



# ANNUAL REPORT 2015

**Age &  
Opportunity**  
Life is for  
Living.

Our aim is to inspire and empower older people to live healthy and fulfilling lives and to influence policy to ensure the active participation of older people in ways that benefit our community and wider society.



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## Chairperson's Statement

Once again, Age & Opportunity has produced a programme of work that continues to deliver on the promise to enable and inspire people to live healthy and fulfilling lives. Through projects in education, active citizenship, physical activity and the arts, Age & Opportunity continues to make a real difference to how we think about ageing and what opportunities are available as we age.

The national research series on physical activity levels conducted by our Go for Life programme showed, for the first time, that there are more older people active than inactive. This is very heartening and a great sign that our older populations are becoming increasingly physically active. It was a privilege to award the prizes at the 2015 Go for Life Games and to celebrate with nearly 300 participants on a great day of fun and physical activity. It is hard to believe that, only a few years ago, this was still only an idea in Age & Opportunity and, now, it is a national Games event with competitors from every county in Ireland, and an important activity on the social calendar of our participants. It is also only a small part of the thousands of people who are involved in our Go for Life programme across the country, the unsung local heroes who keep people fit and active in their local community hall or sports club, thanks to the Physical Activity Leaders (PALs) programme, FitLine and the Small Grant Scheme.

It was also a year where we recorded our largest participation rate so far for our Bealtaine arts festival; an impressive 125,889 participants. This includes people who created new work, people who performed and interpreted others' songs, plays, poems, people who attended events as audience members and people who supported the arts and cultural life of their community. Bealtaine is about building audiences, creating artists and supporting the artistic and cultural life of the nation. It is about different generations working together to find new ways of expression and it is about tapping into the underexplored potential of older generations, those who may not have had the benefits of any formal artistic education during their early years.

Bealtaine also provided much needed support for older actors and artists; while initiatives like Bealtaine have now made it natural for many people to consider older age as a time of creativity, it is also important to ensure that the practical issues that allow older artists to keep creating are

managed. An older actor, for example needs to take care of their voice and their physical health, but they also need to understand how to form temporary production companies to get their own show off the ground.

Age & Opportunity also worked with people across the country to build capacity and confidence in active citizenship. With our Get Engaged programme, funded by the Atlantic Philanthropies, the organisation provided workshops and courses to over 800 people in order to encourage participation in the Older People's Councils in various counties across Ireland. We also played a fundamental role in Touchstone, a civic engagement course established by Active Ageing Partnership and run through NUI Galway, which saw 50 civically engaged older people come together to discuss issues around volunteering and to plan their own projects and interventions to make their communities a better place.

With so much to be proud of for 2015, on behalf of the board, I would like to congratulate the CEO and all of our employees, and the entire Age & Opportunity family across Ireland for helping to create an Ireland where, as we age, we have the right and the opportunity to realise our potential and one where we can shape decisions that affect our communities.

I would also like to pay tribute to the Board of Age & Opportunity and our various sub-committees, who remain deeply committed to the continued growth and success of the organisation, and constantly examine new and innovative ways of working, to ensure that we maximise our reach to all older people in Ireland.



## CEO's Statement

I am delighted to present Age & Opportunity's Annual Report for 2015.

Throughout 2015, Age & Opportunity continued to review, consolidate and improve our position as the leading organisation providing nationwide programmes in creativity, physical activity and personal development so that all older people can have a richly varied life in Ireland.

We have undertaken a process of restructuring and reconfiguration during the year, to ensure that we continue to add real value through high-quality work in areas such as the arts, sport, health and well-being. We are confident that we develop and deliver all of our programmes with efficiency and effectiveness, and that we ensure value for money for each of our funders.

We are extremely passionate about our work, and we are very proud of what we have achieved over the last year in providing a myriad of exciting and valuable opportunities for older people to increase their levels of activity, improve health and wellbeing, enhance participation in cultural events, and encourage civic engagement in communities. We also continue to provide a range of supports for those working with older people to ensure meaningful professional engagement in line with HIQA and legislative requirements.

We have had many successes throughout the year. Some of our highlights were the development of our CarePALs programme, which ensures that we now manage to reach some of the most vulnerable older people in our society who are in residential care environments. The development of CarePALs provides us with an innovative mechanism to enable the enhancement of the physical activity levels and health and wellbeing among this cohort of older people.

Another highlight was the continued expansion and development of our Creative Exchanges programme, a QQI Level 6 component award which continues to give Activities Coordinators in care settings the skills and confidence they need to run creative activities, again ensuring the meaningful engagement of older people in residential care environments.

Next year will be the final year of our partnership with the Atlantic Philanthropies, who have been a major funder of our work for many years.



Mindful of this, the Board commissioned a review of the organisation's sustainability in 2015 and worked with Purplegrass Consulting to develop a new funding model for the next three to five years. We also held an internal symposium in 2015, which was an incredibly dynamic and exciting way of exploring the future of ageing in Ireland and exploring new potential areas of work for Age & Opportunity.

A main focus of our Business Plan for 2016 will be to develop alternative sources of sponsorship and funding for our work across all of our programmes and continue to work closely with our government partners.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Maurice O'Connell, Co-ordinator of Active Ageing Partnership (AAP) for his tireless dedication to the ageing sector. AAP is a collaboration between Age & Opportunity, Third Age and Active Retirement Ireland, funded by the Atlantic Philanthropies. Throughout 2015, the engagement between the three member organisations has been phenomenal, and much has been achieved in terms of enhancing the human rights of older people and also the civic engagement of older people through the highly successful Touchstone programme.

