



**Mid Ulster
Age Friendly
Strategic Plan
2023-2026**

Our Plan for an Ageing Community

Ensuring people age well in Mid Ulster



Age Friendly
Mid Ulster

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FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIR

Mid Ulster District Council (The Council) is fully aware it has an ageing population, meaning that the demographic profile is changing significantly with a higher proportion of older people in our communities. With older people living longer, these changes are welcomed as they are a great asset to society with vast experience, wisdom and community spirit. However, an ageing population presents significant challenges to the planning and delivery of services and facilities. Being better prepared to adapt to these changes is a priority for our older people and future generations. In response to this shift, the Council is committed to improving the lives of older people through the World Health Organisation's Age-friendly Framework, which will positively impact our residents.

As we live longer, this can result in experiences of active and positive living, life-long learning and diverse interests but as we age, we can be presented with ill health, disability, dependence, social isolation or loneliness. This can significantly impact a person's life, especially their physical and social environment. Transforming environments into supportive and inclusive places with the right policies and services means that older people can thrive in their local community, contributing to healthy ageing.

The Age-friendly initiative aims to encourage active and healthy ageing by improving health, promoting inclusion and supporting well-being in older age. The population as a whole benefit from designing environments for older people and preparing for future generations. New plans for delivering an Age-friendly community can help tackle some of the biggest challenges to healthy and active ageing, such as social isolation and loneliness, injuries and falls, inactivity, mental and physical ill-health.

New interventions, policies and co-design of age sector projects are needed to transform our Council area into a supportive environment for our ageing population. The publication of this Age-friendly Strategy and Action Plan celebrates the beginning of a process that will see a coordinated approach being embraced by organisations and communities to create a more Age-friendly culture.

I welcome this first Age-friendly strategic plan as the Chair of Mid Ulster District Council and as a resident who knows we need to take responsibility for the health and wellness of everyone in our area. I look forward to the implementation of an Age-friendly plan through extensive collaboration with our partners to make Mid Ulster a great place to live and grow old. Together our plan will ensure people age well in Mid Ulster.

(Name and photo)

Age friendliness is about making Mid Ulster a great place in which to grow older and a community where older people can thrive.

I. INTRODUCTION – AGE-FRIENDLY PLANS FOR MID ULSTER

Age-friendly is a framework developed by the World Health Organisation ¹(WHO) to support the development of Age-friendly communities due to an ageing population. An age-friendly world and an Age-friendly Council area enables people of all ages to actively participate in community activities and treats everyone with respect, regardless of their age. An Age-friendly community is a place that makes it easy for older people to stay connected to people and things that are important to them. It also helps people stay healthy, active and appropriately supports those who need additional support. The eight thematic areas should be considered when developing plans; they are designed to overlap and interact with each other. These eight domains are:



Figure 1: Age-friendly domains ²

“When you plan for young, you plan just for the young – when you plan for the older population, you plan for everyone”.

¹ The World Health Organisation (WHO): is a specialised agency of the United Nations concerned with international public health. The WHO Global Network for Age Friendly Cities and Communities was established to foster the exchange of experience and mutual learning between cities and communities worldwide.

² <http://www.who.int/ageing/age-friendly-world/en/>

An Age-friendly world enables people of all ages to actively participate in community activities. It is a place where everyone is treated with respect, regardless of their age. It is a place that makes it easy to stay connected to those around you and those you love. It is a place that helps people stay healthy and active even at the oldest ages. And it is a place that helps those who can no longer look after themselves to live with dignity and enjoyment. Many cities and communities are already taking active steps towards becoming more Age-friendly and signing up to the Age-friendly Global Network.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has established a global network of Age-friendly cities and communities that encourage active ageing by optimising opportunities for health, participation, and security to enhance the quality of life as people grow older. The WHO has proposed eight domains that can help identify and address barriers to the well-being and participation of older people.

In Northern Ireland, the Active Ageing Strategy is one of the Northern Ireland Executive's key strategies to address the ageing of our population. Its vision is 'one of Northern Ireland being an Age-friendly region in which people, as they get older, are valued and supported to live actively to their fullest potential; with their rights respected and their dignity protected'. The Department of Communities Active Ageing Strategy outlines that people here are living longer than ever. Our older citizens make a significant contribution to society; by volunteering, continuing to work or providing childcare³.

Age-friendly is also an outcome within the Programme for Government (PfG) Delivery Plan for 2018/19 under Outcome 4: To Make each council area "Age-friendly" – a place where organisations work together to enhance the quality of life for people as they age.

Promoting the well-being of older people and ensuring they can enjoy later life to the fullest must remain a priority, especially overcoming the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic and looking forward to the future. Our longer lives are an opportunity for the economy, society, and individuals. We all need support at different times across our lives and want to live in communities where we look out for each other.

Our Vision

Mid Ulster is an Age-friendly district where older people are valued, engaged and supported to live healthy, active and fulfilling lives.

³ <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/active-ageing-strategy-2016-2021>

2. AGE-FRIENDLY AND OUR COMMUNITY PLAN

Mid Ulster District Council developed a Community Plan for the District, it highlights that an ageing population is an important issue to address. The ethos of community planning is to help improve how public agencies progress together alongside local people, to plan and deliver better services. It is essential that public services and infrastructure, designed and implemented today, will still be relevant to the Council's future population. We liaised with key partners represented on the Strategic Partnership Board and their working groups.

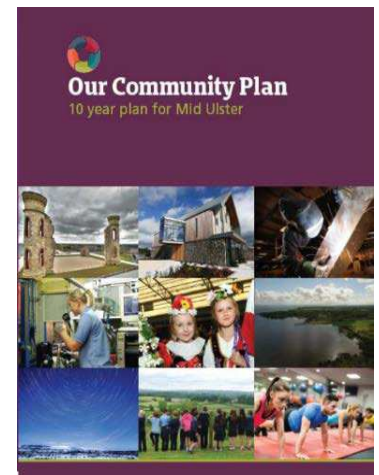
This Community plan, alongside the Age-friendly plan will build on the solid foundation of the existing relationships, partnerships, programmes already in place. The Age-friendly plan will link to the community plans outcomes as it highlights that an ageing population is an important issue to address. With the purpose of community planning being to improve how public services work together, with local people, to plan and deliver better services. Age-friendly will be a relevant way of working to gain positive outcomes for the Council's population in future years, linking to the current eight Age-friendly themes ensuring that everyone will benefit.

We envisage improved relationships with key stakeholders: Statutory Partners, as well as representatives from community, voluntary, business, colleges, NI Government Departments, and other sectors. Partners are represented on the Strategic Partnership Board and working groups.

This Age-friendly strategy provides a framework to help make our council area a great place to grow older and an area in which everyone, regardless of age, is valued and respected. It will provide the structure and new ways of working for cross-sectoral co-operation, which is essential to improving our older population's quality of life. This Age-friendly strategy and its associated action plan have been influenced by the Community Plan. It has been further supplemented by direct engagement with older people, other stakeholders and service providers. This Age-friendly plan will address challenges local people face and ensure that everyone will benefit.

The Age-friendly Alliance ⁴ will work collaboratively to meet the outcomes of the community plan in relation to Age-friendly and promote the best possible health and well-being, safety and quality of life outcomes for older adults living in the Mid Ulster District Council area.

Improving productivity and co-production across the Council will harness local knowledge, expertise and new ways of working, bringing Age-friendly a higher profile with partners. Investing in Age-friendly at a local level can help provide support older people and communities to achieve higher levels of productivity and tackle disadvantages and better outcomes.



⁴ Age Friendly Alliance: A group of representatives from specialist organisations who are collectively working together to make sure Mid Ulster is a great place to live and grow older.

