**Briefing Paper for APG on Ageing and Older People**

**March 2023**

***Active Ageing Strategy***

**Introduction**

The Active Ageing Strategy 2016 - 2021 was introduced by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister (OFMdFM) in early 2016. Responsibility for the Strategy moved from OFMdFM to the Department for Communities (DfC) later that year.

A link to the Active Ageing Strategy can be found here: <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/active-ageing-strategy-2016-2022>

**Revising and updating the Active Ageing Strategy**

In November 2020 the Strategy was revised and updated, extending its application to 2022 to take account of the impact of the pandemic and “*to allow time for the development of a new one in conjunction with older people and their representative organisations*.”

The Strategy is “*a cross-cutting Executive Strategy that relies on contributions from a number of departments*.” The extended Strategy “*builds on and updates the original*

*actions from 2016 and adds further actions which improve the wellbeing of older people*.”

All Strategy Outcomes contribute to draft Programme for Government Indicator 49 – “the confidence of people over 60 years old as measured by self-efficacy.”

**Vision, Purpose and Outcomes**

**Vision**

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.

**Purpose**

The purpose of the Strategy is to transform attitudes to, and services for, older people.

**Outcomes** - there are six High Level Outcomes:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 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. |

**Methodology for Review of the Active Ageing Strategy**

In the current Strategy, highlights of progress to date are set out, as is the methodology for the review.

Departments were asked to update on progress against:

* **Stage 1 Strategy Actions** – Actions which contribute to the Strategy programmes which were in place at the outset of the Strategy and intended for immediate implementation from 2016;
* **Stage 2 Strategy Actions** – Actions which contribute to programmes which were published at the outset of the Strategy for possible future implementation in a second phase, subject to funding availability;
* **New Actions** – Actions not in the original Strategy but which contribute to its overall aims (such actions may not be specifically targeted at any age group but do benefit older people); and
* **Covid-19 Actions** – Departments were also asked to include actions focused on mitigating the medium - to - longer term effects of Covid-19 on the older population.”

**An Age Friendly Region**

**Global Age Friendly Movement**

In 2006, the World Health Organization (WHO) started the global age-friendly movement, an initiative to create liveable communities that are inviting and accessible for people of all ages - especially older adults. The WHO Global Network of Age Friendly Cities and

Communities was established in 2010, with the common vision of making their community a great place to grow old in.[[1]](#footnote-1)

The eight domains of age-friendly cover all the aspects of community life that need to be considered to support citizens to age well:

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

**Age Friendly in Northern Ireland**

In Northern Ireland all 11 Councils are formally members, or progressing towards being members, of the WHO Age Friendly programme. Public Health Agency (PHA) funds local councils to implement the WHO Age Friendly Communities Model.

The Age Friendly Network was launched in November 2019 to promote good Age Friendly practice and support practitioners in their work. Members of the Network include

representatives from Councils, Age Sector Networks, DfC, PHA and Age NI. At the

launch event older people were involved in setting Age Friendly Network priorities and its

engagement with older people. Due to COVID-19, plans to organise an engagement event bringing older people and practitioners together have been delayed.

**Age Sector Networks and Groups**

Age Sector Networks and groups across Northern Ireland offer a range of activities and support including opportunities for older people to come together, to participate and be

active contributors to the life of their community and have their views and voices heard. Some Age Sector Networks deliver key services including befriending schemes, good morning calls, arts activities, health and wellbeing programmes etc. which improve the lives of older people and reduce isolation and loneliness. Some also play and active,

integral role in the planning, design and delivery of Age Friendly within their council area.

The short term, often ad hoc nature of funding for Age Sector Networks and groups,

creates uncertainty around the sustainability of this sector and support available to older people in local communities. It also makes it more difficult for Age Sector Networks and groups to plan future delivery of much needed support to older people in their area.

Many older people’s groups stopped in response to COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns. Anecdotal evidence suggests that a number of local groups, particularly those run by older people, have not re-started. Additional resources are required to build the confidence and trust of older people to participate in community based activities and to stimulate and

support the development of older people’s groups across Northern Ireland.

**Questions**

**Review and Evaluation of 2016-2022 Active Ageing Strategy**

1. Has the Department for communities completed its evaluation and, if so, when does it plan to publish the report?
2. The current Strategy references the contributions made by its Outcomes to the draft Programme for Government Indicator 49:”the confidence of people over 60 years old as measured by self-efficacy.” Can the Department please outline the extent to which the confidence of older people has improved over the lifetime of the Strategy?
3. The Active Ageing Strategy 2016-2022 “is a cross-cutting Executive Strategy that relies on contributions from a number of departments.” What role has the Department for Communities played in driving and co-ordinating these contributions across all Departments?
4. What steps are the Department taking to ensure the sustainability of a vibrant age sector and the key role it plays in supporting implementation of the Active Ageing Strategy?

**Development of a New Active Ageing Strategy**

1. Can you outline the Department for Communities’ plan and timescales for producing the next Strategy?
2. What are your plans for taking forward a co-design approach and engaging with older people and key stakeholders?
3. Can you set out the Actions that have not yet been achieved and whether the Department intends to carry forward outstanding actions into the new Strategy?

***For further information, please contact:*** *Eithne Gilligan, Head of Policy and Engagement* [eithne.gilligan@ageni.org](mailto:eithne.gilligan@ageni.org) *who provides Secretariat support to APG on Ageing and Older People.*

*ENDS*

1. <https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/age-friendly-cities-framework/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)