I would also like to thank our funders for their continued support, advice and funding, without which our work would be impossible. We are deeply indebted to the Atlantic Philanthropies, the Health Service Executive, the Arts Council of Ireland and Sport Ireland.

I would like to also thank the Board of Age & Opportunity for their tireless commitment to the organisation on a voluntary basis, and all of our sub-committee members for their advice and expertise. Many thanks also to my wonderful colleagues and the extended team of committed facilitators, trainers, artists and volunteers.

Finally, thank you the hundreds of thousands of resilient, creative, innovative and adventurous participants of our programmes across the length and breadth of the country; we are honoured that you choose Age & Opportunity as your go-to organisation in your quest to embrace the positivity of ageing.

## Sport and Physical Activity

Go for Life is Age & Opportunity's sport and physical activity programme. Its aim is to promote greater participation by older people in all aspects of sport and physical activity. Its mission is to get more older people more active, more often.

This is achieved through:

- an education and peer leadership scheme which trains older people as Physical Activity Leaders (PALs) to lead sport and physical activity programmes with older people in their local communities;
- a national grants scheme which makes grants to local groups of older people;
- a physical activity awareness programme;
- FitLine, a volunteer-led telephone-based motivation line to encourage older individuals to become more active; and
- the Go for Life Games which encourages recreational games with a competitive element.

In development within the Go for Life Programme is CarePALs: a two-day programme which is providing residential and day care staff with the skills and confidence to provide physical activity in care settings both to individuals and to groups. It is hoped that Age & Opportunity can source further funding to implement CarePALs on a nationwide basis.

LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME	Number of Events	Total Participants
<b>PALs Training</b>	6 Courses (48 Workshops)	148
<b>Existing PALs – Dance workshops</b>	2 Workshops	47
<b>CarePALs</b>	6 Courses (12 Workshops)	233
<b>SportsFests supported by GFL</b>	5	300
<b>Games Events (including workshops &amp; qualifiers)</b>	24	889
<b>Fitline Workshops</b>	2 Courses (6 Workshops)	78



### ***Small Grant Scheme***

In 2015, the Small Grant Scheme was in its 15th year. The amount allocated was €300,000 and it brings the total amount allocated under this scheme to €5 million. A record number of grants were processed and allocated to groups in all 26 counties by a sub-committee established by the Go for Life Steering Committee. There were 1,047 grants allocated in 2015, which will be used to purchase equipment and to pursue activity programmes. An evaluation of the impact of the scheme is conducted annually. The grant scheme will benefit 29,047 people; this represents an investment of just over €10 per person. Furthermore, previous research suggests that this investment will be subsidised by the vast majority of the participants themselves.

GRANT SCHEME	Number of Grants	Total estimated Participants
<b>Older groups funded by the Go for Life programme &amp; Sport Ireland's National Grant Scheme</b>	1047	29047

Launch of our Research on Physical Activity for Older People



### ***Leadership Programme (Physical Activity Leaders)***

Under the Go for Life Programme's unique model of peer leadership/active citizenship, approximately 2,000 Physical Activity Leaders (or PALs) have been trained over the last 15 years. Approximately 930 PALs were active at the start of 2015 and the organisation has trained another 48 in 2015. There are trainers and tutors nationwide supporting these PALs and their groups. During 2015, there were 50 workshops for PALs.

Ongong PAL Activity	Number of Events	Total Estimated Participants
Trained PALs since 2000	2150	
Estimate of currently active PALs	978	
Each PAL works in an ongoing way with an average of 10 people		9780

Figures quoted for events do not take into account Go for Life-inspired activities organised by local agencies such as Sportsfests organised by Local Sports Partnerships or Local Authorities.

### ***Targeted Initiatives Programme***

Through the Go for Life Targeted Initiatives Programme, Age & Opportunity continues to target older adults who are not members of social groups or who are at risk of social isolation. This includes the Fitline Project, which aims to support individuals who are not members of groups, to get more active using telephone support. At the end of 2015, there are 51 people actively using the service. Fitline ran a number of events to support mentors during 2015 and there are now 27 active mentors.

During the year, the Go for Life Programme delivered 12 CarePALs sessions, aimed at those working in day and residential care settings who had been asking to do the standard PALs workshops. CarePALs is an adaptation of the main PALs workshops and aims to empower those working in care settings to lead suitable physical activities with older people in their care. The leadership model developed by the Go for Life Programme means that physical activity sessions can be delivered by staff and, therefore, included as part of the daily or weekly routine without cost to the care setting. A total of 12 sessions were run with 233 care staff receiving the training.

The fourth Go for Life Games was held in DCU in June 2015 hosting a total of 288 players. Each county had a team of 15 people, playing 3 different devised sports. Many of the teams were selected locally from Sportsfests or leagues which many older people's groups regularly take part in. There were 24 local / regional Games initiatives. The Games is an event that integrates people of all abilities; some counties provided teams which included supported service users of mental health or disability services.

