about	12%	85%	3%
I use Community Transport to get out and about	4%	92%	4%
I use Public Transport to get out and about	42%	55%	3%
Information on Community Transport is easy to find	9%	59%	32%
Information on Public Transport is easy to find	54%	34%	13%
I feel safe using Community Transport	12%	7%	81%
I feel safe using Public Transport	67%	13%	20%
I feel safe using a private taxi	62%	7%	31%
Community Transport timetable and route choices are adequate	10%	24%	66%
Public Transport timetable and route choices are adequate	39%	37%	24%
<b>Other comments on Transportation:</b>			
It was felt that more information on Community Transport would be welcomed while it was felt that Public Transport links were poor outside of the towns.			

- There is a clear trend toward using one's own transport among those responding
- Public transport was viewed positively in terms of both safety and easy to find information
- Greater promotion of Community Transport information, including routes and timetables, is required.

## OUTDOOR SPACES & BUILDINGS

Being able to access outdoor spaces and buildings, and to feel safe while doing so, is important for all citizens in order for them to fully engage in public and community life. Survey respondents were asked about their feeling on these topics, as one of the eight WHO domains:

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
I do not leave my home due to health/mobility reasons	9%	90%	1%
I do not leave my home as I feel unsafe outdoors	2.5%	95%	2.5%
There are enough accessible outdoor places to walk and meet family/friends	72%	16%	12%
I feel safe using outdoor parks and open spaces	77%	15%	8%
There are enough seating areas in the outdoor areas I visit	42%	44%	14%
Pavements are well maintained, clear and easy to navigate	40%	54%	6%
Pedestrian crossings allow enough time to cross the road	62%	21%	17%
Cars parking on pavements is a problem in my area	49%	43%	8%
There are accessible toilets in the outdoor areas I visit	39%	45%	16%
Public buildings and facilities have helpful and courteous staff to respond to older people	50%	14%	36%
Public buildings and facilities are accessible with clear signage	51%	15%	34%
<b>Other comments on Outdoor Spaces &amp; Buildings:</b>			
It was felt that there is a lack of disabled spaces for parking and not enough accessible areas for older people/people with disability. Concern was also expressed about levels of anti-social behaviour in public areas which is intimidating for older people. A lack of public toilets (or restricted opening) was noted while footpaths in poor condition was also highlighted.			

The feedback below identified areas for consideration in relation to outdoor spaces and buildings in the borough in order to improve facilities for older people:

- While there are good levels of accessible outdoor places, provision of seating areas in outdoor areas could be increased

- Outdoor areas could also be improved by provision of accessible toilets
- In general respondents reported feeling safe about leaving their homes and spending time in outdoor parks and open spaces
- There are accessibility and safety issues to be addressed, such as cars parking on pavements and pavements in need of maintenance
- Public buildings and their staff were viewed positively, in terms of both helpfulness and accessibility.

The survey asked respondents for their views on how Council facilities or events (such as leisure, public convenience, public realm, open spaces/parks) could be improved to help older people, recognising the importance of accessibility and awareness of such services in promoting an Age Friendly society. A wide variety of responses and suggestions were put forward and summarised as follows:

- Accessible parking and better toilet provision
- Improved maintenance of footpaths and walkways, including greenway provision
- More seating in outdoor areas
- Better promotion of events and activities

## COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

Ensuring citizens are able to access information on events, activities and services is essential to support engagement. At present a wide range of information sources are used by older people:

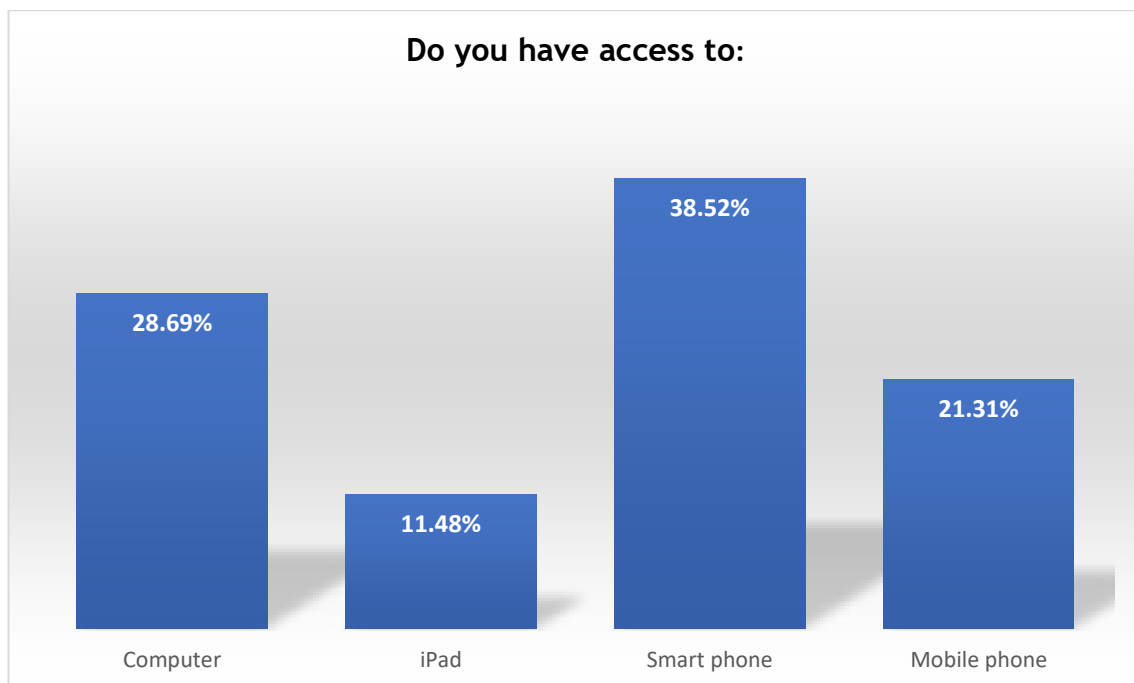
Internet	80%
Family/Friends/Neighbours	62%
More information should be available about services and activities	39%
Council (e.g. Council Officers, website, newsletter)	31%
Local newspaper	27%
Local church/place of worship	18%
Local community centre/group	15%
<b>Other comments on Communication and Information:</b>	
Feedback again highlighted the importance of non-online information sources. It was suggested that a central information site/point would be useful where all relevant information could be signposted/co-ordinated - a "one stop shop".	

While online information was most commonly cited, it is noted that respondents cautioned against an overreliance on online services under the domain for Civic Participation and Employment. The responses above demonstrate the need to



employ a wide spectrum of communication tools when promoting Age Friendly issues.

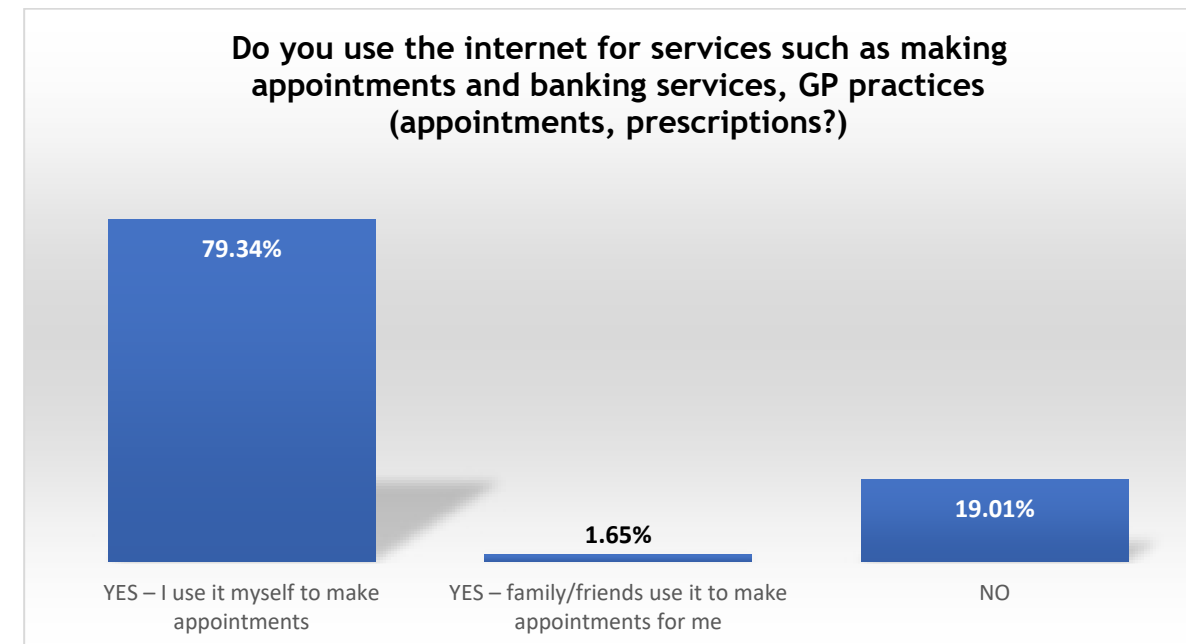
With regards to digital access, respondents were asked about the devices they have access to with 94% of respondents having their own device, broken down as follows:



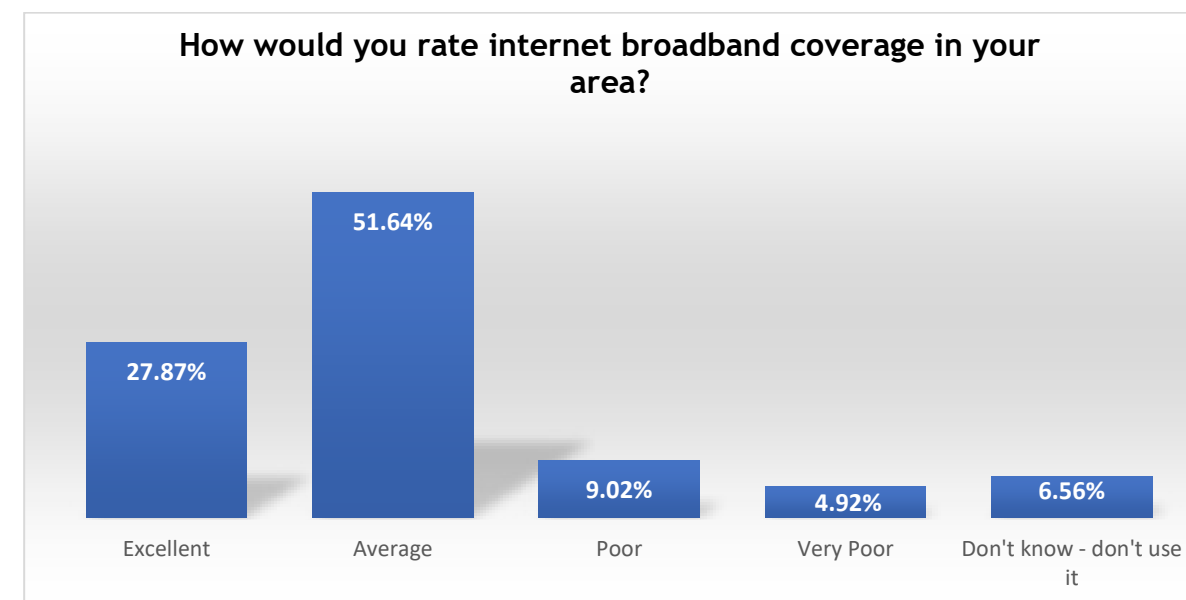
If YES, does this belong to:

Myself	95%
Family/friend/neighbour	3%
Local library	2%

While a very high percentage of respondents use online services it is noted that almost one fifth (19%) do not do so, highlighting the importance of ensuring ongoing accessibility for non-internet users to avoid the threat of digital exclusion.



