

Ag freastal ar an Dún
agus Ard Mhacha Theas
Serving Down
and South Armagh

Age-Friendly Strategy 2021–2031

Creating positive
outcomes for older people



Comhairle Ceantair
an Iúir, Mhúrn
agus an Dúin
**Newry, Mourne
and Down**
District Council



Newry, Mourne
and Down
**Age-Friendly
District**



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Foreword



Cllr Cathy Mason
Chairperson, Newry,
Mourne and Down
District Council

In a world which is unpredictable and ever changing, one thing we know and can predict with certainty is that the population of the Newry, Mourne and Down district is ageing and will continue to age up to and beyond 2039.

As we work with and through all our partners to maintain an age-friendly district, predicted demographic changes provide us with a sense of the challenges and opportunities which need to be addressed and availed of if we are to deliver on our ambition of creating a district in which it is great to live and grow older.

This Age-Friendly Strategy and Action Plan are about creating positive outcomes for people in the district as they grow older. The strategy and action plan are about creating a district and a living experience in which all of us can flourish as we age, and lead healthy, active and engaged lives. The strategy and action plan are about tapping into the talents, diversity and life experiences of an older population as something to be recognised, valued and celebrated.

How we deal with the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population depends on our ability to plan for the longer term. We need to develop a strong public sector capable of engaging all key stakeholders in bringing about changes in planning, health, housing, transport, safety and public space management.

Improved communication and collaboration among key agencies and communities is key to delivering a comprehensive and effective programme of this nature. Indeed, this is at the very heart of community planning.

The publication of this strategy and action plan builds on all of the good work that has already been undertaken by the Age-Friendly Strategic Alliance in the district's Age-Friendly Action Plan for 2016–19. The strategy sets out a direction of travel for the Alliance up to and beyond 2031, a timeline which coincides with the Council's Community Plan.

This phase of the Age-Friendly Strategic Alliance's journey marks the beginning of a process that will see a coordinated approach being adopted by the organisations and groups that make up the Alliance to create a more age-friendly district.

The aspiration to remain an age-friendly district is something I very much welcome and support, not only as Chairperson of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, but as a citizen of the district I live and hope to grow old in.

Cathy Mason

Councillor Cathy Mason
Council Chairperson


Executive Summary

The Newry, Mourne and Down Age-Friendly Strategic Alliance is committed to

‘supporting healthy living, active ageing and positive outcomes for older people across the district’.

Our Vision is

‘to make Newry, Mourne and Down an age-friendly district and a great place in which to live and grow older’.



The Alliance presents its strategy for the period 2021–2031. This plan outlines the Alliance’s strategic goals for this period as well as the outcomes which will be indicators of success. **The Alliance has set itself the following four goals:**

Goal 1

To be an exemplar of positive and effective partnership working

Outcome 1

Sustainable success through effective partnership working

Goal 2

To optimise the district’s physical environment as a key enabler of health, wellbeing and social interaction

Outcome 2

The physical environment (natural and built) is accessible and age-friendly

Goal 3

To create a socially inclusive district, in which older people feel safe, supported, involved, engaged, connected and respected

Outcome 3

The social environment is inclusive

Goal 4

To empower individuals to live healthier and more active lives in connected communities

Outcome 4

Living healthier and more active lives in connected communities

Introduction

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council is projected to record the highest increase by Northern Ireland local government district in the over 65s by 2028.

Projected Population Changes by Local Government District, 2016–2041 (Source: NISRA)

LGD	Age band	2016	2028	2041
Newry, Mourne and Down	0 – 15 years	40,187	40,477	39,612
	16 – 64 years	111,051	112,990	112,118
	65+ years	26,578	37,049	47,915

The change in the age profile of the population of the district means it is vital for us to plan for the requirements of this older population. We should of course embrace the fact that more people are living longer and the opportunities that brings for us individually and as a society.