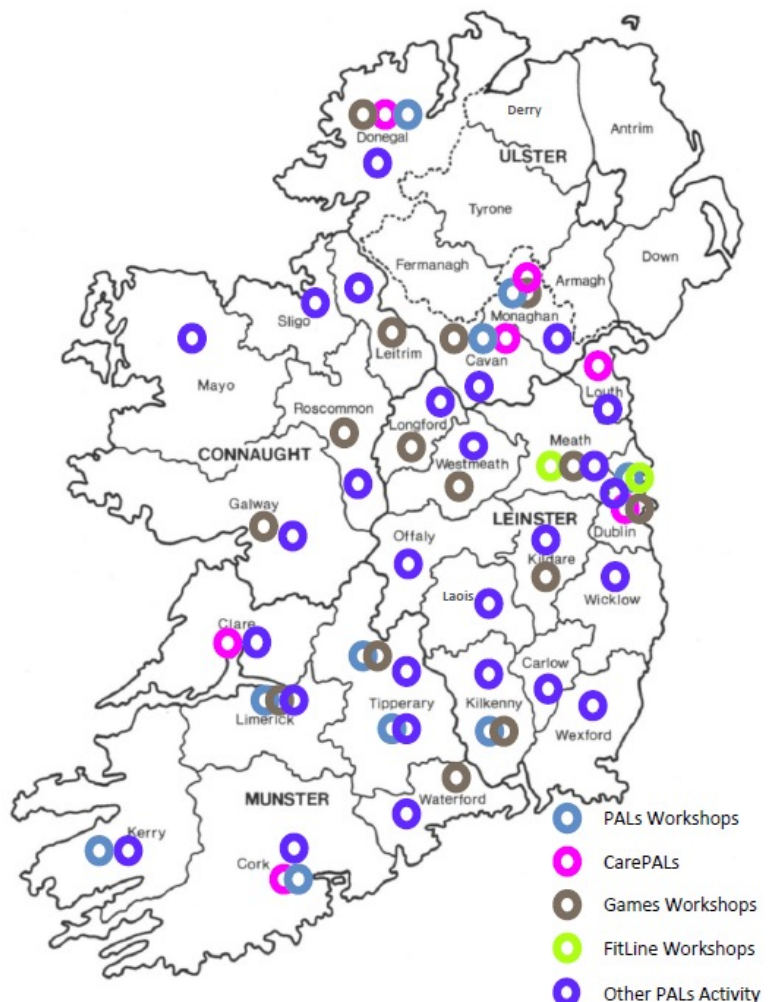
### Awareness and Research

The Go for Life Programme and Sport Ireland published the fourth survey examining behaviour and attitudes of older people to sport and physical activity, carried out by Perceptive Insight. The main finding from this fourth survey in a series which we began in 2006 is that, for the first time in the history of the research, older Irish people reported to be more likely to be 'active' than 'low active' or 'inactive'. Copies of the research are available at [ageandopportunity.ie](http://ageandopportunity.ie)

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FitLine has made a great difference, not just to me but also to my fellow mentors. We decided that if we are going to be encouraging people to get active, well, we should be too. So we have developed a walking group and go for weekly, and sometimes twice-weekly, walks. I am also able to advise friends, neighbours and family about the benefits of walking and general physical activity.

Go for Life FitLine mentor



## Arts & Culture

Age & Opportunity's arts and culture programme encourages greater participation by people, as they age, in the arts and cultural life of Ireland. Our flagship project is the Bealtaine arts festival, an annual month-long national arts festival celebrating creativity as we age. Cultural Companions is a peer support network of people who accompany one another to arts events. Azure is a partnership between Age & Opportunity, the Butler Gallery in Kilkenny, the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) and the Alzheimer's Society Ireland (ASI), to enhance the experience of galleries and museums for people with dementia and their carers.

### ***Bealtaine 2015***

The aim of Age & Opportunity's Bealtaine arts festival is to bring about a shift in attitudes and practices that creates opportunities for older people to participate fully and meaningfully in the arts. Bealtaine also offers an opportunity for arts workers, service staff, policymakers and service providers to experience the creativity of older people, in order to lead to further shifts in how policy and services are planned and delivered.

In 2015, Bealtaine had 661 partners ranging from national cultural institutions, arts centres and public libraries to local Active Retirement Associations, Family Resource Centres and neighbourhood groups. An estimated 125,889 people attended or took part in 3,777 Bealtaine events during the year. Bealtaine 2015 also had a focus on the wellbeing of older professional artists, with two joint projects (with Irish Theatre Institute and Visual Artists Ireland) both to celebrate the value and contribution of experienced artists and to explore the physical and economic precariousness of artmaking in Ireland. Bealtaine also supported artists working in St James' Hospital and on Inis Oirr with the local community, and commissioned an artist to work with a community garden group.

Bealtaine Participation	Totals
Number of participants	125889
Number of events	3777
Number of organisers	661
Number of counties represented	26



Bealtaine Organisers	Totals
National Cultural Institutions & Arts Organisations	17
Local Authority Arts Offices or other Depts	18
Regional Arts & Heritage Centres	156
Public Library Branches	157
Retired/Older People's Community Groups	97
Care Centres	138
Other	78
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>661</b>

Highlights from the 2015 festival programme include:

- A traditional music tour with two emerging musicians which toured both music venues and care settings around the country;
- Development workshops and residencies for older artists: actors and visual artists;
- 'Before We Go' and 'The Art of Dying', a film and workshop exploring the use of art in palliative care settings;
- A celebration of the artistry of concertina player Chris Droney, who has influenced generations who have come after him;
- Seedlings bursaries for artists working with older people in the community. The bursaries for 2015 were for projects in St James Hospital and on Inis Oirr;
- The construction of a multi-functional and ecological community shed as part of Christine Mackey's commission in Flanagan's Fields, Rialto in Dublin.