3. AGE-FRIENDLY PROFILE - MID ULSTER

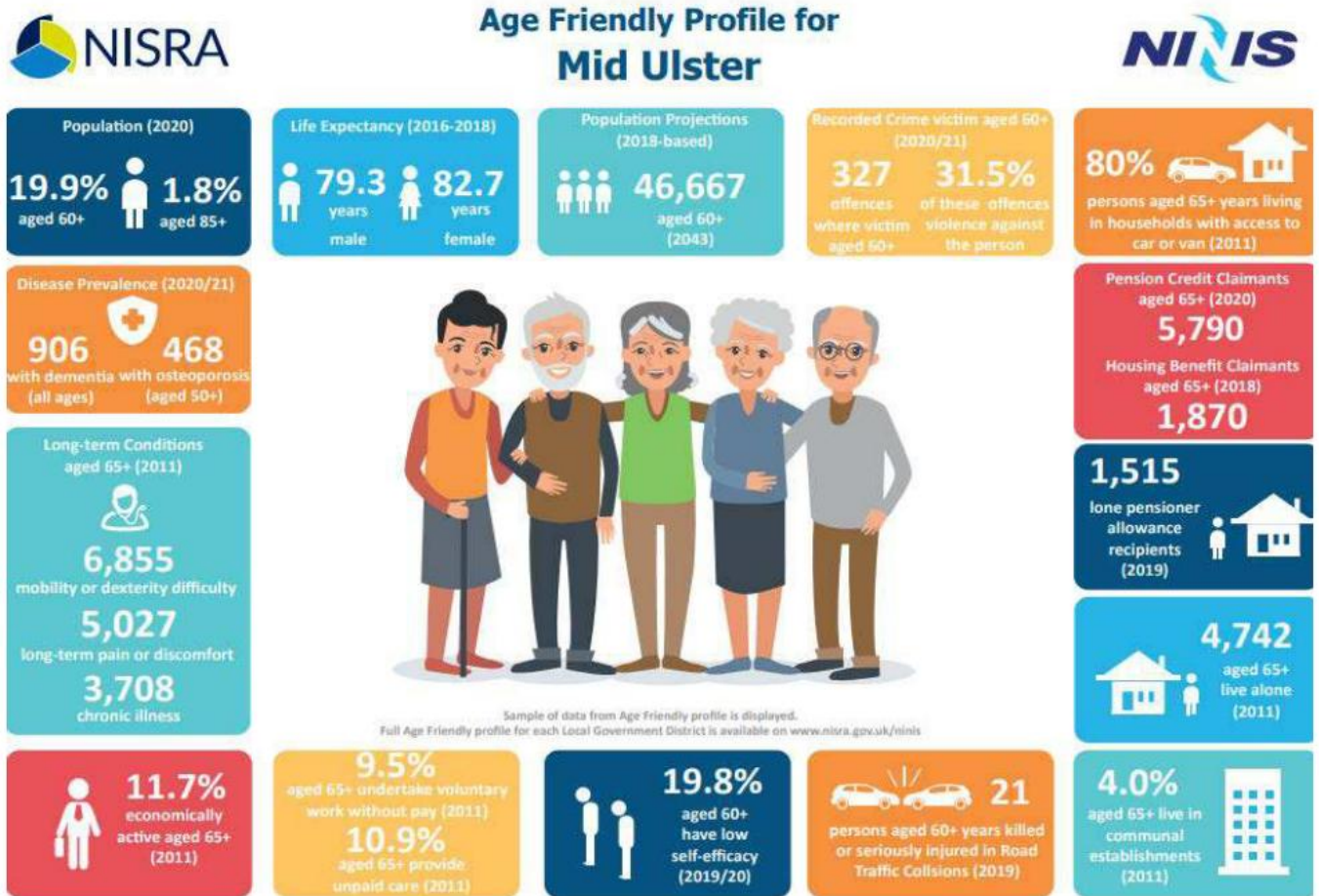


Figure 2: Age-friendly Profile ⁵

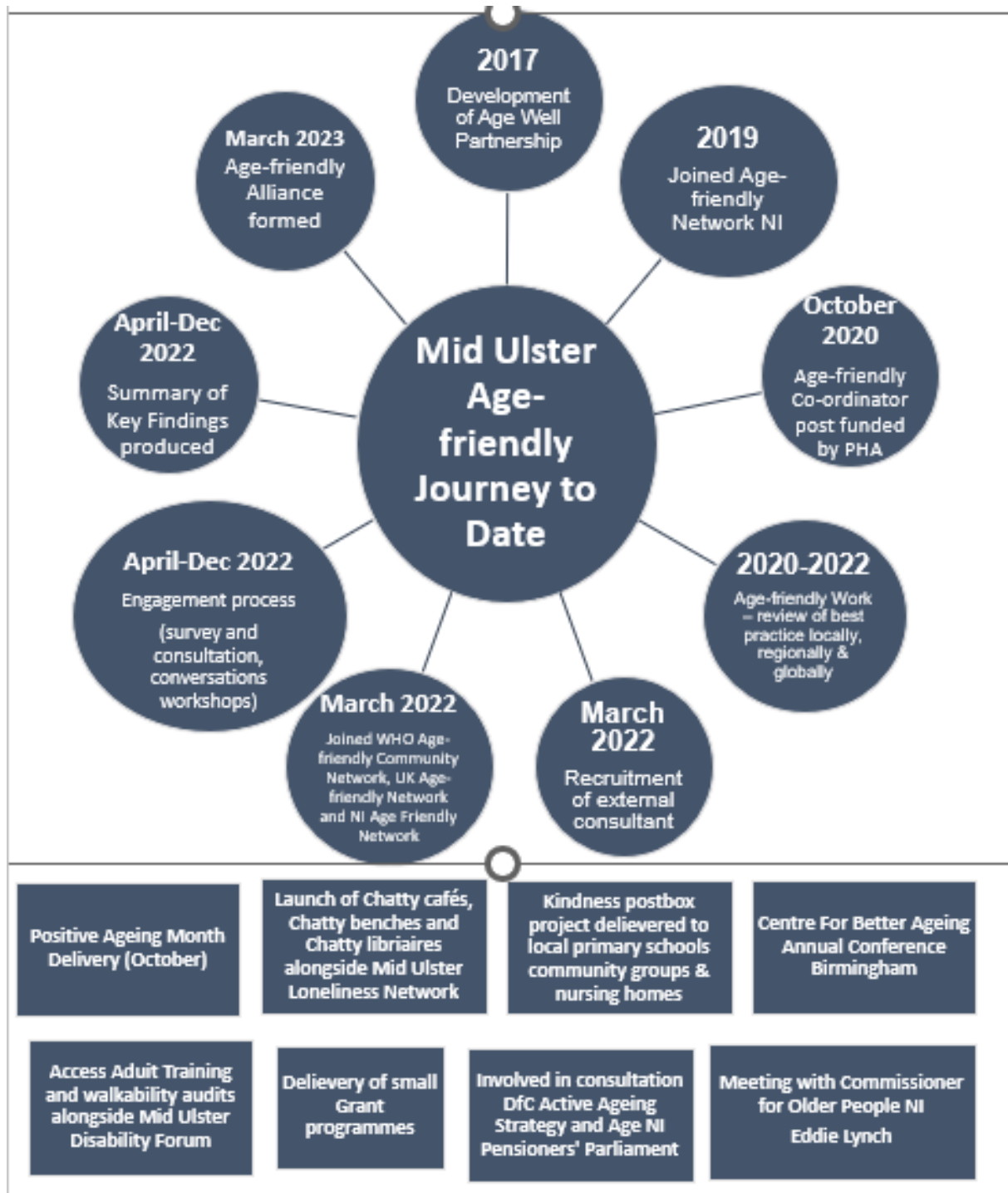
- 148,528 Population of Mid Ulster (2020)
- 29,557 Mid Ulster population aged 60+ years **19.9%**
- 2,673 Aged 85+ **1.8%**
- 46,667** Mid Ulster aged 60+ expected to rise to by **2043**

⁵ www.nisra.gov.uk/ninis https://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/download/Infographics/AFP_All.pdf

4. STEPS TAKEN BY COUNCIL TO DATE

Over the past five years Mid Ulster District Council have been working hard to support older people with better care, increased connections and improved well-being.

Timeline of work supporting an Age-friendly community



The Age-friendly co-ordinator continues working alongside Mid Ulster Loneliness Network, Mid Ulster Disability Forum, Mid Ulster Seniors Network, Age-friendly Network NI, Mid Ulster Age Well and other partners. Along with other local community groups, older people will help to promote and embed Age-friendly.

5. AGE-FRIENDLY CHARTER

An Age-friendly charter will accompany the Age-friendly strategic plan outlining long-term Mid Ulster District Council commitments that will make Mid Ulster District an Age-friendly Community.

Our Vision – what we hope to achieve

Mid Ulster is an age-friendly district where older people are valued, engaged and supported to live healthy, active and fulfilling lives.

Our Mission – how we will do it

- We will implement a new *Age-friendly strategy and action plan* to benefit everyone living in Mid Ulster District Council.
- We will develop an *Age-friendly Alliance* to ensure the implementation of the strategic plan, a multiagency partnership to drive the process locally, linking to other community planning processes - adapting existing structures.
- We will develop an *Older People's Forum* to engage older people with effective consultation, ensuring their voices are heard and participation is enabled.

Our Values – informs what we do and how we do it

- *Respect and Diversity*: We will value all older people, respect their diversity, and promote positive messages about age and older people.
- *Co-design*: We will build on assets and partnership structures through collaboration, meaningfully engaging with older people in planning, design and review processes – giving older people opportunities to share their wisdom, experience, hopes and fears.
- *Challenge and Change*: We are committed to giving older people a voice to challenge and bring about the changes they seek, fairness and justice.
- *Change attitudes*: We will see older people are a resource for their families, communities and economies in supportive and enabling living environments.
- *Equality and Inclusion*: We will address inequalities with urban and rural residents, people with disabilities or mobility issues. We will promote their inclusion and contribution to all areas of community life, respecting their lifestyle choices.

Outcomes – What success will look like

We will ensure that older people in the district:

- Have access to safe outdoor spaces and buildings with suitable facilities.
- Have access to suitable forms of transport.
- Have sufficient access to affordable home maintenance services and support to improve home efficiency and safety. Caring for the most vulnerable and in need.
- Feel part of their local community and not isolated, optimising opportunities for participation to enhance their quality of life and promote friendships.
- Feel heard and have a say in decision-making on things that affect their lives.
- Have access to work and volunteering opportunities that they want.
- Have opportunities to stay better connected via an effective communication system.
- Have opportunities to improve their health and well-being and have access to appropriate health, social care and well-being services at the right time.

6. WHAT THE COMMUNITY TOLD US

CONSULTATION, ENGAGEMENT AND ACTION PLANS

This extensive consultation with older people focused on the eight key themes identified by WHO and identified a number of key priorities for the lives of older people. One of the most significant findings being that older people are keen to be consulted with and provided with follow up information.

All those involved in this consultation process stated that this community is a great place to grow older. The majority liked living in their homes and if they had the choice to live elsewhere would choose to remain where they are. It was also found that there was a positive correlation between being associated with a group or community association and feeling involved and leading active lives in communities.

Older people who participated in the consultation clearly take their safety, health, and well-being seriously, taking the necessary provisions to protect themselves and their homes. They appreciate healthcare professionals and others visiting them in their communities to talk to them about health, safety and scam prevention.

The information gathered provided a baseline for future development, it outlined the positive aspects of residing within the Mid Ulster area and highlighted the priorities we needed to address within the Mid Ulster District, helping shape a better Age-friendly community.

As part of the consultation process, a facilitator was appointed to carry out workshops to enable the general public and key stakeholders to put forward their suggestions for improving the experience of growing older. We asked for thoughts and opinions on issues such as transport, housing, access to information and how to meet older people's needs now and in the future.

