

Sharing the Journey: Louth Age Friendly County

Overview

The aim of the Louth Age Friendly County Initiative is to make Louth an “Age Friendly County” with all agencies working together to promote and maintain the best possible health and well-being of older people, and to make the County itself a great place to grow old. The theme of the initiative is “Sharing the Journey”.

The three core principles in the Louth Age Friendly County Initiative are

- participation
- partnership
- innovation.

In essence “Participation of Older People in a Partnership Approach enriches Innovation.

The Initiative has been driven by two guiding forces, the voice of Older People through the Louth Older People’s Forum and R&D projects which include collaborations between Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT), Louth Local Authorities and HSE North East.



The Age Friendly Alliance, a cross agency group, developed a strategy following an extensive consultation process that included older people, advocates for older people, nursing homes and older people in general. The strategy is based on the eight framework programme areas of the World Health Organisation’s Global Cities Network. The Alliance reports back formally to the Older People of Louth on a bi-annual basis, on a continual basis through www.louthagefriendly.ie and through the Louth Older People’s Forum (LOPF) executive that meets every 6 weeks. The LOPF is represented on all implementation groups of the Louth Age Friendly Initiative.

The Age Friendly Alliance agreed to brand the Initiative in order to provide a recognisable symbol dedicated to services for older people. The brand was designed by older people and has been adopted by Ageing Well Network as the National Roll out Brand and has been used by other counties that have subsequently launched the Initiative.



The Louth Age Friendly Programme developed a Toolkit which includes templates for all areas of implementation

Achievements to date include; the great Northern Haven, an apartment block equipped to support ageing in place through the application of tele-health and tele-care supports, Tele-care and Tele-health projects run out to approx 120 clients in Louth, Louth Garda Division Strategy for Older People, the Louth Age Friendly Business Plan, the Louth Age Friendly Transport Action Plan, the Louth Age Friendly County website, the “Parlour”, Ardee Age Friendly Town Programme, Business Charter for Older People, Men’s Sheds and an Older People’s Sports Programme. The Louth Age Friendly County Initiative has also produced 2 DVDs, “Generations” an intergenerational study on ageism and “The Journey” capturing the journey of the Initiative. Both DVDs were requested by the EU commission for use during the EU Year on Active Ageing and Solidarity between the Generations.



In June 2012 the Louth Age Friendly County Programme won a coveted Excellence in Public Service Award from An Taoiseach Enda Kenny.

The Louth Age Friendly County Programme is delighted to have joined in partnership with University College Cork to form COLLAGE (Collaboration on Ageing) as a candidate reference site in the current EIP Active and Healthy Ageing Programme. It is anticipated there will be many more opportunities to learn from other partners in the EIP to build on the ambitions of the LAFP to make Louth a great place to grow old. The Louth Age Friendly County Programme on behalf of the North East leads the way in the commitment proposal made to the European Innovation Programme (AFRA.net). Through the EIP the Louth Age Friendly County Programme participated in the Scottish Older People’s Assembly in November 2012 through a video conference link. The North East partnership together with Ageing Well Network is now leading out on developing a national Age Friendly website based on the Louth design. There is also a strong growing interest coming from Northern Ireland through the Newry and Mourne involvement in AFRA.net in the EIP and the Louth Age Friendly Alliance recently hosted the Strategic Health Improvement Partnership for N.I.

COLLAGE is Ireland’s joint candidate Reference Site for the European Innovation Project on Active and Healthy Ageing.

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