Broadband coverage is an important consideration in today's society; for those responding to the Age Friendly survey, coverage would appear to be encouraging:



### Priority Areas

The survey sought to identify key issues among older people across Mid and East Antrim, asking respondents to rank the top challenges faced by older people today. Responses are ranked in order of priority as follows:

1. Failing physical health/serious illness
2. Loss of mobility
3. Failing mental health
4. I have to make financial choices regarding essentials - heat or eat
5. Not being aware of what support is available
6. Access to health and wellbeing services

## Action Planning

In developing an Age Friendly Action Plan, Mid and East Antrim Borough Council was keen to ensure that older people's views are heard and their needs identified in the strategy and action plan. To inform this process, respondents were asked about the type of services/actions/activities for older people they would like to see provided in their local community.

Responses are ranked as follows in order of priority (where 1= most important):

1. Accessibility of buildings and services
2. Health and wellbeing, including:
  - activity classes
  - mental health and wellbeing
  - better access to GPs
3. Transportation
4. Information/signposting to events/activities
5. Social activities and programmes (including inter-generational)
6. Befriending
7. Home maintenance services
8. Advice on benefits and cost of living
9. Support for those living alone
10. Addressing anti-social behaviour

## Keeping You Informed

Developing and maintaining effective lines of communication will be essential to any Age Friendly strategy, in order to both reach the target audience (and their families) and also to support succession planning among groups by attracting new members and volunteers.

There was a willingness among respondents for concerns to be shared with other agencies, again highlighting the benefits of a strategic approach to the Age Friendly agenda and scope for co-operation among Community Planning partners. Enthusiasm in receiving the Age Friendly News sheet was encouraging, with almost one third of respondents interested in finding out more about how to be prepared for emergencies.

With less than one quarter expressing interest in joining the Age Friendly Alliance, the issue of succession planning and sustaining group members remains challenging.

Can we refer your concerns/comments to other agencies if necessary (e.g. Translink, NI Libraries etc)	75.00%
Would you like to receive our Age Friendly News sheet?	58.33%
Would you like to find out more about how to be prepared for emergencies	31.94%
Would you like to be contacted by us in the future regarding this work?	25.00%
Would you be interested in joining the Age Friendly Alliance?	23.61%

## 5.0 Baseline Summary

The baseline report has provided a comprehensive picture of the current position in respect of Age Friendly provision across the borough, with particular attention given to the WHO Age Friendly domains. It has provided clear evidence to inform the strategy and action plan over a three-year period and identified potential areas of joint working, recognising the importance of collaboration on what is very much a multi-agency response and shared responsibility.

Among the key areas to be addressed by the strategy and action plan will be:

- Promoting (affordable) health and fitness programmes in addition to health and wellbeing activities
- Improving accessibility of buildings, especially health and community service facilities
- Distributing information on services and activities
- Exploring opportunities for volunteering, sharing skills and experiences
- Ensuring older people's voices are heard in policy consultation
- Succession planning to ensure the sustainability of the sector
- Inter-generational activity and projects
- Support for cost of living measures

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council will work with its strategic partners across the public, private, community and voluntary sectors, including Community Planning partners, to develop and drive a civic response to establishing an Age Friendly Borough where older people are recognised, valued, empowered and engaged to contribute to their community and wider society.

# We'd like to hear your views on our new Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan 2024 - 2027

## The Consultation

Council is currently consulting on their new Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan 2024-27. Participation in this consultation is very important to us and we welcome all comments. Each response will be carefully analysed and considered to help shape the Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan 2024-27. It is optional to include your personal details.

At the end of this response form, we will be collecting monitoring data. This is completely anonymous and optional - we will only use this information to analyse the engagement with this consultation.