We carried out engagement with 425 people through:

- Four workshops
- Ten focus groups – in-depth conversations
- Guided conversations
- Postcards
- Online survey
- Hardcopy surveys
- Local, regional and national consultations
- 12 week public consultation

The Action Plan

This is a people-led process where local people and organisations told us what it is like to live in their area. Their views informed this three-year action plan for delivery. People offered invaluable insights to key challenges, solutions and further engagement. The action plan contains actions that will enable the Age-friendly Alliance members to work towards their aspirations set out within the strategy. Actions will be continually reviewed each year.

1. Outside spaces and buildings

The outside environment and public buildings have a major impact on the mobility, independence and the quality of life of older people and affect their ability to “age in place”. The recurring themes are quality of life, access and safety.

What is working well



- 93% said shops/ businesses were accessible and welcoming.
- 79% reported they felt safe in their local area.
- 65% reported that public spaces were clean and pleasant to visit.
- 59% were able to access public toilets outdoors, saying they were clean and well maintained.
- 50% stated there is good street lighting, police patrols and community education.
- Public realm work, Shopmobility, PSNI Active Listening, Ballyronan Marina, Dungannon Park and the Hill of the O’Neill and the Burnavon, bus station, wide-open spaces in the countryside, and Mid Ulster’s welcoming places.

Key Issues – What the community told us

- Older people need more opportunities to come out of the house with welcoming indoor and outdoor spaces i.e. coffee gardens, seating, clean toilets, lifts, picnic tables and places for walkers.
- Better parking, wider carpark spaces, lower kerbs. 64% said car parking on footpaths a problem.
- Better disabled access to shops. More disability friendly premises inside and out, i.e. handrails in local cinemas.
- Road crossing and ramps/signs to slow traffic down – too much speeding.
- Public spaces need to be cleaned from weeds, overgrown hedges, dogfouling and litter.

“Outdoor spaces need more connection areas with chatty benches and information notice boards promoting local hidden gems, walks and clear accessible parking.”

What needs improved

- Needs of the ageing population considered in the planning future public infrastructure and services.
- More encouragement to access outdoor spaces (outside gyms and exploring gardening).
- More signage, walkability audits and amenities such as toilets, and seating in public spaces.
- More access to leisure, museums and libraries and promote their facilities widely.
- Standards improved: public toilets, footpaths, lighting, roads, safety, litter and dog fouling.

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings Action Plan

To maintain and grow the valuable input of older people, Mid Ulster needs an infrastructure of age-friendly communities with good public transport links, free travel, accessible parking, and locally available cash and banking services. We will collaborate with tourist offices, museums, shops and businesses to promote accessible nature parks, and community areas paying attention to roads, paving, toilets, crossing, lighting, footpaths and seating.

Outcome: Enhanced infrastructure to support an Age-friendly community, with increased access to Mid Ulster community areas and green spaces, both town and rural that the public enjoys.

Outdoor spaces and buildings	Action Lead
Action	
Encourage and promote more access to outdoor spaces – recreation, leisure, parks, chatty benches and chatty cafes.	Mid Ulster District Council Mid Ulster Loneliness Network Sports NI
Develop age-friendly design guidelines and business charters for our district that will evolve over time.	Mid Ulster District Council
Promote Accessibility apps and websites and recognition of Age-friendly awards to places to promote accessibility.	Shopmobility Mid Ulster
Promote anti-littering programmes of education, awareness raising and enforcement.	Mid Ulster District Council
Explore options to improve accessibility along pavements and roads e.g. Awareness raising and signage.	Mid Ulster District Council

Support Partners: Mid Ulster District Council, CDM Community Transport, Mid Ulster Volunteer Centre, Mid Uster Disability Forum, Southern Health and Social Care Trust, Northern Health and Social Care Trust, Chamber of Commerce, Age-friendly Co-ordinator, Tourism NI, Gobility/ Shopmobility, Translink, Guide Dogs NI, Sports NI, Department of Infrastructure - Roads and Police Service NI.

2. Transport

Transportation, including accessibility and affordable public transport, is a key factor influencing active ageing. Being able to move about an area (urban, rural and connections) determines social and civic participation and access to community and health services.



What works well

- 80% of those aged 65+ have access to a car or van⁶.
- CDM Community Transport, Comfort of buses, Mid Ulster Shopmobility and Gobility programmes, Park and Rides.



Key issues – What the community told us

- Although older people are generally happy with transport services, there are still concerns about the accessibility of buses, particularly for those who use mobility aids, safety or need to get to health appointments.
- 87% in the survey said they have their own car, 9% rely on public transport, 17% rely on family and friends, 7% rely on community transport.
- Inequality exists in accessing services, bus timetables are hard to read.
- 65% say that public transport is not convenient, 63% say public transport doesn't get them where they want to go, 33% not enough seating for older people, 33% report that public transport drivers are patient, 51% feel safe, 48% say there is not enough information on timetables and routes, 40% say that taxi's are not affordable.
- 21 reported road traffic collision casualties for persons aged 60+ who were killed/seriously injured.⁷

"I don't drive and live in a village with poor to no public transport. Totally rely on family and friends to bring me to essential and very important appointments".

What needs improved

- Provide better public and community transport for essential services, Dr's and hospitals encouraging people to come out of their homes with trips, church and shopping.
- Age-friendly training for bus drivers and transport providers.
- Public transport timetables to be larger and more accessible.
- Improve the reliability, accessibility and affordability of transport within the town and rural areas.
- Promote smart passes and community transport with good news stories promoting services.
- Address funding to continue community transport and volunteer expenses.

⁶ (NISRA 2011)

⁷ (NISRA 2011)

Transport Action Plan

Older people need additional transport support, especially in rural areas. People living outside of town centres who rely on public transport have less access to services for health and recreation. Transport provision needs to be mapped to services available, improving access, equality and safety.

Outcome: Increased collaboration to ensure better transport options and better integrated and cohesive infrastructure for increased accessibility, equality and safety.

Transport	Action Lead
Action	
Engage with decision makers to maintain community transport services, improving the reliability, accessibility and affordability of transport within town, rural areas and hospital settings.	Translink CDM Community Transport
Promote smart passes and community transport, volunteer driver schemes with good news stories promoting services and easy to read timetables.	Translink CDM Community Transport
Promote Shopmobility and Gomobility services and increase referrals from healthcare professionals across Mid Ulster, including NHSCT and SHSCT.	Shopmobility Mid Ulster
Promote Age-friendly awareness training to all transport providers.	Mid Ulster District Council Translink

Support Partners: Department of Infrastructure, Translink, Taxi and Private Operators, CDM Community Transport, Mid Ulster Shopmobility, Age-friendly Co-ordinator, Mid Ulster Volunteer Centre, Southern Health and Social Care Trust, Alzheimer's Society, Northern Health and Social Care Trust and community organisations.

3. Housing

Housing is essential to safety and well-being. There is a link between appropriate housing and access to community and social services in influencing older people's independence and quality of life. Housing, maintenance, heating and support that allow older people to age comfortably and safely within their community are universally valued. Housing can significantly impact the quality of life and feedback tells us older people want to remain independent at home for longer.



Mid Ulster Profile

- 2011 people aged 65+ years 96% lived in a household and 4% lived in communal establishments. 82% lived in households that were owner occupied, 8% in households that were social rented, 5% in households that were private rented and 5% were living rent free. 4,742 aged 65 are living alone. In 2019/20, there were 1,515 lone pensioner allowance recipients in Mid Ulster. These are ratepayers aged 70 or over who are living alone and entitled to a 20% reduction in their rates. 1,810 are in receipt of housing benefits.⁸

What works well:

- Residential Homes, sheltered dwellings, compassionate communities, Supporting Communities and warm home schemes. 73% felt safe at home and had housing to meet their needs.
- Energy efficiency workshops, boiler replacement schemes, warm home grants, Agewell Partnership HandyVan scheme, Home Safety Scheme and falls prevention work.

Key Issues – What the community told us

- Worries about the cost of living, fuel poverty, the rise in home energy costs, the rise in rented properties and profit-led homes, anti-social behaviour, loneliness and scams.
- Not sufficient and affordable housing - 63% said there wasn't affordable housing.
- Safety in the home is an issue with fear falls. 58% said they didn't know where to go to get information on home adaption, 39% said they didn't know who to contact for home maintenance, 57% didn't know who to contact for home safety, home warm/ energy efficiency.

“Good social housing would improve the health and lives of older people”.

What needs improved

- Accessible and affordable housing, with support if required for independent living.
- Homes need to be a place of well-being with home activities, care and compassionate communities, with better designs and shared living options explored.
- Support for home grant schemes enabling people to live independently in a safe, warm, affordable home.

⁸ 2018 NISRA.

Housing Action Plan

We want to ensure older people stay in their home if they wish and more consideration given to building home for life; more information and advice on services and housing issues; dementia friendly housing; more social housing; and retirement villages for those over 60 who don't require nursing home or fold setting.

Outcome: More accessible and affordable housing to give older people more choices to live independently and safely in their homes.

Housing	Action Lead
Action	
Scope and promote the opportunities for people to remain independently at home in a safe, warm and affordable environment as they age well in their own homes.	Northern Ireland Housing Executive Housing associations NI Fire and Rescue Service
Lobby government to support home grant schemes that enable people to live independently in a safe, warm and affordable home.	Mid Ulster District Council
Maintain a home maintenance service for those in need.	Mid Ulster District Council
Promote Dementia Friendly environments promoting assisted technology, safety measures with PSNI and the Herbert Protocol.	Alzheimer's Society Dementia NI PSNI

Support Partners: NI Housing Executive, Department of Communities, Housing Associations, Supporting Communities, Consumer Council NI, Agewell Partnership, PSNI and NI Fire and Rescue Service.

4. Social Participation

Social participation and social support are strongly connected to good health and well-being throughout life, giving people a sense of belonging. Participating in leisure, social, cultural and spiritual activities in the community and with the family allows older people to continue to exercise their independence, develop friendships and feel part of their community.



