



**Review of
Leitrim Age Friendly Strategy 2017-2020**

Theme 1: Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Goal: Make outdoor spaces and buildings pleasant, clean, accessible and safe for older people.

Accessibility and Age Friendly Buildings are embedded in Leitrim County Development Plan 2015-2020. Actions to make our towns more age friendly were included in the 2017-2020 Strategy.

Most memorable was the Walkability audit of Carrick on Shannon where a large crowd of mixed ability, from organisations and community groups, covered 2 routes in September 2019.

A full report was completed and submitted to the Area Engineer and Senior Engineer of the Capital Projects Office. As Carrick-On-Shannon was approved for funding under the Urban Regeneration Development Fund, it was appropriate to complete works under this scheme.



Audits in other towns in 2020 had to be postponed, although staff from Leitrim Co Council and some community representatives did a preliminary audit in Manorhamilton in February 2020.



Age Friendly Buildings

The plans for new buildings include proofing for their future use by older people. An example of this is the plans for the new build at St Patrick's Hospital in Carrick. Existing buildings cannot all be adapted, but the strategy focused on actions to make buildings as age friendly as possible.

Age Friendly Business

Leitrim Age Friendly Business was launched in Mohill in November 2019. In order to be recognised as an Age Friendly Business, each shop/business had to undertake training and identify what they offer their older customers/clients. These offers/actions are listed on a Charter which is prominently displayed in their premises. Mohill was the 1st town to undertake the project, and participating businesses have window stickers, a lovely red chair and reading glasses for use by customers, all with Leitrim Age Friendly branding.

Rollout to other towns was suspended in 2020.

The plan going forward is to make Leitrim Age Friendly Business an identifiable brand all over the county.



Launch of Age Friendly Business, Mohill 2019

A new age friendly space An Seomra Cairdis has been developed at Mohill Library with age friendly seating, tea/coffee making facilities.



Mohill Age Friendly Library

Age Friendly Outdoor Spaces

A number of walking routes have been developed around the county. Grants such as Community Enhancement funding was used to provide seating in many locations, on the walkways and in towns.



Development of new walking routes were commenced, maximizing any funding available, at Ballinamore and Eslin.

Leitrim Sports Partnership encouraged all ages and levels of fitness to use these walkways through Operation Transformation and the Keep Well Campaign.

As a result, several programs have been run specifically for older people who wish to remain fit and active.



Walk at the New Golf Links Road, Ballinamore



Theme 2: Transportation

Goal: To promote quality, safe reliable, accessible transport services for all

Rural Transport

Transportation in County Leitrim comes under the remit of the National Transport Authority (NTA).

The operation of Local Link transport services is conducted under contract with the NTA.

At the start of the Age Friendly Strategy 2017-2020, Local Link transport services in the county were administered by Local Link Sligo Leitrim Roscommon (SLR), based in Carrick on Shannon.

In July 2019 the NTA transferred the administration responsibility to the Local Link Donegal Sligo Leitrim (DSL).

During the period under review, new routes were established, and existing routes expanded.

As a result of an NTA directive the social car scheme was discontinued from 1st January 2020, and a pilot community transport scheme introduced nationally.

564 Ballinamore to Carrick-on-Shannon

983 Kinlough to Ballyshannon

983 Ballyshannon to Kinlough

Drumkeeran – Dromahair – Manorhamilton

Carrick-on-Shannon to Manorhamilton

Manorhamilton to Carrick-on-Shannon

564 – Ballinamore, Mohill, Dromod & Carrick-on-Shannon

County Transport Plan

The NTA and Local Link Donegal Sligo Leitrim, with the cooperation of local stakeholders are near completion of a county transport plan as part of the connecting Ireland project.

Currently the investment in Local Link administered transport in Leitrim has been predominantly demand response services which operate one or two days per week and are limited in geographical area coverage and the number of people they can access.