### ***Cultural Companions***

Cultural Companions is a peer network of people across Dublin and surrounding counties interested in arts and culture who accompany each other to events. By providing increased opportunities to engage with Dublin's vibrant cultural and arts scene, its aim is to reduce social isolation and to provide an outlet to people who would not otherwise seek out support services. A core group of older volunteers, drawn from the initial users of the service, programme the official bimonthly Events Programme

and act as a 'meet and greet' contact for new people attending. Age & Opportunity supports the volunteers, books the tickets for attendees and distributes the events programme, while also being therewhere necessary to those attending.

In 2015, there were 140 active Cultural Companions with approximately 50 events programmed during the year for attendance. On average, there is an attendance of 15 people per event.

### ***Azure***

The Azure programme was initiated in 2012 as a partnership between Age & Opportunity, the Butler Gallery in Kilkenny, the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) and the Alzheimer's Society Ireland (ASI). As a programme, it aims to ensure that people can maintain their relationship with galleries, arts venues, museums and other public spaces, following a diagnosis of a dementia-related condition. It is also about those public spaces encouraging greater levels of engagement with people who are living with dementia or their carers.

The arts can play an important role in the lives of people with dementia in a number of ways, contributing to changes in awareness and to developing thinking about issues like dementia. The arts can also enhance the quality of life of individuals affected. This is because of its capacity to engage emotions and facilitate communication (including non-verbal communication). They can also foster greater involvement in communities by people affected by the condition i.e. carers and family members.

Through the arts, a space can be created for interaction and sharing between people with dementia and those close to them, in a non-medicalised environment. The Azure model is based on the 'Meet Me' programme developed by the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

A central part of our vision is to extend this programme nationally so that people living with dementia and their carers can access art galleries in a safe and supportive manner. To achieve this, the four organisations agreed to deliver a three-day training programme in partnership with MoMA and invite galleries and arts centres to take part. The specialised training to arts facilitators looked at: making art accessible to people with dementia and their carers; how they can become more dementia-friendly; and how to respond to unexpected issues that can arise when working with people who have dementia.

The training took place at IMMA during the Bealtaine festival in May. Thirteen arts institutions took part. These were:

Arts Council NI	Arts & Disability Forum NI (Belfast)
Butler Gallery (Kilkenny)	Chester Beatty Library (Dublin)
Dublin City Arts Office	Dunlaoghaire-Rathdown Arts Office
Galway Arts Centre	Highlanes Gallery (Dundalk)
Hunt Museum (Limerick)	IMMA
Luan Gallery (Athlone)	National Gallery of Ireland
West Cork Arts Centre	

Seventeen people took part in the three-day programme. Day One of the programme was also attended by a senior member of staff from each institution (this was a mandatory condition for taking part in the programme).

The training team consisted of: Bairbre-Ann Harkin (Butler Gallery), Laurel Humble (MoMA), Fiona Gallagher (Alzheimer Society of Ireland), Ciarán McKinney (Age & Opportunity), Helen O'Donoghue (IMMA and Age & Opportunity) and Caroline Orr (IMMA). We also had a number of invited guest speakers: Marie Brett (Artist), Kevin O'Shanahan (Artist) and Ronan Smith (Actor/Member of Irish Dementia Working Group).

The level of participation was high and the impact of the training was confirmed by the evaluation at the end. We felt confident that we had achieved our objective in delivering the training, introducing this methodology to a range of arts institutions on both sides of the border and establishing a network of Azure providers.

The training was followed up by a networking day in December. This network will meet twice yearly to facilitate continued learning, support for members and sharing of resources.