Mid Ulster Profile

Continuous Household Survey ⁹ on engagement in culture, arts and sport shows that of those age 60 and over: 28% participated in sport; 29% participated in arts activities; 59% attended arts events; 20% used the public library service; and 35% visited a museum or science centres.

What works well

- 53% said there was a wide variety of activities to attend and participate in the community before COVID with 56% taking part regularly. 86% interact with family and friends on a daily basis.
- 36% lacked companionship before COVID, only 15% felt lonely, and 30% felt isolated.
- The range of community group's facilities and activities.
- Electronic Magazines (Ezines): Mid Ulster Community Newsletter, NICH, Age NI and Carers Matters.
- Networks: Mid Ulster Loneliness Network, Mid Ulster Intergenerational Network, COSTA, CWSAN and Compassionate communities were appreciated for co-design and co-delivery.
- Websites: NHSCT and SHSCT directory of services and Mid Ulster Agewell Partnership.

Key issues – What the community told us

- Lack of information, activities, befriending, signposting, face-to-face interactions and alternative promotions. Not enough opportunities (trips and outings).
- 45% say activities are not accessible, promoted or have transport options available.
- Barriers include disability, transport, cost of living, lack of funds, confidence, unsuitable times, lack of community halls, mobility, being housebound, digital access and mental health.
- Too many activities become closed clubs and new people find them hard to access.
- Groups closed because of the pandemic, rising costs, high paperwork, lack of funding and Charity commission governance, volunteer burnout and no succession planning.
- Cutbacks and lack of long-term sustainable resources give uncertainty and inconsistency of services and activities.

“We need Wellness Checks at age 50/60 with a welcome pack with range of services available.”

What needs improved

- Access to affordable services and activities with discounts in hospitality, hairdressing and gyms.
- More community initiatives would attract residents of various demographics.
- Promote project ideas: gardening clubs, history, book clubs, day trips and hobby classes.
- More intergenerational work, changing attitudes and culture with Age-friendly schools.

⁹ 2015/16

Social Participation Action Plan

Supporting social well-being for both individuals and communities will be key to addressing loneliness and isolation and supporting preventive approaches to wellness and good health in the long term. The community and voluntary age sector are essential in keeping older people connected to services and their local communities. We must commit to maintaining and developing much-needed community connection and support.

Outcome: Increased social participation to reduce the likelihood of complex needs developing.

Social Participation	Action Lead
Action	
Develop more chatty places – Warm, friendly chat areas, promoting libraries providing services for older people such as reading newspapers aloud, a cup of tea etc.	Northern Health & Social Care Trust Mid Ulster Agewell Partnership Libraries NI Mid Ulster Loneliness Network
Increase Age-friendly Promotion, i.e., social media/ newsletter to highlight current activities, leisure opportunities, volunteering, support organisations, and good news stories.	Mid Ulster District Council Mid Ulster Volunteer Centre
Encourage the development of buddy schemes to support involvement in local activities and community groups.	Mid Ulster District Council Mid Ulster Agewell Partnership
Promote training for staff who work in the community, the voluntary and educational sectors.	Linking Generations NI
Ensure better access to affordable services and activities that are age appropriate with convenient times and locations.	Northern Health & Social Care Trust Southern Health & Social Care Trust

Support partners: Age NI (Connect North), SHSCT Social Prescribing Service, Agewell Partnership, Mid Ulster District Council, 040, Mid Ulster Volunteer Centre, Supporting Communities NI, Libraries NI and CWSAN.

5. Respect and Inclusion

The respect and inclusion of older people can depend on culture, gender, health status and economic status. The extent to which older people participate in the social, civic and economic life of where they live is closely linked to their experiences of inclusion. With the right policies, environments and support, people can age well. Older people's diverse life experiences, skills and resilience mean they have much to contribute to life and be respected for. Everyone has a right to influence what happens to them as individuals and within wider society.



Mid Ulster Profile

- 71% agreed that society doesn't recognise the contribution that many older people are still able to make.¹⁰
- 19.8% of respondents aged 60+ living in Mid Ulster reported low self-efficacy. People with low self-efficacy often doubt their capabilities, are less ambitious and give up when challenged.¹¹

What works well

- 69% feel respected and included within their community.
- Older people are represented in many local groups and strategic partnerships.
- The Age-friendly co-ordinator encourages engagement and co-design.
- Neighbours are always ready to help if needed and look out for each other.

Key Issues – What the community told

- 21% agreed they are consulted, 50% disagreed not consulted, 41% were not portrayed in a positive manner without stereotypes.
- Older people feel invisible and not seen as a priority. Isolation, loneliness and transport issues are significant factors that affect inclusion. Covid has killed some community spirit because older people are afraid to go out.
- Older people have great assets to bring to society, and appreciate culture and diversity.
- Listen to us regarding our care, fears and anxieties – 86% said there is a need for a forum.
- Only 50% agreed that facilities, shops, businesses and Council had courteous staff trained to understand the needs of older people. "Some people could be more friendly".
- 41% said there are not enough activities for young and older people.
- "Improve transport issues – you will improve inclusion".

"Don't put older people in a box – we have all different needs, some are healthy and then others need more attention. There can be many negative stories on the media of older people – share more good news about older people"

What needs improved

- Value older people and challenge ageism and discrimination in everyday conversations, work and media. Need growth of equality and diversity legislation and policies.
- Older people engage with policymakers, media and community action.
- Promote and support intersectoral, intergenerational approaches to policy development, planning and provision across each and every sector and department.
- More consultations and engagement opportunities to value older people's contribution.

¹⁰ Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) Survey 2017.

¹¹ Northern Ireland Continuous Household Survey (CHS) 2020.

Respect and Inclusion Action Plan

There needs to be more opportunities to support and promote active ageing, removing barriers to older people to ensure they are more respected, valued and included. This plan will support and focus on the diverse range of people living within mid ulster from 50+. As we all live longer, there are great opportunities to create vibrant communities, develop life-long interests and aspirations, and support diversity amongst our ageing population considering people living with a disability, LGBT communities, BAME groups and carers.

Outcome: Increased involvement, respect and inclusion with older people feeling more valued.

Respect and Inclusion	Action Lead
Action	
Develop an Age-friendly Older People’s Forum to consult on policies, age-friendly planning, services and inclusion.	Mid Ulster District Council
Connect and support people to participate in digital training and digital inclusion programmes, promoting good news stories.	Libraries NI
Promote a positive image of people ageing well, appreciating diversity, and having recognition awards/events to inspire others.	Mid Ulster District Council
Promote Positive Ageing Month each October with District-wide engagement opportunities online and face-to-face with positive ageing grants.	Mid Ulster District Council

Support partners: Age NI Community Navigator, Department of Finance (Digital Inclusion) Linking Generations NI, SHSCT Social Prescribing Service, Southern Health and Social Care Trust, Northern Health and Social Care Trust, First Steps Community Centre, COSTA, STEP, Alzheimer’s Society, Agewell Partnership and CWSAN.

6. Civic Participation

Older people do not stop contributing to their communities on retirement. Many continue to provide unpaid and voluntary work for their families and communities, and they are lead contributors to the economy. An Age-friendly community should provide options for older people to continue contributing to their communities through paid employment or voluntary work, if they so choose, and engage in the political process. It's possible for us all to live meaningful and purposeful lives, participating in and contributing to the workplace, community and society at large.



Mid Ulster Profile

- In 2020, 120,410 people living in Mid Ulster were receiving state pension. In the same year, 5,790 living in Mid Ulster received pension credit.
- In 2016, 9.5% aged 65 + take part in voluntary work without pay. The corresponding figure for those aged 65+ years in Northern Ireland was 10.7%.
- On Census Day 2011, 11.7% of those aged 65+ years in Mid Ulster were economically active and 88.3% were economically inactive. Of those who were economically active, 490 worked full-time, 414 worked part-time, 1,100 were self-employed and 31 were unemployed, and 73.4% had no qualifications. In Northern Ireland, 63.7% of people aged 65+ had no qualifications.

What works well:

- Community assets: numerous halls, meeting venues and welcoming places. Mid Ulster Volunteer Centre, Compassionate communities, Shopmobility, Carers Matters and Carers NI, Mid Ulster Agewell Partnership, The Burnavon and Community Transport.
- Positive Ageing Month - involvement and promotion by Age-friendly Co-ordinator.
- 39% stated there were good opportunities for older people to volunteer.

What the community told us

- Longer working lives and pension age rising. Some older people are not looking forward to retirement. 46% don't know about work and retraining opportunities for older people, 47% said if there was better transport available, they would work.
- Older people don't feel valued in the workforce but have high experience and skills. 64% agreed that older people would work longer if employers were more flexible.
- 59% didn't know who to contact for volunteering. 51% would do voluntary work if they felt supported. 58% don't know who to contact about benefit entitlements and have difficulty accessing them. There is stigma associated with asking for help.

Age Inclusion at work needs addressed. Top issues raised by older employees: confidence, caring responsibilities, health, discrimination, tech, menopause, ageism, fatigue, stigma, undervalued, staying relevant, getting left behind, security fears (Age NI Age at Work conference 2022).

What needs improved

- New ways of engagement are addressed with older people through networks and forums.
- Age-friendly audits are needed in workplaces and consider reasons for economic inactivity.
- Need to promote volunteering opportunities.
- Promote benefit uptake campaigns locally and local discount schemes.

Civic Participation Action Plan

Older people need to lead and play vital roles in their communities. Whether through work, volunteering, civic action or family support, the added value of older people’s time, expertise and experience is significant. Communities, connection and inclusion are key.

Outcome: Increased support services to encourage opportunities to train, acquire skills, support employment, financial well-being, volunteering and interview skills.