The vision and goals contained within this strategy set out the direction of travel for the Age-Friendly Strategic Alliance over the next 10 years and beyond. The use of consecutive action plans over the lifespan of the strategy allows the Alliance to build on its successes over three-year timelines while also allowing the Alliance to review progress

and maintain age-friendly status. The strategy for 2021–2031 is aligned to the eight domains of the World Health Organization's (WHO) age-friendly framework,⁽¹⁾ while also reflecting the themes, timelines and priorities contained within the 'Making Life Better' framework,⁽²⁾ the Council's 'Living Well Together' Community Plan⁽³⁾ and the work of the Centre for Ageing Better, 'Transforming Later Lives'.⁽⁴⁾

This strategy and associated action plans represent commitments from a wide range of partners in the Alliance to put older people centre stage and to have them involved in both the formation and the delivery of the work needed.



Newry, Mourne and Down Age-Friendly District

An age-friendly district has the following characteristics:

In impact terms, people live longer and healthier lives and older people have a healthy life expectancy and quality of life. In addition, inequalities in life expectancy, healthy ageing and quality-of-life metrics are reduced between different towns and villages across the district and between different socio-economic subgroups (e.g. gender, age and income level).

In outcome terms, more people are making positive short- and medium-term changes in their lifestyles and habits, resulting in gains in their health, wellbeing and quality of life.

In outcome terms, short- and medium-term changes and improvements are evident in the creation of an age-friendly environment (physical and social).

In output terms, a higher percentage of older people are enabled, empowered and actively engage and participate in health, social and community-related activities, and they stay connected to people and things that are important to them.

In input terms, key stakeholders work effectively to create the physical environment and social infrastructure that support the development of strong and supportive relationships across generations.

In input terms, key stakeholders work effectively to create the physical environment and social infrastructure that allow older people to live in communities that make it easier for them to stay active and connected as they get older. Living well in place and with dignity is something all older people aspire to.

In input terms, resources, structures and collaborative arrangements and networks are in place, including political and organisational commitment from key stakeholders. These factors help the district to become enabling, valuing and connected, and in turn make it a great place to live and grow older.

In summary, being an age-friendly district is about creating an inclusive and accessible physical and social environment that removes barriers to participation while creating opportunities for older people to age with dignity, security, purpose and meaning in the place of their choosing for as long as is possible.

‘In practical terms, an age-friendly district adapts its structures and services to be accessible to and inclusive of older people with varying needs and capacities.’
World Health Organization (2007)

As an Age-Friendly Strategic Alliance we are keen to engage with people who are aged 50+ as part of our long-term commitment to improving the health, wellbeing and quality of life of older people.

Our primary concern is to create the environment, conditions, circumstances and opportunities across the district for older people to live and age well.

Supporting healthy living, active ageing and positive outcomes for older people

Our Vision

To make Newry, Mourne and Down an age-friendly district and a great place in which to live and grow older.

Our Objective

The Newry, Mourne and Down Age-Friendly Strategic Alliance is committed to creating the environment, conditions, circumstances and opportunities across the district for older people to live and age well.

Our Approach

Our approach to this work, 'ageing well together', focuses on working collaboratively with individuals, families, communities, businesses, and voluntary and statutory organisations to positively influence the factors that impact on the health, wellbeing and quality of life of older people across our district.

Our Guiding Principles

Being inclusive and targeting where necessary so that no one is left behind – We will focus on addressing the challenges of disadvantage and inequality that affect older people across our district.

Engaging and empowering for success – We want individuals, families and communities to be active and take increasing responsibility for their own health and wellbeing. As an Age-Friendly Strategic Alliance we will work with people, groups and communities to address priorities in line with our four goals.

Working collaboratively – Everyone has a role to play in influencing the wider factors that impact on lives, choices and ageing well. We will rely on everyone within the Age-Friendly Strategic Alliance to play their part in turning the aspirations contained within this strategy into a living reality.

Using evidence-based practice and what is known to work –

We are committed to using existing resources wisely to have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of older people across the district. Our approach and actions will be informed by evidence and best practice.

