Press Release

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**Age & Opportunity welcomes new Positive Ageing Strategy**

**Age & Opportunity welcomes the publication by the Department of Health of the National Positive Ageing Strategy.**

**Age & Opportunity** today, 24th April 2013, welcomes the publication of the **National Positive Ageing Strategy**, from the Department of Health. The strategy acknowledges that ageing is broader than simply a health issue therefore a number of Government Departments have a responsibility to engage with different aspects of the strategy to create a better Ireland in which we can grow older. Age & Opportunity also welcomes the acknowledgement of diversity within Ireland’s older populations, diversity of circumstances, of interests, of identities and of needs.

The strategy places a strong emphasis on the continued participation of older people in their communities and their need for access to lifelong learning, active citizenship, arts and cultural opportunities, physical activity and employment. “Continued participation by older people in society can have a positive effect on the physical health, mental health and wellbeing of the person themselves as well as a knock-on effect on their families, their communities and on society in general. We have seen it through our programmes like **Go for Life**, the national sports programme for older people and our **Bealtaine** arts festival. As Ireland’s population ages, creating conditions in which older people can play their full part will have a significant effect on everyone in our society,” said **Ciarán McKinney**, Director of Development at Age & Opportunity.

The strategy also highlighted the need for strengthening intergenerational bonds for better social cohesion. It sees that positive ageing begins at birth and that, as everyone is ageing, everyone has a role to play in the implementation of the strategy. It also highlights that negative stereotyping and age discrimination should be tackled so that they no longer act as barriers to full participation.

“Age & Opportunity has been part of the campaign to see a National Positive Ageing Strategy published. It is gratifying to see a public strategy statement that is written from an understanding that older people, like all other age groups, want to play a full part in all areas of society. We will be considering the strategy in greater detail over the coming days and we look forward to seeing the implementation plans of the individual Departments involved and the commitments involved. We look forward to working with those Departments in making those plans a reality,” said McKinney.

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For further information, contact **Aleksandra Szymbara**, Age & Opportunity PR Coordinator at 01 805 7795 or 086 241 6083.

Available for interview:

**Ciaran McKinney**, Director of Development, Age & Opportunity

**Ann Leahy**, Director of Policy, Age & Opportunity

**What is Age & Opportunity**?

Age & Opportunity is the national organisation that inspires everyone to reach their full potential as they age.

Our goal is to turn the period from age 50 onwards into one of the most satisfying times in people’s lives - by facilitating opportunities to engage in arts and cultural activities; opportunities for sport and physical activity; opportunities to learn and be involved as active citizens.

We work with public and private partners to deliver established innovative programmes like the **Bealtaine** arts festival, and **Go for Life** - the national sports programme for older people. We are also developing a series of exciting positive ageing programmes.

Our major partners include the **HSE**, the **Irish Sports Council** and the **Arts Council**.

People are now living for longer. Over the past 25 years, Age & Opportunity works to provide opportunities to allow people to live their longer lives to the full. We are continually finding new ways to engage, to motivate and to support people in this adventure.