



**Age &
Opportunity**

Strategic Plan

2021–2024

Chairperson and CEO Statement

Our understanding of ageing has changed dramatically over recent decades. We now have a far better appreciation of the impact of physical activity and civic and cultural engagement on our wellbeing, our overall health and our longevity than ever before.

The unexpected and ubiquitous challenges that Covid-19 brought with it from early 2020 reverberated around the world, impacting significantly on society and bringing with it a radically altered landscape with unanticipated challenges. The pandemic has drawn attention to a dominant narrative of decline around ageing and has demonstrated that we will have some distance to travel in developing as a truly age friendly society.

Seeing an ageing population as an opportunity, rather than a challenge, is vital for the progression of society. We believe that our programmes have a critical role to play in realising our ambitions for positive ageing. We want to help people, as they age, to seize the opportunities that are available. In doing so, we want to help people to thrive rather than just survive.

Our previous strategy (2018–2020) has been successful and has served us well. We have enhanced our strong research orientation to ensure that our programmes are meeting the needs of participants. The rich data that we have garnered informs programme design while also providing confidence to our funders. The pandemic, of course, has required a shift to new methods of programme delivery – online for the most part, and much has been learned through this process. Our programme participants and staff have responded admirably to these new delivery methods. As more of life moves online, however, an older generation faces a digital divide. Uncomfortable with technology, many are struggling to use modern tools to keep up with friends and family and physical, social and cultural activity at a time when many are craving those connections the most. In a post Covid-19 environment, a mix of online, telephone and in-person engagement will allow an extension of our reach to new communities and help ensure that fewer older people are left behind.

Given the ongoing relevance of our previous Strategic Plan, we decided to ‘test and refresh’ the plan rather than ‘start again’. This strategy refresh process was led by a Strategy Committee comprised of Board and Staff members. The testing and refreshing of the plan consisted of a robust process of stakeholder engagement, review and strategy formulation. Facilitated sessions and interviews were conducted with programme participants, funders, staff and other sectoral experts. Their honest appraisal, insight and ambition has enabled and emboldened our vision of an Ireland where all older people can be more active; more visible; more creative; more connected; more confident; more often.

Throughout the lifetime of our new Strategic Plan, the focus will be on achieving ambitious goals in four areas to help society make the most of the social and economic opportunities presented by people living longer. We will measure and track progress on these aims to be sure that our programmes, and the funding which supports them, are making a real difference to people’s lives. In keeping with ambitions set out in the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030), by 2030 the aim is for more people in later life to be in good health, physically active, to have social connections and to continue to feel that our lives are meaningful and purposeful.

This document is a call to action not only for ourselves but also for our funders, our partners and participants. It is an invitation to continue to work with us in extending our reach and in supporting Ireland to become a better country in which to grow older. The road ahead may be challenging, but the gains for us all as we age will be worth the effort. We look forward to working with you to make it happen.



Ita Mangan, Chair



Karen Horgan, CEO

Strategic Theme One: Enhancing the ageing experience

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Strategic objectives

- Develop and deliver programmes which promote community development and enhance the ageing experience.
- Challenge ageism and negative stereotypes of ageing.
- Conduct and collaborate on research with programme participants and older people and apply findings gathered through consultation and programme delivery.

Sought outcomes

- Ageing is viewed as a time of opportunity, growth and discovery.
- The reach of our programmes is amplified to positively impact the lives of older people in our widely diverse society.
- Our programmes have a measurable impact on the lives of marginalised and vulnerable older people.

Strategic Theme Three: Working with partners

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Strategic objectives

- Engage strategically with partners, programme participants and older people to advance our stated vision and mission in a sustainable and effective way.
- Ensure stronger collaboration across our three programme areas.

Sought outcomes

- Strengthening our sectoral voice.
- Extension and increased support of the wide range of Age & Opportunity programmes which are proven to produce successful, sustainable quality of life gains for older people.
- Capitalise on the synergies between programmes within the work cycles of relevant partner organisations.

Strategic Theme Two: Influencing public policy

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Strategic objectives

- Strengthen engagement and communication with politicians and national-level policymakers.
- Shape informed, compelling and targeted goals for relevant policy and decision makers.
- Create opportunities for older people to have their voices heard by relevant policy and decision makers.

Sought outcomes

- Age & Opportunity is viewed by stakeholders as an informative, authentic, independent, authoritative and influential voice on positive ageing.
- Policy and programme development at national and local levels is informed by the lived experience of older people.
- An increased recognition of the social, civic, cultural and economic contribution of the diversity of older people to Irish society.

Strategic Theme Four: Delivering value for our funders and programme participants

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Strategic objectives

- Promote an innovative and learning working environment that motivates, challenges and develops the organisation.
- Facilitate the continued development of staff and optimise the effective deployment of available resources.

Sought outcomes

- Age & Opportunity has a leadership and performance culture that is informed by systems of best practice.
- Proven programmes are supported by sustainable funding streams.
- Age & Opportunity is recognised as a model of good governance and corporate responsibility.

We are Age & Opportunity,

the national organisation that provides a range of opportunities for older people who want to get more involved in arts and culture, sport and physical activity, civic engagement and personal development. Our aim is to inspire people aged 50+ to live a dynamic life in which they can be more active, more visible, more creative, more confident and more connected. One of our key priorities is to truly understand what ageing in Ireland means for people today by increasing the dialogue we have – conducting regular research through focus groups and workshops and by generating more opportunities for their feedback across all of our programmes. We work with local communities and organisations across the country to run a range of programmes and activities in three key areas:

- **Age & Opportunity Arts** provides opportunities for us to engage more in arts and cultural events and initiatives.
- **Age & Opportunity Active** is designed to get us more active and participate in recreational sport and physical activity.
- **Age & Opportunity Engage** offers a range of workshops and learning initiatives for our own personal development as well as opportunities for us to play an active role in our community.

Our Vision

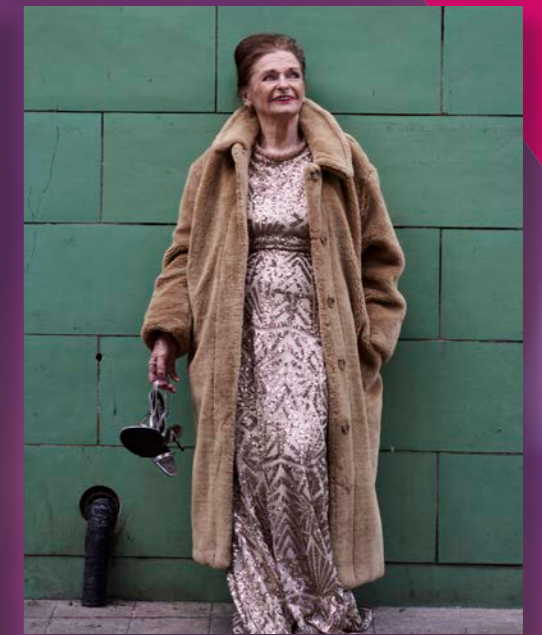
An Ireland where all older people can be more active; more visible; more creative; more connected; more confident; more often.

Our Mission

Our mission is to enable the best possible quality of life for us all as we age.

Our Values

Our values are centred around ensuring that the views, opinions and experiences of **Older People** inform all that we do. We seek to promote **Equality** and **Inclusivity**. We aim to be **Brave**, **Pioneering** and **Inspiring** and we strive for **Excellence** in everything we do.





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