Civic Participation	Action Lead
Action	
Supporting people to plan for a better later e.g. Research and develop a retirement pack for 50+, promoting engagement and volunteering opportunities.	Mid Ulster District Council
Encourage businesses to prioritise Age-friendly planning and retain an older workforce e.g. Age NI Age @ Work Mid-Career reviews, Age-friendly training and policies to support roles.	Mid Ulster District Council Age NI
Promote cost-of-living, benefit uptake and financial well-being workshops e.g. Make the Call pop-up clinics.	STEP

Support partners: Age NI, Business in the Community, STEP, First Steps Community Centre, Libraries NI, Mid Ulster District Council, Compassionate communities, Mid Ulster Volunteer Centre and Banks.

7. Communication and Information

Staying connected with events and people and getting timely, practical information to manage life and meet personal needs is vital for active ageing. Age-friendly communities have relevant information that is readily accessible to older people with varying capacities and resources. Newspapers, radio, tv, social media, internet, community notices and community navigator roles are all important in supporting effective communication.



Mid Ulster Profile

- Seven libraries are located in Mid Ulster.¹³
- In 2016, 71% aged 65 + people in Mid Ulster have never accessed the internet. 46% of people aged 65+ living in Northern Ireland have never accessed the Internet.¹⁴
- In 2019/20, 40% of respondents to the Northern Ireland Continuous Household Survey aged 65+ reported using online channels to access public services.

What works well:

- Ezines: Council Community Newsletter, Health Alliance NI newsletter, Age NI Community Navigator Snapshot and Carers Matters. Networks: Mid Ulster Loneliness Network, MUSN, COSTA, and CWSAN. Websites: NHSCT directory of services, Connect North, Mid Ulster Agewell Partnership.
- Survey respondents: 44% read newspapers, 82% listen to the radio and 96% watch tv to gain information. 34% use a local community facility (church, community hall) for information and 10% used the community navigator scheme. 61% information from the Council is easy to understand. 60% didn't know who to contact to get information on older people's issues.

What the community told us...

- 71% over 65 are not able to use the internet. Technology is a barrier. – not everyone on social media and the IT world is moving too fast-slow broadband speeds in certain areas.
- 24% wanted support on how to use the internet.
- Most older people rely on word of mouth to find out about opportunities.
- Lack of awareness of services and opportunities, one-stop HUB for older people.
- Duplication of messages and support via trusts, PHA, Councils and Community groups.



“Older people can face difficulties when searching for clear, accessible information. We need trustworthy sources of information and advice to support older people make informed decisions about all aspects of later life.”

What needs improved

- Council social media could be significantly improved with weekly messages.
- Digital inclusion training and support access to devices.
- More positive messaging and link in with welcoming places.
- Information & advice portal for staff and professionals – co-design approach.
- Access to libraries needs to be improved, and mobile reading/ information rooms in villages.

¹³ LGD2014.

¹⁴ Labour Force Survey from January-March 2019.

Communication and Information Action Plan

Personal interaction with service providers is important. We can not rely on digital communication and information leaflets to get information out. We need to utilise a mix of communication methods. Service providers in Mid Ulster need to work together to share how they provide public information, ensuring people feel motivated by what they read. We will ensure older people have the information, advice and support they need to claim their rights, entitlements, and access services.

Outcome: A good effective communication system that enhances well-being, so that as we age, we can continue to be informed and engage in our community with the confidence of support.

Communication and Information	Action Lead
Action	
Provide online sessions such as financial fraud, and TV Licensing Scam Awareness talks.	PCSP PSNI
Develop an Age-friendly newsletter with essential contacts, linking to Mid Ulster District Council website.	Mid Ulster District Council
Develop one-stop shops for people to access information i.e. Rural areas information roadshows.	Mid Ulster District Council
Connect and support people to access information, including digital training, digital inclusion programmes and promoting digital champions.	Libraries NI
Encourage organisations to produce Age-friendly documents, including funding applications.	Mid Ulster District Council
To develop a communication action plan i.e. developing a database for partners, organisations and older people's groups for future communications.	Mid Ulster District Council

Support Partners: PSNI, Age NI, Linking Generations NI, SHSCT Social Prescribing Service, Northern Health and Social Care Trust, COSTA, DeafBlind NI, Community Health Connectors, Community Ambassadors, Mid Ulster Agewell Partnership and CWSAN.

8. Community Support and Health

Community support and health services are vital to maintaining health and independence in the community. Civil society can provide a role in supporting the health of a community with programmes, services and activities such as fitness, wellness, diet, supporting health conditions, GP, dentist, hospital, home help, befriending, carers, sitting, daycare and care homes which all play an essential role in supporting better health and wellness.



Mid Ulster Profile

- There were 918 people on the Dementia Register (all ages) living in Mid Ulster.
- 1,990 are in receipt of carer's allowance. 5,790 are in receipt of pension credits.
- From those surveyed: 50% rated their health and quality of life good; 37% have day to day activities limited a little because of their health with 10% say they are limited a lot by their health.

What works well

- 87% eat well and have a varied diet and 92% cook for themselves.
- 52% said health and social services in their area provide a good service.
- 64% didn't know of good home care services in the area: home helps, carers and sitting service.
- 45% stated there were good residential facilities in the area: care homes, day centres etc.
- Compassionate communities, carers matters, a variety of day care, home helps, nursing care, carers and community activities, hearing clinics and safety talks.
- Council: Recycling, waste management, sports and leisure facilities, warm home schemes, chatty walks, Make a Change Programme and Agewell Partnership

What the community told us

- Accessing GP, dental services and hospital appointments. 80% didn't know who to contact in an emergency. The fear of becoming ill and long A&E triage times and complex systems.
- Care at home not available when discharged from hospital, no control over decisions going to bed or getting up, carers only time on microwave meals, carer low paid, inadequate care.
- Living with long term pain, ill health, hard of hearing/ disabilities, visual impairment and mobility.
- 52% don't know of affordable health and wellness programmes and classes in their local area i.e. nutrition, smoking cessation and weight control. 69% don't know of affordable fitness activities for older people. 79% don't know of support for chronic health conditions.
- Mental health issues, loneliness on the rise and insecurity of the future.

"We need health and well-being hubs to incorporate pharmacy, dentist, doctor, nurse led services, physiotherapist, nutritionist etc."

What needs improved

- Physical activities, keep active programmes online and offline – creative involvement.
- Provide better leisure centre facilities for groups of older adults to use.
- Better access to care and support to help people and their families live well.
- Dying matters need to be talked about – more talks about leaving behind digital footprints, funeral planning and wills.

Community Support and Health Action Plan

Activities, services and relationships help us all to live independent and healthy lives. As we age, our needs change and people require assistance due to disability, vulnerability, illness, incapacity or old age. We need to pay attention to promoting independence, social inclusion, safeguarding, mobility and well-being. Delivering effective support and helping people age with dignity helps prevent and address pressures elsewhere in the health system. To respond positively to an ageing population, we need action to help people stay well and feel good for longer and deliver positive outcomes for older people now and in the future.

Outcome: A system that enhances well-being and independence with a focus on early intervention and prevention so that as we age, we can continue to engage with professionals and the community maintaining our dignity and with care.

Community Support and Health	Action Lead
Action	
Build and maintain relationships with all service providers to share support and increase referrals, i.e., meals on wheels, luncheon clubs and food banks.	Northern Health & Social Care Trust Southern Health & Social Care Trust
Identify and promote good mental health and well-being programmes and support i.e. Mental Health Community Ambassadors, Make a change programme, Take 5 Programme, Safer U App, Scam Wise and Action Mental Health support.	Northern Health & Social Care Trust Southern Health & Social Care Trust PHA
Share information on health issues, relevant services, development opportunities regarding nutrition, diabetes, sleep routines and public health messages.	Northern Health & Social Care Trust Southern Health & Social Care Trust
Raise awareness and promote physical activity programmes i.e. Physical activity referral scheme, walking groups and leisure centre activities.	Mid Ulster District Council
Support and raise awareness around end-of-life care.	Compassionate Communities

Support Partners: Age NI, Mid Ulster Volunteer Centre, Age-friendly Co-ordinator, Gobility/Shopmobility, COSTA, Sport NI, CWSAN - Health Alliance, older people's groups, Community Health Connectors, Community Ambassadors, PHA and private agencies.

7. MAKING OUR PLAN HAPPEN

To make our Age-friendly plan work, we need the support of all stakeholders to ensure that they deliver what is needed to have a thriving Age-friendly community.

Age-friendly Alliance: This multiagency partnership will lead in delivering this Age-friendly strategic plan. Alliance members will work together to support the needs and aspirations of older people. They will drive the process locally and have agreed to terms of reference and structures for linking to other Mid Ulster District Council's community planning processes.

The Mid Ulster Council: The Council is funded by the PHA to develop an Age-Friendly community. They are also a member of the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities, UK Network of Age-friendly communities through the Centre for Ageing Better UK and Age-friendly Network NI where Age-friendly best practices are shared, and learning is brought back to Mid Ulster.

An Age-friendly Co-ordinator: As a Council staff member, they will support the Age Friendly Alliance meetings, reporting to community planning structures with updates on progress. The Age-friendly co-ordinator will facilitate quarterly Age-friendly Alliance meetings ensuring all relevant stakeholders remain engaged, including having internal meetings with Council strategic leads.