Addressing local need – We will support joint working at local level between the Council, statutory bodies, businesses, and community and voluntary sector organisations and groups.

Looking forward – We will work with partners locally, regionally and nationally to improve our approach and ensure continuous improvement.

Achieving and maintaining age-friendly status

2015

The Newry, Mourne and Down Age-Friendly Strategic Alliance formed in April 2015.

2017

An Age-Friendly Coordinator was appointed in March 2017.

2014 /17

An over 50s Older People's Forum was established in the legacy Newry and Mourne area in 2014 and in the legacy Down area in 2017. Both of these forums (Newry and Downpatrick) listen to and address older people's issues by working with our partners to deliver and lobby with regard to issues raised by older people in their areas.

2018

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council obtained age-friendly status in September 2018.

2018

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council joined the World Health Organization Global Network for Age-Friendly Cities and Communities in September 2018.

2018

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council are a member of the UK Network of Age-Friendly Communities, which means the district is now part of the growing movement of communities across the UK making places more age-friendly.

The retention of age-friendly status is a continuous process and therefore the age-friendly cycle below will be central to our approach.

Planning

- Involve older people in planning process
- Conduct assessment of the age-friendliness of the district
- Develop an action plan
- Identify indicators

Implementation

- Implement an action plan
- Monitor indicators

Continual Improvement

- 5-year membership cycle

Evaluate Progress

- Measure progress
- Identify successes and remaining gaps
- Submit progress report



How will Newry, Mourne and Down maintain age-friendly status?

- 01** Ensure the mechanisms we have in place to engage and involve older people in the development of this strategy and throughout its lifetime, starting with the 2021–2023 action plan, are fit for purpose.
- 02** Develop and implement consecutive three-year district-wide action plans over the lifetime of this strategy, which are aligned with the eight domains of the WHO's age-friendly framework.
- 03** Identify mechanisms to monitor and report progress against our priorities and objectives.

Your Age, Your Community, Your Opinion

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council engaged with residents over the age of 50 to find out how it feels to grow older in their communities and the challenges they anticipate. An online survey 'Your Age, Your Community, Your Opinion' was live from 2 October to 11

December 2020. During this time 455 surveys were completed from residents who live in the Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area. The survey addressed the eight WHO domains relating to older people. Below is a summary of the statistical results.

Outdoor Spaces

74%

for safe public spaces
(highest satisfaction)

56%

average satisfaction

25%

for public toilets
(lowest satisfaction)

Transport

85%

of respondents 'usually
drive' to get around

18%

use the bus

2%

use the train

Respondents were asked 'Are you satisfied' with a range of nine features of transport – shelters, online booking, location of bus stops, etc.

90%

for drivers and conductors
(highest satisfaction)

54%

average satisfaction

2%

for shelters
(lowest satisfaction)

Respect and Social Inclusion

28%

think of their community as a city/town/village, with **16%** thinking of it as a neighbourhood

85%

of respondents feel a sense of belonging in their community either sometimes (**31%**) or mostly (**54%**)

52%

of respondents feel they are mostly not asked for their views about services in their community

47%

of respondents feel they receive as much help as they need in order to stay in their own home either always (**22%**) or often (**25%**)

98%

of respondents feel it is very important (**16%**) or extremely important (**82%**) to live independently in their own home as they age

Civic Participation and Employment

28%

of respondents feel opportunities for people over 50 to set up a business are either extremely important (**12%**) or very important (**16%**). **18%** feel it is not at all important

47%

of respondents feel the ability for people over 65 to remain in work is either extremely important (**21%**) or very important (**26%**)

58%

of respondents would like more involvement in decision making by the Council and others

Communication and Information

64%

of respondents agree they have good access to information on public services and activities

58%

of respondents prefer to hear about Council services and activities by leaflets and magazines

97%

of respondents have an internet connection in their home

Community Support and Health Services

71%

of respondents normally engage in some form of physical exercise either daily (33%) or a few times a week (38%)

58%

rate their overall health and wellbeing as either excellent (10%) or good (48%). Only 3% rate it as poor