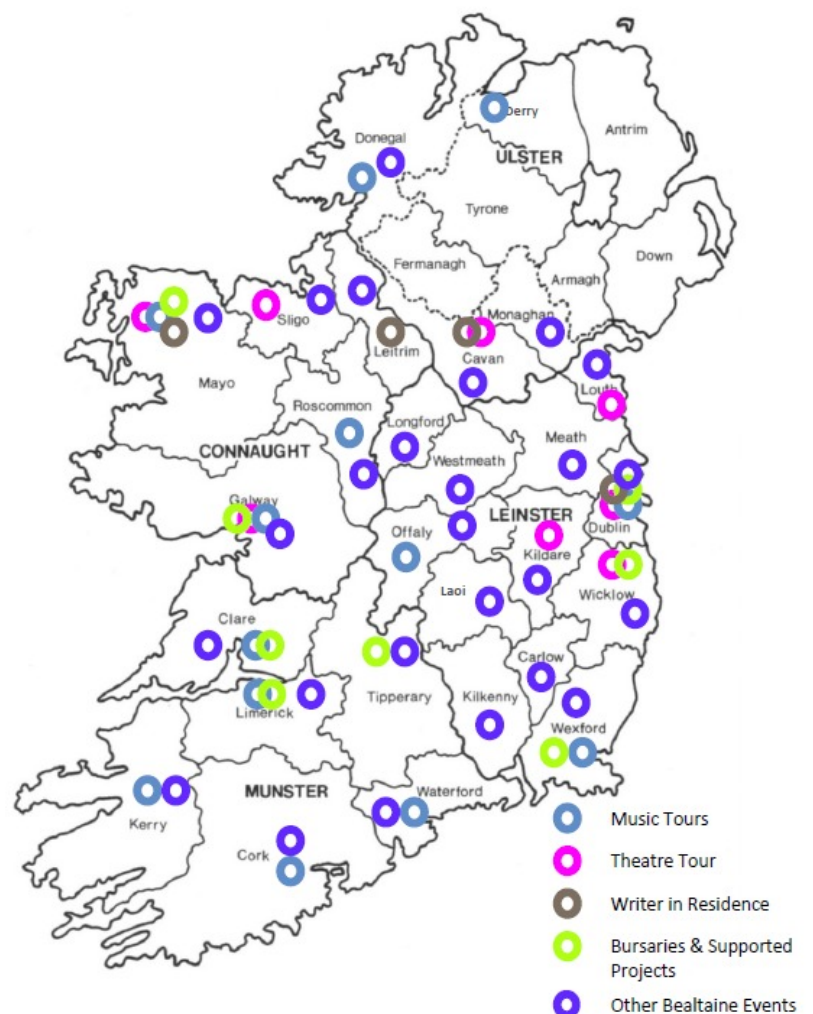
### **Arts & Culture Strategy**

Age & Opportunity have an ongoing commitment to ‘celebrating creativity as we age’ through our Bealtaine festival. We strive to continue to enhance the quality of both artistic and audience engagement through a systematic programme of commissions and residencies. We also continue to deepen and expand our relationships with professional artists through our core professional development strand. Finally, we continue to liaise with the existing arts infrastructure, namely local authority arts offices, arts organisations (producing and resource) and most importantly, our wider national and international community.

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I feel I have gained a new confidence with delivering tours for a dementia specific audience and I look forward to developing links with the local Alzheimer’s and dementia groups and furthering the inclusiveness of the venues under our management.

Azure trainee





## Active Citizenship & Lifelong Learning

Age & Opportunity's Active Citizenship and Lifelong Learning (ACLL) programme facilitates learning experiences in community participation, personal development, civic engagement, age-friendly environments and accredited vocational learning.

During 2015, Age & Opportunity continued its delivery of education, consultation and training to meet the needs of older people. This was supported by the continuance of Get Engaged, Age & Opportunity's three-year project funded by the Atlantic Philanthropies.

We also delivered the first QQI Level 6 Group Facilitation Skills and began working with the Gulbenkian Foundation as the only Irish partner on a multi-agency project to provide courses to 'peri-retirees' (i.e. those about to or who have just retired) which will lead to three pilot deliveries in 2016, including one with older prisoners.

During 2015, ACLL has been developing a positive relationship with the Irish Prison Service and, in collaboration with it, Age & Opportunity was able to have a number of meetings with individual prisoners and host a focus group in the Mountjoy Training Unit. The learning from this process will inform future proposed work in the area.

Age & Opportunity was also invited by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) to be a partner in a two-year campaign that includes older workers. This work, too, will be developed during 2016.

### ***Get Engaged***

The aim of Get Engaged is to build civic and community engagement among older people. This capacity-building work, funded by the Atlantic Philanthropies, is designed to foster the skills and confidence older people can then use to participate effectively in service user engagements, consultations and in participating in areas such as Older People's Councils (OPCs). The development of OPCs throughout the country is an opportunity to facilitate the voice of older people in policy development and service delivery locally. The influence of older people at this level is dependent on the skills and experience of the people taking part: the Get Engaged programme aims to support this process through the delivery of training where appropriate and other interventions as needed.

The model for Get Engaged brings older people through personal development and onto community engagement with a focus on building skills in shared leadership and responsibilities.

GET ENGAGED COURSES & WORKSHOPS DELIVERED	Courses	Sessions	Counties Involved	Total Participants
<b>Civic Participation</b>	1 Course	8	1	10
<b>Civic Participation Workshops</b>	6 Workshops	6	5	163
<b>The Community Effect</b>	2 Courses	10	2	28
<b>Taking Stock</b>	2 Courses	16	1	26
<b>AgeWise for Get Engaged</b>	7 Workshops	7	5	112
<b>Service User Panel Facilitation</b>	5 Workshops	5	3	115
<b>Leadership Training</b>	1 Course	7	1	15
<b>Local Authority Staff Facilitation</b>	3 Workshops	3	3	18
<b>Consultations &amp; OPC Support</b>	11 Workshops	11	6	170
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>657</b>

In 2015, Get Engaged ran 73 workshop sessions, consultations and learning experiences that reached an estimated 657 people in the counties of Carlow, Cavan, Clare, Cork, Dublin City, Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown, Fingal, Galway, Kilkenny, Laois, Leitrim, Meath, Roscommon, Sligo and Waterford.

### ***Creative Exchanges***

Creative Exchanges is a training course to provide the skills and confidence that Activities Coordinators working in care settings need to plan and run activities that deliver meaningful arts engagement for people in residential and daycare settings.

This QQI component course delivered at Level 6 was developed with support from the Community Foundation for Ireland, in response to the hiring of Activities Coordinators in care settings in order to fulfil the HIQA Standards around 'meaningful and purposeful activity'. The aim of Creative Exchanges is to provide a deep learning experience at an appropriate level to those Coordinators so that residents can access the 'opportunities for participation in meaningful and purposeful activity, occupation or leisure

activities' as required in the HIQA Standards for Residential Care Settings for Older People.