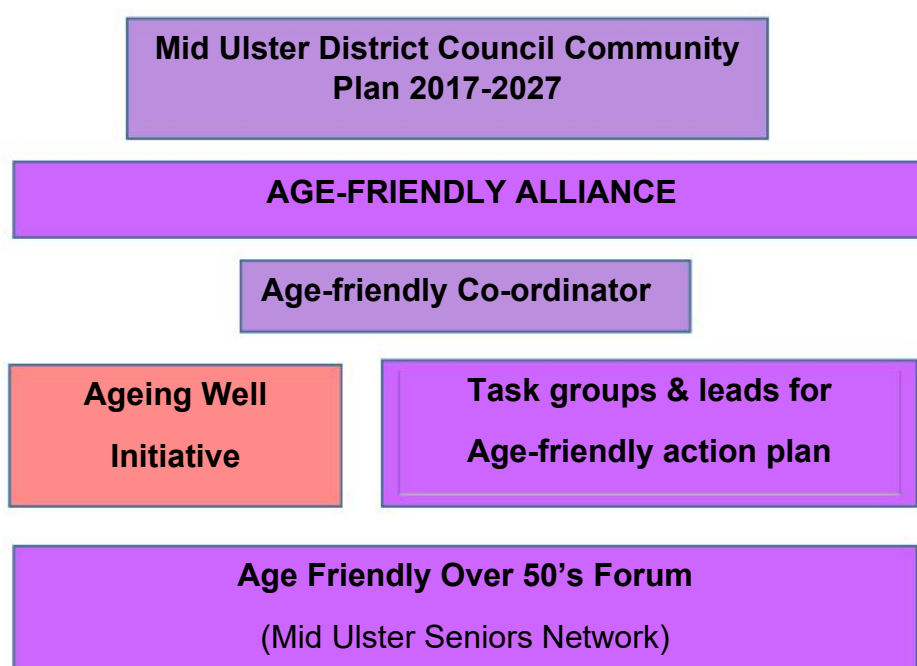
Tasks Groups and Action Leads: Task groups and action leads will be appointed to take on responsibilities, identify resources and set performance measures. Action leads will report back to the Age-friendly Alliance at quarterly meetings.

Older People's Forum: We will refresh the membership and terms of reference of the Mid Ulster Seniors Network (representatives of older people's groups and service providers) to include an older people's forum. We will engage with older people ensuring they have their voices heard.

Ageing Well Initiative: By working together, we can achieve great things from our combined efforts in supporting and developing the Agewell Initiative with the community sector.

IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE

 *Already in place*  *Community and Voluntary service*



8. MEASURING THE IMPACT

Becoming Age-friendly is not something that happens overnight and there are several steps that need to be taken. The planning, implementation, evaluation and improvement aspects of Age-friendly is a continuous process as shown in the figure 4 below.



Figure 4: The Age-friendly Management Cycle

We will adopt an outcomes-based approach to show what difference the actions have made. This will provide a manageable performance framework through which the Age-friendly Alliance can monitor and review progress against suggested actions and outcomes.

This performance management framework will require the Age-friendly Alliance to work collaboratively with a wide range of partners.

To be included in the performance management framework:

- Purpose of measurement of the strategic plan – ensuring actions are addressing gaps.
- Age-friendly strategic action leads and task groups.
- Key performance indicators (KPI's) used to measure impact.
- Formal reporting scorecards agreed.
- Communication to Age-friendly Alliance
- Communication to Community Planning structures.
- Older people's forum to provide feedback and engagement reviewing the plan.

9. STAKEHOLDERS

Developing this strategy was a people-led process where multiple stakeholders told us about living in the Mid Ulster area. Wide engagement gained views and informed the new action plans over the next three years. They all offered invaluable insights into key challenges, solutions and we thank them for their commitment and engagement.

By working with a wide range of older people's service providers and statutory partners, the new Age-friendly Alliance will be able to collectively pool knowledge and expertise to achieve delivering this plan together. Age-friendly stakeholders will have a vested interest in the needs and aspirations of older people.

Action leads and support partners from the public, private, community and voluntary sectors will be involved in delivering this plan. They will inform current issues and identify future strategic actions, priorities and key performance indicators.

Other statutory partners may include: Clanmill Housing, Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS), DfC, DfI, Education Authority (EA), Integrated Care Partnership, Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT), Southern Health and Social Care Trust (SHSCT), Health and Social Care Board (HSCB), Invest Northern Ireland (Invest NI), Northern Ireland Library Authority (Libraries NI), Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB), Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS), Public Health Agency (PHA), Mid Ulster District Council, (Community Planning CVS Forum), Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), NIFRS, Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), PCSP and Sports Council for Northern Ireland (Sport NI).



10. POLICY CONTEXT

The Age-friendly strategy and action plan for the Mid Ulster District connects to and complements other strategies and policies that impact older people's lives.

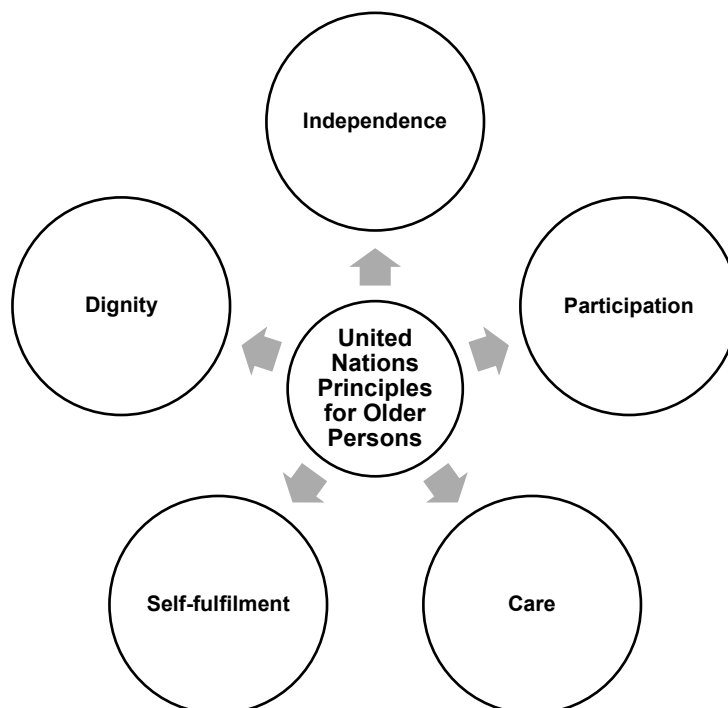
The WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities was established in 2010 to connect cities, communities, and organisations worldwide with the shared vision of making their community a great place to grow old. The Global Network currently includes over 1333 cities in 47 countries, covering 298 million people worldwide.

Mid Ulster District Council provide the leadership to explore Mid Ulster becoming an Age-friendly City and Community. In 2018 Mid Ulster District Council signed the WHO Age-friendly Declaration, and in 2021 the Chair of the Council signed a declaration committing to this process by joining the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities.

This section considers key strategies that relate to an Age-friendly district. Of particular importance are the Department for Communities' Active Ageing Strategy 2016–22, Making Life Better 2012-2023 A Whole System Framework for Public Health and Commissioner for older people Northern Ireland Corporate Plan 2023-2024 Right Here Right Now.

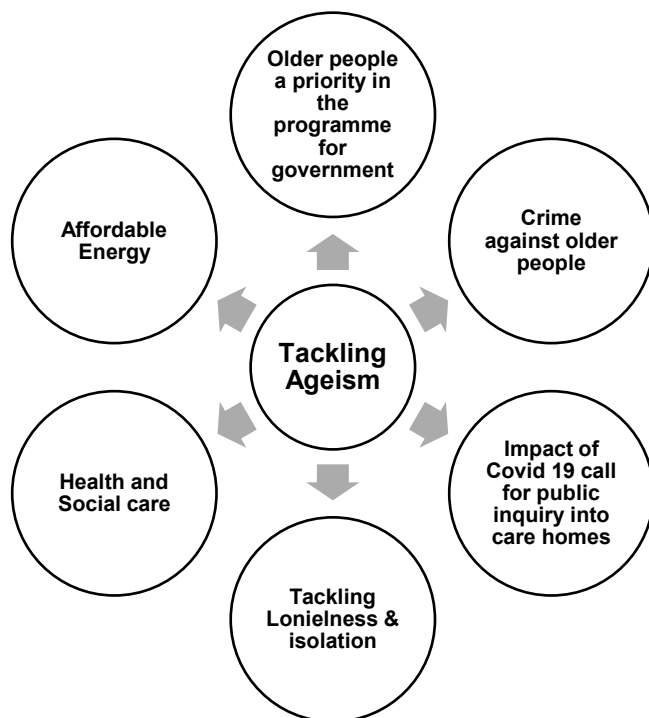
Department for Communities' Active Ageing Strategy 2016–2022

The Active Ageing Strategy vision is one of "Northern Ireland Being An Age-friendly 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." This strategy aims to increase understanding of the issues affecting older people and promote and emphasise their rights, value, and contribution. The strategy is informed by five key themes.



Commissioner for older people Northern Ireland Corporate Plan 2023-2024 Right Here Right Now.

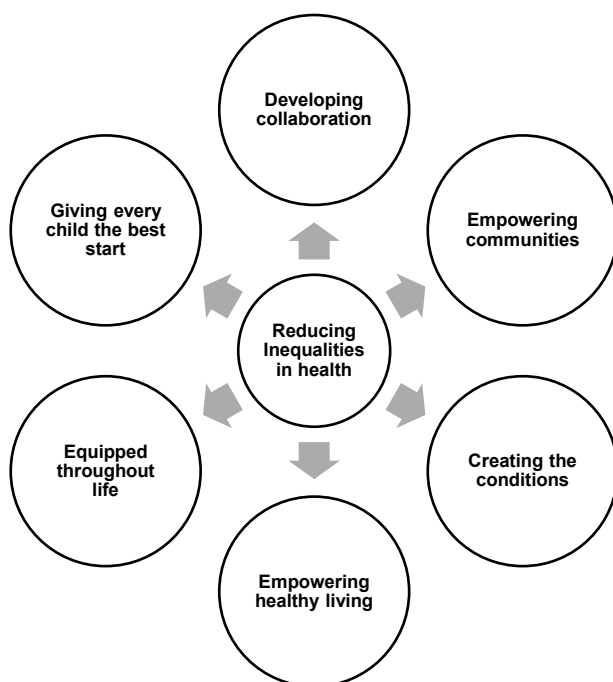
The Commissioner's vision is that: "Northern Ireland is a great place to age". The Commissioner's priorities will focus on six key issues.