	Yes	Not Sure	No
Are there enough initiatives and activities to promote healthy living in your area?	24%	28%	48%
Is there enough support for older people living with long-term health conditions?	7%	32%	61%
Is there access to good hospital services?	25%	13%	62%
Is there easy access to GP services?	46%	9%	45%



Goal 1

To be an exemplar of positive and effective partnership working

Outcome 1 - Sustainable success through effective partnership working

1.1 Representative, committed and engaged membership.

1.2 Fit-for-purpose structures and reporting arrangements.

1.3 Key processes.

Context

The work of the Age-Friendly Strategic Alliance is underpinned by the principles of Community Planning, which is the process through which public sector organisations work together with local communities and the voluntary sector to identify and solve local problems, improve services and share resources.

The Alliance is a collaborative partnership whose members are

committed to making life better for all older people across the district, an aspiration which can only be realised through effective partnership working between all the members that make up the Alliance.

We have set the following three strategic objectives to ensure that, as an Alliance, we continue to work in an effective and collaborative manner in the pursuit of shared aims and outcomes.

Effective Partnership Working Strategic Objectives

	Strategic Objective	Measure(s) of Success
1.1	We will have representative, committed and engaged membership	Membership is sufficiently representative
1.2	We will have fit-for-purpose structures and reporting arrangements	Accountability and reporting arrangements have been agreed and are being maintained
1.3	We will have key processes that support achievement of this strategy	The delivery and performance management of the Age-Friendly Strategy will be reviewed and published

Goal 2

To optimise the district's physical environment as a key enabler of health, wellbeing and social interaction

Outcome 2 - The physical environment (natural and built) is accessible and age-friendly

2.1 Open spaces (walks, parks and beaches), the public realm and buildings are accessible and age-friendly.

2.2 Houses are available, affordable, accessible and age-friendly.

2.3 Transport is accessible and age-friendly.

Context

The natural and built environments have been identified by the WHO as an important factor that impacts on an older person's ability 'to age well' and 'to age in place'. Age-friendly open spaces, public realm and built environment (buildings) positively impact on the mobility, independence and quality of life of older people. Having access to open spaces and built environments which are safe, affordable and age-friendly is seen by older people as being a key contributor to an enhanced quality of life.

Housing is essential to safety and wellbeing. There is a link between appropriate housing and access to community and social services in influencing the independence and quality of life of older people. Housing and support that allows older people to age comfortably and safely 'in place' and 'within their community' are universally valued.

Transportation, including accessible 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.

Accessible Environment Strategic Objectives

	Strategic Objective	Measure(s) of Success
2.1	We will work with others to ensure open spaces (walks, parks and beaches), the public realm and buildings across the district are accessible and age-friendly	Accessibility of open spaces, the public realm and buildings
2.2	We will work with others to ensure houses across the district are available, affordable, accessible and age-friendly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility of buildings • Availability, affordability and accessibility of housing • Safe and healthy homes
2.3	We will work with others to ensure transport across the district is accessible and age-friendly	Accessibility of transportation system and infrastructure

Goal 3

To create a socially inclusive district, in which older people feel safe, supported, involved, engaged, connected and respected

Outcome 3 - The social environment is inclusive

3.1 To ensure older people feel safe, supported, engaged and connected to their neighbourhoods.

3.2 To ensure older people from all backgrounds are valued, included and respected.

3.3 To ensure older people continue to positively contribute to their communities.

Context

Social participation and social support are linked to good health and wellbeing throughout life. Participating in social, cultural and spiritual activities in the community and with family gives older people continued independence, respect and esteem. Sports, leisure and cultural activities provide opportunities for engagement, particularly by vulnerable or hard-to-reach groups. They can also bring intergenerational and environmental benefits.

People's social networks also have a significant impact on health and wellbeing. Support from families, friends and communities is associated with better health. Social capital – the links that connect people within communities – can promote resilience and give people a feeling of control over their lives.