In 2015, there were four Creative Exchanges courses run: two in Dublin, one in Cork and one in Sligo at the end of the year which was completed in 2016. There has also been a 'taster day' in Sligo for Activities Coordinators.

Age & Opportunity also delivered a QQI Group-work Facilitation Skills course in Dublin; this was a pilot and the internal evaluation was positive.

We also provided consultation and facilitation to a number of agencies providing care to older people in the community.

### ***AgeWise***

In addition to supporting skills development among older people who take part in local structures such as Older People's Councils, Age & Opportunity also seeks to challenge the many stereotypes about older people.

The AgeWise programme offers age awareness workshops to policymakers and service providers whose work affects the lives of older people in Ireland. It challenges myths and stereotypes about ageing and older people through the delivery of workshops to those who can effect change.

During 2015, AgeWise was delivered to groups including local and national community and voluntary organisations, staff and management of public and private nursing homes, groups of older people, and students in third level institutions studying courses relating to policy on older people or services for older people.

During 2015, 3 workshops were delivered to 42 participants mainly from statutory and voluntary groups in Dublin and Galway. A further 7 AgeWise workshops were delivered to 112 people under the Get Engaged programme in Galway, Carlow, Laois, Dublin and Clare.

Using the materials of AgeWise, we also include an ageism workshop during Creative Exchanges and Group Facilitation Skills, which means that a further 50 participants were provided with an AgeWise-style workshop during 2015.

OTHER COURSES DELIVERED	Courses	Sessions	Counties Involved	Total Participants
<b>Creative Exchanges</b>	4 Courses	28	3	43
<b>Creative Exchanges Taster Day</b>	1 Workshop	1	1	14
<b>Groupwork Facilitation Skills</b>	1 Course	7	1	7
<b>AgeWise for Statutory &amp; Voluntary Groups</b>	3 Workshops	3	2	42
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>106</b>

### ***Strategies for Successful Ageing - TCD's Online Course***

Age & Opportunity participated in Strategies for Successful Ageing, Trinity College Dublin's MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) on Ageing. Along with Trinity's academics and other experts from age-related fields, we provided sessions on ageism, on life planning, on personal development and on the arts. The MOOC ran in early 2016, with over 10,000 learners participating in some or all of the course.

### ***Touchstone***

The Atlantic Philanthropies granted funding to the Active Ageing Partnership to carry out projects to demonstrate the impact of skills-development work with older people. The projects, entitled Touchstone, are running on four sites: Galway, Waterford, Meath and Dun-Laoghaire Rathdown.

Touchstone aims to demonstrate the value of capacity building, training and other interventions that support active citizenship.

The Galway site was a pilot project and was completed in partnership with the Lifecourse Institute at NUI Galway. ACLL had a significant input into the development of the Galway Touchstone course.

During 2016, Active Retirement Ireland will lead the Waterford site, Third Age is leading the Meath site and Age & Opportunity has been working



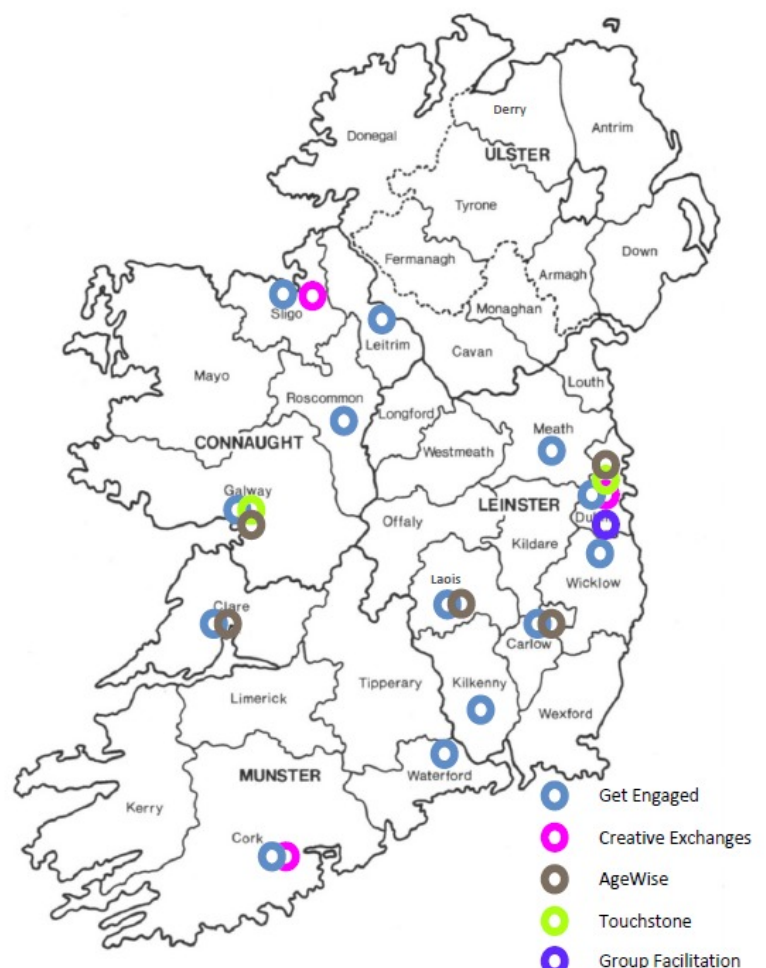
with the Older People's Network in Dun Laoghaire Rathdown since October 2015.