Making Life Better 2012-2023 A Whole System Framework for Public Health

Making Life Better's vision is: "All People Are Enabled And Supported In Achieving Their Full Health And Well-being Potential." Its aims are to achieve better health and well-being for everyone and reduce inequalities in health. Making Life Better is structured around six themes.

Regional policies, strategies and supporting documents relating to the Age Sector to support this strategic plan. During consultations, Mid Ulster stakeholders analysed the external environment and the following public documents, policies and research were taken into consideration when making the action plans.



Other policies that relate to supporting an Age-friendly district include:

- Anti-Poverty Strategy
- Active Ageing Strategy (Department for Communities)
- Access to Cash Strategy 2020
- Advance Care Planning Policy (Department of Health)
- Age NI Strategy 2022
- Age NI Election Manifesto 2022
- Adult Protection Bill for Northern Ireland
- Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland with NIA
- Cancer Strategy for Northern Ireland 2022 -2032
- COPNI Corporate Plan 2023-2024: Right Here Right Now
- Consumer Council NI
- Department of Health's Urgent and Emergency Care Services
- Digital Inclusion Strategy 2022-2030
- Disability Strategy 2021-2026
- Inconsiderate Pavement Parking with IMTAC
- Gender Inequality
- Gender strategy and Sexual Orientation strategy
- Hourglass safer ageing index 2022
- European Union Settlement Scheme
- Mental Health Strategy 2021-2031
- NISRA Census data
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive's Older People's Housing Strategy 2021/22 - 2025/26
- Organ donation – PHA statutory opt-out system for Northern Ireland
- PHA: 'Making Life Better - a whole system framework for public health (2013-23)
- Programme for Government Outcomes Framework
- Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2022
- Strategy to End Violence Against Women and Girls
- The Housing Supply Strategy for Northern Ireland
- Victims of Crime Commissioner

There needs to be an integrated approach to address these external strategies, ensuring Mid Ulster Age-friendly actions are aligned with them to make sure they are all implemented effectively, guaranteeing better outcomes for older people. This Age-friendly strategy and its full implementation provide a unique chance to do things differently with a collaborative approach.

Over the next three years, there is the opportunity to improve structures and services so that older people have access to the advice, care and support they need when they need it, and in a way that helps them and their families to live and age well.

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT AGE-FRIENDLY



Want to know more about Age-friendly

Contact details

Raisa Donnelly
Age-friendly Co-Ordinator
Mid Ulster District Council
Ballyronan Road
Magherafelt
BT45 6EN



Prepared by: Elaine Curry Coaching

**Mid Ulster
Age-friendly
Strategic Plan
2023-2026**



Our Plan for an Ageing Community

Ensuring people age well in Mid Ulster



Age Friendly
Mid Ulster

WHAT IS IN THE PLAN

- **Age-friendly plan introduction.....Page 3**
- **Profile of growing older in Mid Ulster.....Page 4**
- **Steps taken by the Council to datePage 5**
- **How this plan links to the Council’s plan.....Page 6**
- **Age-friendly 8 key themes with actions.....Page 7**
 - **Theme 1: Outdoor Spaces Buildings.....Page 7**
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 - **Theme 5: Respect and Social Inclusion.....Page 11**
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- **Making the plan happenPage 15**

AGE- FRIENDLY PLAN INTRODUCTION



This easy read version of the Age-friendly plan tells you our vision and what we plan to do to support older people to age well.



AGE FRIENDLY

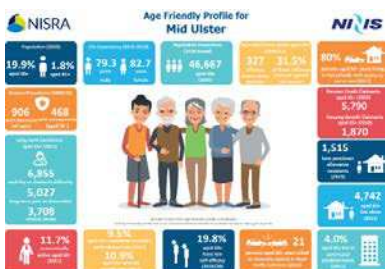
An Age-friendly community is one in which people of all ages can live healthy and active lives and where everyone is treated with respect, regardless of their age. As we all live longer, there are huge opportunities to create ageing well communities.



Mid Ulster District Council have been engaging with residents over the age of 50 from April 2022 – March 2023 to find out how it feels to grow older in their communities and what matters most to them with improvements for the future.



The findings from engagement with 425 people have informed actions to make improvements over the next three years, looking at key actions covering the 8 Age-friendly themes.



Mid Ulster is fully aware we have an ageing population meaning that there will be more older people over the age of 50 in the next 10-20 years. We want to be better prepared to support older people and future generations.

PROFILE OF GROWING OLDER IN MID ULSTER

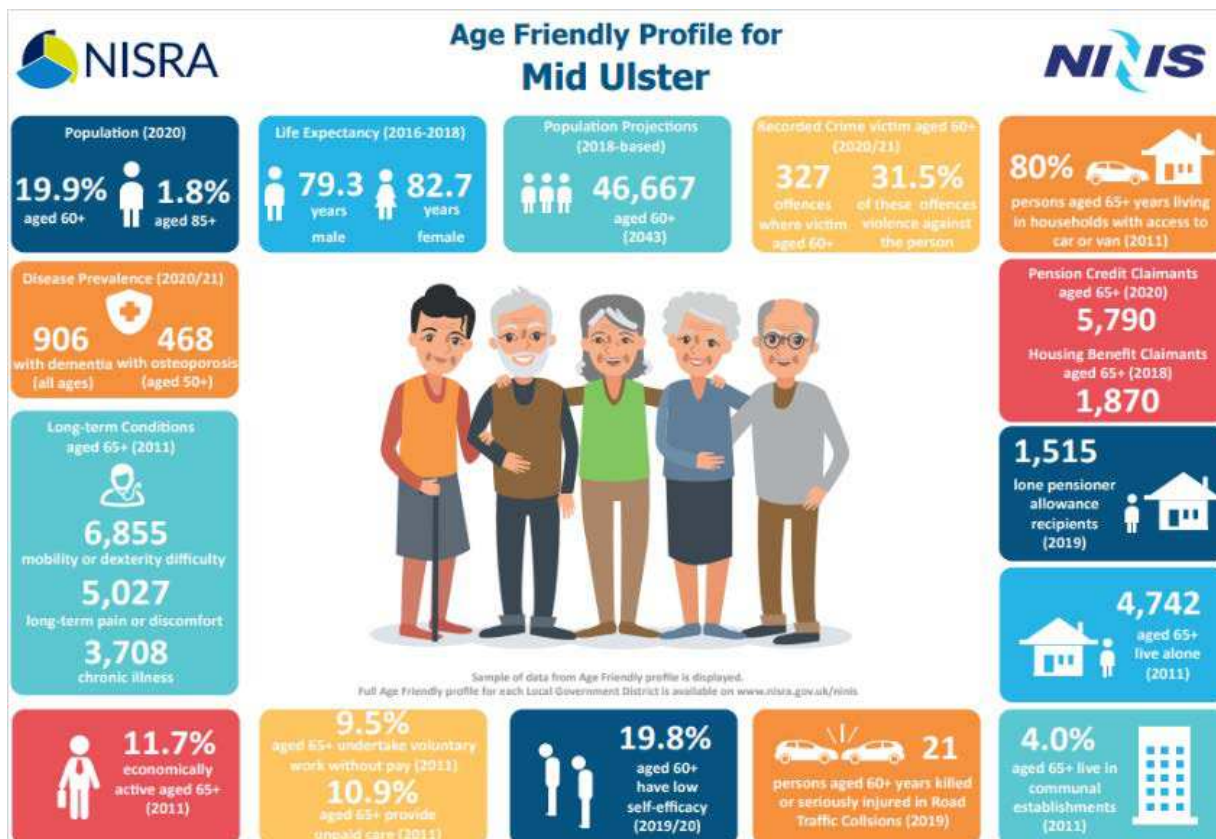


Figure 2: Age-friendly Profile www.nisra.gov.uk/ninis
https://www.ninis2.nisra.gov.uk/download/Infographics/AFP_All.pdf

148,528 Population of Mid Ulster (2020)

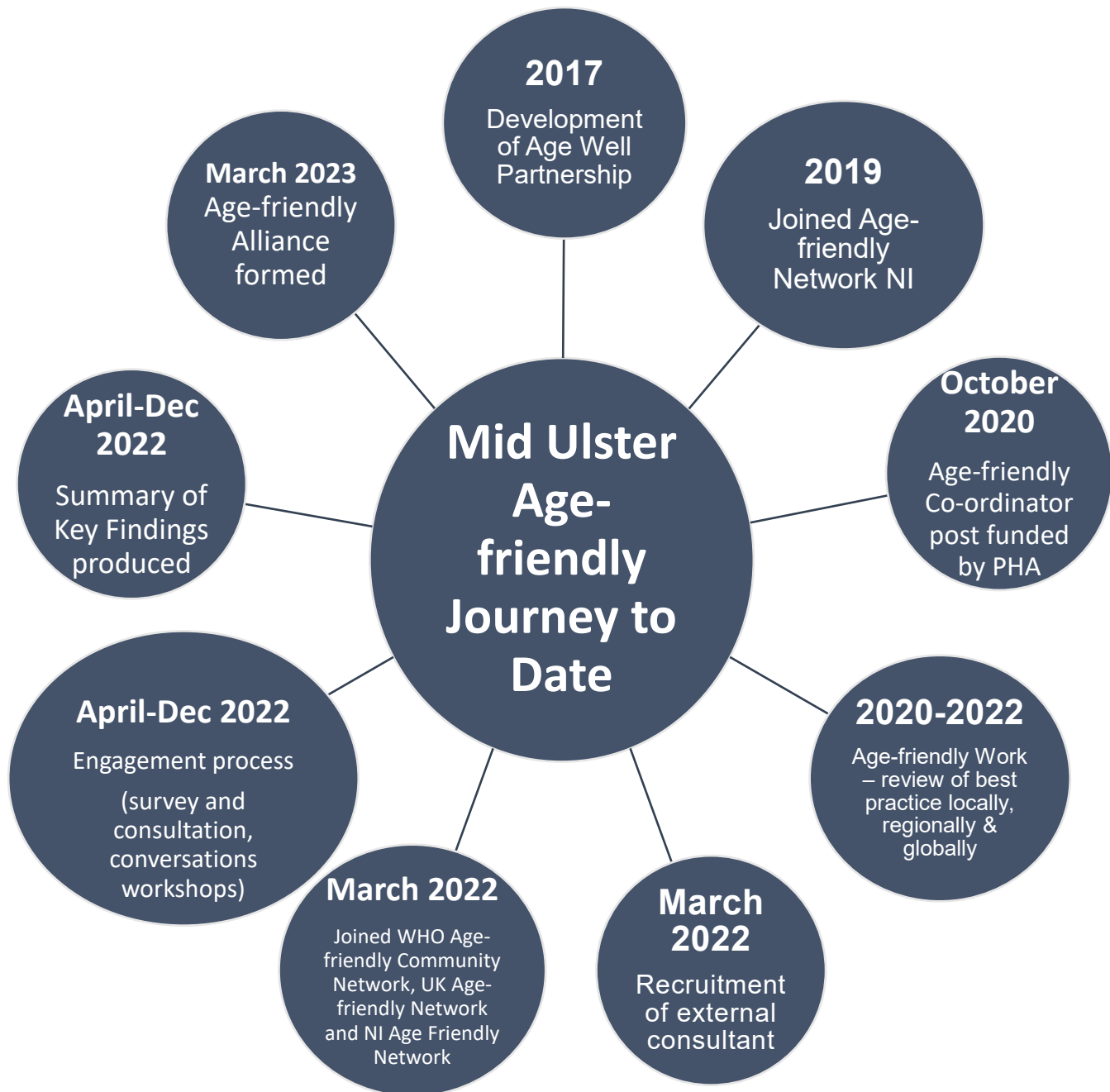
29,557 Mid Ulster population aged 60+ years **19.9%**