The new County Transport plan will introduce transport corridors, which in turn will be serviced by connect services. It is anticipated that door to door transport provision for passengers wishing to attend the social day centres, active age groups etc will continue.

The transport plan will open up many parts of the county previously unserved by accessible public transport, while aiming to expand the passenger profile for public transport services in Leitrim to include education, tourism, training, social activities, access to essential services, daily commuters and work.

Local Link Donegal Sligo Leitrim continue to engage with Leitrim County Council with regard to the provision of bus stops and bus shelters throughout the county.

Donegal Sligo Leitrim, Local Link Contact details:
Local Link Donegal Sligo Leitrim, Roshine Road, Killybegs,
Co. Donegal 074 9741644



Theme 3: Housing

Goal: Support people to live independently in their own homes

Within Leitrim County Council approximately 30% of housing stock is adapted for older people or people with disabilities. There was in 2020 a waiting list of 24 applications for suitably adapted units. LCC complies with the requirements of 'Part M' which encompasses the majority of universal design aspects such as level access thresholds, door entry widths, corridor widths, visitable wcs etc. All houses meet as wide a cross-section of those on the Housing List as possible. In addition LCC includes wider corridors particularly in the single storey houses, stairs are in straight runs to facilitate possible future stair lifts and external areas such as paths and house approaches are level or gently sloped.

Leitrim Co Council has an Age Friendly Housing Technical Specialist, who completed training with Age Friendly Ireland in 2020. This staff member provides specialist advice to the authority itself, to private sector interests who want to get involved in providing age-friendly housing and to the public generally.

As of December 2020, the following Age Friendly Social Housing Units were:

At Construction Stage:

7 units at Pairceanna an Baile, Carrick on Shannon

At Planning Stage:

5 units at Taobh Tire, Manorhamilton;

2 units at Lahard, Ballinamore;

2 units at St. Particks Park, Carrick on Shannon;

4 units at Dromahair.



Pairceanna an Baile, Carrick on Shannon – Age Friendly Social Housing

The Age Friendly Housing Technical Specialist has engaged with Leitrim County Council Planning Section to ensure that the next Leitrim County Development Plan encompasses the commitments set out in Housing Options for our Ageing Population, using the Age Friendly Principles and Guidelines for the Planning Authority Document prepared to assist planners charged with undertaking preparation of a development plan to include Age Friendly objectives.

Housing & Mobility Grants:

Leitrim County Council will continue to provide assist to older people with the completion of the necessary forms for the repairs/alterations to properties under Housing Aid for Older Person and Mobility Aids Grant.

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Housing Adaptation Grant for People with a Disability	20	14	10	11
Housing Aid for Older People Grant	38	23	23	38
Mobility Aids Grant	8	8	6	17
Total Per Year	66	45	39	66

The following grants were availed of in Leitrim 2017-2020:

A new single application form and revised guidelines for accessing private housing grants was developed to make the grants more accessible to people and to simplify the application process.

LDC Care & Repair service ceased in 2017. However, Leitrim Development continues to operate the Rural Social Scheme, Tus Scheme and Community Employment Schemes across Leitrim.

The participants on these schemes are involved in a range of environmental work that improves the up-keep of housing estates and community facilities used by older people and also benefits older people as participants on these schemes.

Home Help and Day Care Services

HSE continue within assigned funding to provide Home Support Services, Day Hospital and Day Care to the older population of County Leitrim based on assessed need.

In 2021 a newly established Occupational Therapy led Re-ablement service will be rolled out in County Leitrim from an Integrated Care Hub based in St Patrick's Community Hospital.



The HSE continue to develop and deliver the Integrated Care Programme across County Leitrim with Advanced Nurse Practitioners focused on supporting Older People to remain at home for as long as it is practicable, preventing admission to hospital as appropriate and supporting hospital discharge.

The HSE funds 6 Integrated Day Care Services attended by older people and people with mental health difficulties across County Leitrim.