The DLR project has, as its theme, the development of the local administration in DLR since 1916 and will look at the development of innovations in transport, education, health, arts, parks and amenities, courts and the county boundaries as they changed over the past one hundred years: it is a civic engagement project with a local history edge.

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I've now stood outside myself and looked at myself objectively, rather than emotionally, at the problems I'm facing. And looking at it, you know, as a problem that isn't 'me', if you like; it's 'out there'. I wouldn't have done it without the course, you know. I wouldn't have stood back and looked at myself.

Touchstone participant



## **Corporate & Public Affairs**

### ***Collaborations with Academic Institutions***

Age & Opportunity is committed to working with academic institutions in pursuit of improving public policy, building up the evidence base for its work and in contributing to education on ageing, particularly from an equality perspective.

In 2015, Age & Opportunity began working with Trinity College Dublin on its online course 'Strategies for Successful Ageing' to promote healthier ageing. It also continues to collaborate with NUI Galway who are supporting the evaluation of Age & Opportunity's Get Engaged project. NUI Galway is also working with Active Ageing Partnership in developing a dynamic evaluation framework for the Touchstone districts; as mentioned above, Age & Opportunity is leading a Touchstone project in Dun Laoghaire Rathdown.

### ***Communications & Public Affairs***

The principal role for Age & Opportunity's Public Affairs in 2015 was to support significant annual events, such as the Bealtaine festival, the Go for Life Games and the Sport Ireland / Go for Life Small Grant Scheme, as well as creating print materials to support the work of the organisation.

In 2015, Age & Opportunity released the latest in the research series on behaviours and attitudes of older Irish adults to sport and physical activity. The Bealtaine evaluation was also updated.

The major event organised by Public Affairs during the year was an internal two-day symposium in October, an opportunity for board and staff, with invited guests from sport, the arts, academia, NGOs, public sector bodies and elsewhere to come and discuss the future of ageing with the organisation. A number of interesting and useful topics came to light from the two days which will be pursued in 2016.

### ***National Positive Ageing Strategy & Healthy Ireland***

Over the past two years, Age & Opportunity has, through Active Ageing Partnership, met with the Department of Health to provide support for the National Positive Ageing Strategy and continues to work with Active Ageing Partnership (AAP) to develop routes towards the implementation of the National Positive Ageing Strategy. It has also supported Healthy

Ireland's National Physical Activity Strategy and has been identified as a partner agency in its implementation.

### ***International Involvement***

Helen Campbell, who formerly worked with Age & Opportunity until September 2015, continues to act as a Vice-President of Age Platform Europe on behalf of the organisation, thereby providing a mechanism for Age & Opportunity to input at a European level.

In 2015, Age & Opportunity lent its support to the re-establishment of the Intergroup on Ageing, Intergenerational Solidarity and Family Issues within the European Parliament. Helen Campbell also spoke at the European Summit on Innovation for Active and Healthy Ageing in Brussels and at the WHO Global Forum for Innovation for Ageing Populations in Kobe, Japan.

Age & Opportunity are also represented on Age Platform Europe's Task Force 4 on employment and the older worker.

Age & Opportunity have, with Active Retirement Ireland, been rolling out the Active Senior Citizens in Europe (ASCE) programme, which has convened meetings between older people and their MEPs and will be establishing Reference Groups for MEPs which will provide older people with access to decision making processes in Europe and highlight to MEPs the issues that older Irish people are experiencing on the ground.

During the year, Age & Opportunity also launched Beosach, an international online journal focusing on developments in Creative Ageing, with a significant focus on what is being achieved in Ireland.

### **Governance**

Age & Opportunity held 10 Board Meetings during 2015, with an 80% attendance rate from Board members. The organisation also held 7 meetings of the Finance Committee with an 89% attendance rate.

Age & Opportunity is now fully compliant with 'The Governance Code: a Code of Practice for Good Governance of Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations in Ireland'. It has also registered under the Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015 and on the Register of the Charities Regulatory Authority.

<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Meetings</b>	<b>Attended</b>
<b>Fionnuala Hanrahan</b>	10	9
<b>John Hynes</b>	10	8
<b>Helen O'Donoghue</b>	10	4
<b>Mary Kelly</b>	10	10
<b>Ita Mangan (Chair)</b>	10	9
<b>Catherine Marshall</b>	10	10
<b>Shane McQuillan</b>	10	7
<b>Paul Murray</b>	2	2
<b>John O'Brien</b>	10	7

<b>Audit, Finance, Governance and HR Committee Member</b>	<b>Meetings</b>	<b>Attended</b>
<b>John Hynes (Chair)</b>	7	6
<b>Mary Kelly</b>	7	7
<b>Ita Mangan</b>	7	7
<b>John O'Brien</b>	7	5



## Active Ageing Partnership

Active Ageing Partnership (AAP) is a collaboration between Age & Opportunity, Active Retirement Ireland and Third Age. The aim of AAP is to build civic engagement, getting people involved in making a difference in their communities and, as a result, influencing the way society thinks about ageing so that this can be reflected in public policy and practice.

While the success of Touchstone in Galway has already been reported in the Active Citizenship and Lifelong Learning section, 2015 saw preliminary work on Touchstone Meath, Touchstone Waterford and the Age & Opportunity led Touchstone Dun Laoghaire Rathdown.

A significant role for AAP has been to act as a liaison voice for the three organisations to a number of different bodies who are also shaping ageing policy in Ireland. The closest working relationship is between AAP and Age Friendly Ireland (AFI), with the AAP coordinator, Maurice O'Connell, sitting on the Executive Board of AFI and on their National Innovation and Implementation Group, as well as chairing AAP's NGO Forum.