2,673 Aged 85+ **1.8%**

46,667 Mid Ulster aged 60+ expected to rise to by **2043**

STEPS TAKEN BY COUNCIL TO DATE

Over the past five years Mid Ulster Council have been working hard to support older people with care, connections and wellbeing.



Positive Ageing Month Delivery (October)

Launch of Chatty cafés, Chatty benches and Chatty libraires alongside Mid Ulster Loneliness Network

Kindness postbox project delivered to local primary schools community groups & nursing homes

Centre For Better Ageing Annual Conference Birmingham

Access Adult Training and walkability audits alongside Mid Ulster Disability Forum

Delievery of small Grant programmes

Involved in consultation DfC Active Ageing Strategy and Age NI Pensioners' Parliament

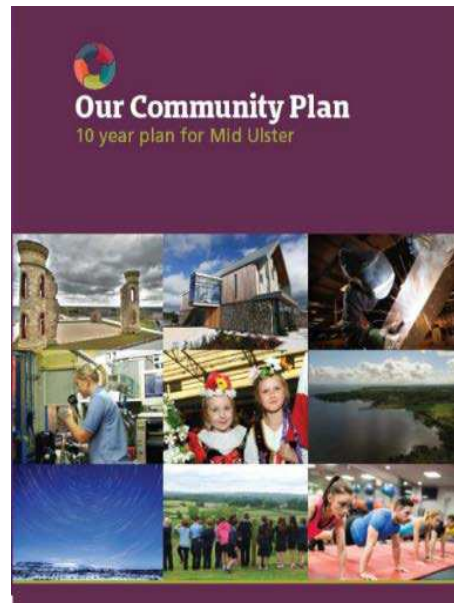
Meeting with Commissioner for Older People NI Eddie Lynch

AGE-FRIENDLY AND OUR COMMUNITY PLAN

The Mid Ulster District Council Community plan, alongside the Age-friendly plan, will build on the solid foundation of the existing relationships, partnerships, programmes already in place.

The Age-friendly plan will link to the community plans outcomes as it highlights that an ageing population is an important issue to address.

With the purpose of community planning being to improve how public services work together, with local people, to plan and deliver better services. Age-friendly will be a relevant way of working to gain positive outcomes for the Council's population in future years, linking to the current eight Age-friendly themes ensuring that everyone will benefit.



This Age-friendly plan tells you our vision and what we plan to do to support residents to age well in their community.

Our Vision

Mid Ulster is an Age-friendly district where older people are valued, engaged and supported to live healthy, active and fulfilling lives.

AGE-FRIENDLY 8 THEMES WITH ACTIONS

Theme 1: Outdoor Spaces Buildings Action Plan

We plan to increase infrastructure to support an Age-friendly community, with increased access to Mid Ulster community areas and green spaces, both town and rural, that the public enjoys.

Suggested Actions:



Encourage and promote more access to outdoor spaces – recreation, leisure, parks, chatty benches and chatty cafes.



Develop a set of Age-friendly design guidelines and business charters for our district that will grow over time.



Promote accessibility apps and websites and recognition of Age-friendly awards to places to promote accessibility.



Promote anti-littering programmes of education, awareness raising and enforcement.



Explore options to improve accessibility along pavements and roads e.g. Awareness raising and signage.

Theme 2: Transport Action Plan

We plan to increase partnership working to ensure better transport options and for improved accessibility, equality and safety.

Suggested Actions:



Engage with decision makers to maintain community transport services; improving the reliability, accessibility and affordability of transport within town, rural areas and hospital settings.



Promote smart passes and community transport, volunteer driver schemes with good news stories promoting services and easy to read timetables.



Promote Shopmobility and GObility services and increase referrals from healthcare professionals across Mid Ulster, including NHSCT and SHSCT.



Promote Age-friendly Awareness Training to all transport providers.

Theme 3: Housing Action Plan

We plan to give older people more choices to live independently and safely within their homes.

Suggested Actions:



Scope and promote the opportunities for people to remain independently at home in a safe, warm and affordable environment as they age well in their own homes.



Lobby government to support home grant schemes that enable people to live independently in a safe, warm and affordable home.



Maintain a good morning call and home maintenance service for those in need.



Promote Dementia Friendly assisted technology and safety measures with Herbert Protocol and PSNI.

Theme 4: Social Participation

We plan to increase social participation, addressing loneliness and isolation by connecting older people to services and their local communities.

Suggested Actions:



Develop more chatty places – warm, friendly chat areas, promoting libraries providing services for older people such as reading newspapers aloud, a cup of tea etc.



Increase Age-friendly promotion, i.e: social media/ newsletter to highlight current activities, organisations and good news stories.



Encourage the development of buddy schemes to support involvement in local activities and community groups.



Promote training for staff who work in the community, the voluntary and educational sectors.



Ensure better access to affordable services and activities that are age appropriate with convenient times and locations.

Theme 5: Respect and Social Inclusion Action Plan

This plan will support and focus on the diverse range of people living within mid Ulster from 50+. As we all live longer, there are great opportunities to create vibrant communities, develop life-long interests and aspirations, and support diversity amongst our ageing population considering people living with a disability, LGBT communities, BAME groups and carers.

We plan to increase opportunities to support and promote active ageing, removing barriers to older people to ensure they are more respected, valued and included.

Suggested Actions



Develop an Age-friendly older people's forum to consult on policies and inclusion.



Connect and support people to participate in digital training and digital inclusion programmes.



Promote a positive image of people ageing well, appreciating diversity and having recognition awards/ events to inspire others.



Promote Positive Ageing Month each October with District-wide engagement opportunities online and face-to-face with positive ageing grants.

Theme 6: Civic Participation Action Plan

We plan to increase employment support, financial well-being and volunteering opportunities, ensuring older people have vital roles in their communities.

Suggested Actions



Support people to plan for a better later, i.e. Produce Retirement packs for 50+, and promote volunteering opportunities.



Encourage businesses to prioritise Age-friendly planning and retain an older workforce, i.e. Age NI Age @ Work mid-career reviews, Age-friendly training and policies to support roles i.e. Menopause.



Promote cost-of-living, benefit uptake and financial well-being workshops i.e. Make the Call pop-up clinics.

Theme 7: Communication and Information Action Plan

We plan to have an effective communication system to ensure older people have the information, advice and support they need to claim their rights and entitlements and access services.

Suggested Actions



Provide online sessions such as pension advice, and TV licensing scam awareness talks.



Develop an Age-friendly newsletter with essential contacts, linking to Mid Ulster District Council website.



Develop one-stop shops for people to access information i.e. Rural areas information roadshows.



Connect and support people to access information, including digital training, digital inclusion programmes and promoting digital champions.



Encourage organisations to produce Age-friendly documents, including funding applications.

Theme 8: Community Support and Health

We plan to help people stay well and feel good for longer by connecting them to community and healthcare services to live independent and healthy lives.

Suggested Actions



Build and maintain relationships with all service providers to share support and increase referrals, i.e., meals on wheels, luncheon clubs and food banks.



Identify and promote good mental health and well-being programmes and support. Mental Health Community Ambassadors, Take 5 Programme, Safer U App, Scam Wise and Action Mental Health workshops.



Share information on health issues, relevant services, development opportunities regarding nutrition, diabetes, sleep routines and public health messages.



Raise awareness and promote physical activity programmes i.e. Physical activity referral scheme, walking groups and leisure centre activities.



Support and raise awareness around End-of-Life Care.

MAKING OUR PLAN HAPPEN

By working together with all partners and interested individuals, we can all do our part to ensure that the Mid Ulster District is a great place to grow older.

- An Age-friendly Alliance is a multiagency partnership who will lead in delivering this Age-friendly strategic plan.
- An Age-friendly co-ordinator will facilitate quarterly meetings and liaise with partners, task groups and action leads.
- We will refresh the membership of the Mid Ulster Seniors Network (representatives of older people’s groups and service providers) to include an older people’s forum, ensuring older people have their voices heard.

OUR AGE-FRIENDLY STRUCTURE