Consultee Details	
Please indicate if you are responding as: <i>(please tick only one option)</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	A member of the public
<input type="checkbox"/>	On behalf of an organisation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other <i>(please specify)</i> _____

Please enter your details below	
Title:	<input type="checkbox"/> Mr <input type="checkbox"/> Ms <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs <input type="checkbox"/> Miss <input type="checkbox"/> Dr <i>(please tick as appropriate)</i>
Full Name:	
Organisation: <i>(if applicable)</i>	
Address:	
Email Address:	
Telephone:	

Do you agree with the actions that have been included in	
Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan 2024-27	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially

Are there any actions that are not included in either the Strategy or Actions that you feel should be included/ considered?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<p>If you answered 'Yes', please outline the actions below:  <i>Note: if commenting on specific items within the draft plan please refer to Plan title and the <u>action measure number</u>, e.g. year, theme (continue on a separate sheet if required)</i></p>	

Are there any other general comments you wish to make?	
<p><i>Note: Please ensure to refer to the document title, e.g. Age Friendly Strategy (continue on a separate sheet if required).</i></p>	



**Section 75 Monitoring (Optional)**

The Section 75 categories noted below are identified from Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act (1998)

Privacy Notice: This information is treated with the strictest of confidence, protected from misuse and will only be used only for monitoring the demographics of our respondents. Council’s Privacy Notice is available on our website or copies are available on request.

Section 75 Categories	
<b>Religion</b> <i>(Groups identified from the 2021 Census)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Catholic <input type="checkbox"/> Presbyterian <input type="checkbox"/> Church of Ireland <input type="checkbox"/> Methodist <input type="checkbox"/> Other Christian (inc. Christian) <input type="checkbox"/> Other religion <input type="checkbox"/> No religion <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say
<b>Age</b> <i>(Age ranges identified from the 2021 Census)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> 0-14 <input type="checkbox"/> 15-39 <input type="checkbox"/> 40-64 <input type="checkbox"/> 65+
<b>Gender</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(please specify)</i> _____
<b>Community Background</b>	I am from the following background: <input type="checkbox"/> DUP <input type="checkbox"/> UUP <input type="checkbox"/> Alliance <input type="checkbox"/> TUV <input type="checkbox"/> Sinn Féin <input type="checkbox"/> SDLP <input type="checkbox"/> Independent <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(please specify)</i> _____
<b>Disability</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> I live with a disability <input type="checkbox"/> I do not consider myself to have a disability

<b>Race</b> <i>(Ethnic groups identified from the 2021 Census)</i>	Please indicate your race below: <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Irish Traveller <input type="checkbox"/> Roma <input type="checkbox"/> Indian <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese <input type="checkbox"/> Filipino <input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/> Arab <input type="checkbox"/> Other Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Black African <input type="checkbox"/> Black Other <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed <input type="checkbox"/> Other <i>(please specify)</i> _____
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	My sexual orientation is towards someone of: <input type="checkbox"/> The same sex <input type="checkbox"/> A different sex <input type="checkbox"/> Both sexes
<b>Marital Status</b>	Please indicate your marital status below: <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Cohabiting <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Separated <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed <input type="checkbox"/> In a civil partnership
<b>Dependants</b>	Do you have a personal responsibility for the care of a dependant(s)? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <b>If yes, please indicate below:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Child/children <input type="checkbox"/> Person living with a disability <input type="checkbox"/> Older person <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple dependants <i>(please specify below)</i> _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this consultation questionnaire.

## What to do next

Return your completed questionnaire to:

**Age Friendly Co-ordinator**  
**Smiley Buildings**  
**Victoria Road**  
**Larne**  
**BT40 1RU**

Or by email to:

[age.friendly@midandeantrim.gov.uk](mailto:age.friendly@midandeantrim.gov.uk)

## Returns deadline

The deadline for responses is 5pm on **Friday 31 May 2024**.

### Data protection

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council is collecting your personal information as part of the consultation exercise on our Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2027. We will keep your information secure, accurate and for no longer than is necessary in accordance with data protection laws. If you wish to find out more about how we control and process your personal data and protect your privacy, please visit [midandeantrim.gov.uk/privacy-notice](https://midandeantrim.gov.uk/privacy-notice)







**Mid & East  
Antrim**  
Borough Council



**Age Friendly**  
Mid & East Antrim



**Public Health  
Agency**

Project supported by the PHA

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