The respect for and inclusion of older people can depend on culture, gender, health and economic status. Older people's participation in the life of their community relates to their feeling of inclusion. Income levels can affect a person's living conditions, health and wellbeing – poverty is the single largest determinant of health, according to the WHO.

Older people do not stop contributing to local life on retirement. Many continue to provide unpaid work for their families and communities. In an age-friendly district, older people can continue to contribute to their communities through paid employment or voluntary work.

Socially Inclusive Environment Strategic Objectives

	Strategic Objective	Measure(s) of Success
3.1	We will ensure older people feel safe, supported, engaged and connected to their neighbourhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Older people feel safer• Older people have reduced fear of crime• Less crime against older people
3.2	We will ensure older people from all backgrounds are valued, included and respected	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence of consultation with older people from all backgrounds• Older people feel consulted on matters important to them• Older people feel respected• Positive social attitude towards older people• Older people feel supported• Reduced social isolation and loneliness
3.3	We will ensure older people continue to positively contribute to their communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Range of accessible, affordable and well-publicised events and activities• Level of older people's participation in social, cultural and spiritual activities in the community and with family

Goal 4

To empower individuals to live healthier and more active lives in connected communities

Outcome 4 - Living healthier and more active lives in connected communities

4.1 To ensure older people can make informed decisions.

4.2 To ensure older people in all settings are an integral part of a supportive, healthy and connected community.

Context

No matter what a person's current health and physical abilities are, they can gain a lot by staying active. Living healthier and more active lives can help improve a person's ability to do the everyday things they want to do, maintain and improve their physical strength and fitness and improve their balance.

Staying active through physical, mental and social activities helps reduce feelings of depression and stress (while improving a person's mood and overall emotional wellbeing), increases

a person's energy levels, improves sleep and empowers people to feel more in control.

Staying connected with others and taking part in social activities can increase a person's confidence and improve their self-esteem, which is good for health and wellbeing.

This strategy will have been successful if the Age-Friendly Strategic Alliance-supported programmes and activities (interventions) are positively impacting on people's independence, health, wellbeing and quality of life.

Healthy Ageing Strategic Objectives

	Strategic Objective	Measure(s) of Success
4.1	We will work to ensure older people can make informed decisions about their health to support improved health outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of health literacy • Availability and accessibility of health and wellbeing information • Levels of physical activity and obesity
4.2	We will work to ensure older people in all settings are an integral part of a supportive, healthy and connected community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of loneliness and/or social isolation • Levels of mental health, self-harm and suicide • The development of a care home engagement project

Members of the Age-Friendly Strategic Alliance who contributed to the development of this strategy and action plan

Newry, Mourne and
Down District Council

Public Health Agency

Southern Health
and Social Care Trust

South Eastern Health
and Social Care Trust

Police Service of
Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland Fire
and Rescue Service

Confederation of
Community Groups

Volunteer Now

Linking Generations NI

County Down Rural
Community Network

Bolster

Newry and Mourne
Community Transport

Southern Age Well Network

Department for
Infrastructure

Libraries NI

Newry and Mourne
Older People's Forum

Down Senior Forum

Age NI

Translink NI

Northern Ireland
Housing Executive

Southern Regional College

South Eastern
Regional College

Down Community
Transport

Caring Communities
Safe and Well

Good Morning Down

Community Advice Newry,
Mourne and Down

Appendix

1. WHO – ‘Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide’

www.who.int/ageing/publications/Global_age_friendly_cities_Guide_English.pdf

2. PHA – ‘Making Life Better’ 2013–2023

www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/health-policy/making-life-better

3. NMDDC – ‘Living Well Together’ 2015–2030

<https://www.newrymouredown.org/living-well-together>

4. Centre for Ageing Better – ‘Transforming Later Lives: A Strategy’

www.ageing-better.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-07/Ageing-Better-Transforming-Later-Lives.pdf

The Age-Friendly Strategy and Action Plan is being led by Newry, Mourne and Down District Council with funding from the Public Health Agency.




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