AAP has also supported Older People's Councils (OPCs), through supporting increased liaison between the OPCs from different counties and the development of gatherings which, it is hoped, will allow the voices of the OPCs to emerge, providing a national perspective on what issues are arising at county level.

The coordinator is also on the board of the Healthy and Positive Ageing Initiative (HaPAI), an endeavour by a number of public bodies to monitor, via statistical indicators, the health and wellbeing of older people in Ireland, and on the board of TILDA, the Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing.

AAP has also facilitated meetings between the AAP partner organisations and the public sector, in order to explore ways in which NGOs can support the implementation of the National Positive Ageing Strategy as a way of increasing civic engagement.

AAP also convened an alliance of age NGOs to come together in order to agree a joint statement in advance of the 2016 General Election. With the support of the Community Foundation for Ireland, the AAP partners invited other organisations, Age Action, the Irish Senior Citizens'

Parliament and Alone, to form an alliance. The following three common areas of concern were identified:

- appropriate community care resources, appropriate housing with care within one's own community as a choice other than long-term care for older people no longer able to live alone;
- pensions, opening up employment opportunities for older people and a positive plan for the realistic investment for the future demographic challenge;
- leadership within government to lead out on the National Positive Ageing Strategy and civic engagement of older people.

AAP also convenes the Human Rights of Older People Working Group (HROP), which includes Age Action, ICCL, Sage, the Alzheimer Society of Ireland as well as the members of AAP. During 2015, the group worked with Community Action Network (CAN), engaging with groups of older people to explore the practical issues that those people are facing in their lives, using a human rights 'lens'. From this, the aim is to develop an event in 2016 that will tackle housing, the issue of greatest concern from the engagements. The HROP working group has also organised, through the Public Interest Law Alliance (PILA), a seminar on the constitution, legislation and the rights of older people. One of the outcomes was to ask PILA to accept a brief from the group to engage experts to develop potential legislation for the right to community care in this jurisdiction.

Graduates and AAP partners from Touchstone in NUI Galway



# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Board and Staff

### Board Members during 2015

Ita Mangan (Chair)  
Fionnuala Hanrahan  
John Hynes  
Mary Kelly  
Catherine Marshall  
Paul Murray (resigned in March 2015)  
Shane McQuillan  
John O'Brien  
Helen O'Donoghue

### Staff Members during 2015

#### Full-time Staff

Karen Smyth: CEO  
Seán Dillon: Head of Operations (left in April 2015)  
Michael Foley: Head of Evaluation & Public Affairs  
Ciarán McKinney: Active Citizenship & Lifelong Learning Manager  
Margaret Roe: Office Manager/HR Manager  
Joyce Dunne: Enterprise and Development Coordinator  
Sabina Wasik: Administrator (left in December 2015)

#### Part-time Staff

Lasarine O'Carroll: Financial Controller  
Helen Campbell: Head of Policy & Active Citizenship (left in September 2015)  
Mary Harkin: Go for Life Manager  
Sue Guildea: Assistant Manager, Go for Life  
Fiona Holohan: Active Citizenship & Lifelong Learning Coordinator  
Aleksandra Szymbara: PR Coordinator (left in September 2015)  
Ciara Dawson: Go for Life Administrator  
Kim Chew: Administrator  
Danielle Byrne: Senior Administrator (left in September 2015)

## Appendix 2

### Committees

#### **Go for Life Steering Committee**

Robert Grier: Chairperson

Dr Ailis Brosnan: HSE Representative

Emma Jane Clarke: Programme Executive, Irish Sports Council

Arthur Dempsey: Active Retirement Ireland

John Hynes: Age & Opportunity Board Member

John Kerrane: Former lecturer, School of Health & Human Performance, DCU

Dr Mick Loftus: GP and former President of the GAA

Tony McCarthy: Independent

Karen Smyth: CEO, Age & Opportunity

#### **Arts & Culture Steering Committee**

Catherine Marshall: Chairperson

Lorraine Comer: Head of Education, National Museum of Ireland

Liz Kelly: Director, glór

Patrick Lydon: KCAT (Kilkenny Collective for Arts Talent)

Anne McCarthy: Arts Officer, Mayo County Council Arts Office

Ailbhe Murphy: Director, Create

Helen O'Donoghue: Senior Curator & Head of Education & Community Programmes, Irish Museum of Modern Art

Karen Smyth: CEO, Age & Opportunity

#### **Active Citizenship & Lifelong Learning Steering Committee**

Joyce O'Connor: Chairperson

Fionnuala Hanrahan, Age & Opportunity Board Member

Karen Smyth: CEO, Age & Opportunity

## Appendix 3

### External Committee Membership

Executive Council Member/Vice-President, AGE Platform Europe  
Human Rights Working Group, Active Ageing Partnership  
Building Capacity for EU Funds, Immigrant Council of Ireland  
Community Foundation Grants Panel, Community Foundation for Ireland  
Dublin City Sports Network, Dublin City Council  
Fingal Age Friendly Alliance, Fingal County Council  
Get Ireland Walking, ISC National Trails Office  
NGO Forum, Age Friendly Ireland







The Bird Song Project in the National Library of Ireland Bealtaine 2015

**Age &  
Opportunity**  
Life is for  
Living.

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