The HSE has a Service Level Agreement with Leitrim Development Company and Drumsna Resource Centre to deliver these services on behalf of the HSE.

Feeling safe in the home:

The HSE continues to roll out the Falls Prevention Strategy through St Patrick's hospital where a weekly falls clinic is delivered for Older People in County Leitrim.

Feeling safe in the home:

Leitrim Co Council provides smoke alarms free to anybody in receipt of a pension, living in Leitrim. Smoke Alarms were issued to 116 applicants, mainly older people 2017-2020.

Leitrim Warmer Homes installed 39 of these while they were carrying out works.

Otherwise, applicants arranged the installation.



The Warmer Homes Scheme was expanded, in partnership with the SEAI, to include windows & doors, and boilers. Leitrim Warmer Homes continues to offer a range of energy saving measures and advice. They had to pause their service throughout Covid-19 restrictions but will continue to offer their services when restrictions allow.

An Garda Síochána appointed a Community Garda in Leitrim, who among other duties, promoted the Bogus Callers Scheme, met with active age groups, led the Light Up Campaign and the Message of Hope campaign in December 2020.

The Gardaí have progressed efforts to amalgamate/integrate the 17 existing Text Alert Areas in Leitrim for cooperation between areas/groups and increased coverage of the scheme



Light-up campaign - Torches funded by Leitrim Age Friendly Alliance were distributed by the Gardaí Community Policing Unit, for people to feel safe and remind them to Light Up and Lock Up

Theme 4: Social Participation

Goal: Provide opportunities for older people to stay connected and play an active part in social life.

Leitrim Older Peoples Council meets on a quarterly basis, with 16 regular members from across the county. Following a recruitment drive in 2019, the OPC gained 7 new members. Members of the OPC participate in the National Network of Older Peoples Councils (NNOPC) and two members attend the Age Friendly Alliance meetings on a quarterly basis, bringing issues raised at the OPC.

During Covid restrictions, the OPC continued to meet via teleconference calls and Zoom calls.

Nine OPC members took part in online training to learn how to use Zoom, Teams, Social Media and the Leitrim Library App in December 2020.

Representatives attend the National Older Peoples Convention every year and feed back to the community and the Alliance members.

Presentations & workshops have included Safeguarding Ireland, Ageing Together – Public Transport's Contribution, Multigenerational Homes & Planning, Housing Options for our Ageing Population.

The OPC proactively seeks new members and produced a flyer in 2019.

In 2020, Leitrim OPC rose to the enormous challenge of staying connected under lockdown. They provided training in using Zoom, and produced and circulated a Guide to Zoom.

What is involved?

Leitrim Older People's Council meet on a quarterly basis (4 meetings per year), attendance at these local meeting is important. There are also regular regional and national meetings and events to share information and discuss relevant issues, which are of interest and can be attended by members of Leitrim Older People's Council.

We need you!



If you are interested in becoming a member, please contact Anna McTiernan @ Leitrim Development Company 071 9641 770/ 0864073492 | annamctiernan@ldco.ie



Drumkeeran Friendship Club represented Leitrim in Pride of Place 2019 – a prestigious 32 county competition.

The judges spent half a day in Drumkeeran, where the Friendship Club pulled out all the stops and presented their activities and achievements in their packed community centre.

The judges even took to the floor dancing and taking part in exercises!

While they did not win an award, Drumkeeran Friendship Club demonstrated what the Age Friendly Programme means to older people, and especially, hard to reach older people.

Transport:

SLR Local Link made a Social Car Scheme available to anyone who required transport to attend meetings. DSL Local Link work with a number of older people's groups and Leitrim Development Company in providing transport for activities, courses, social day centres etc.

It is expected that this will continue as long as the model of these activities continue.

Health & Wellbeing:

Leitrim Sports Partnership (LSP) promoted and ran a range of exercise programmes for older people in collaboration with partners



The LSP Community Sports Development Officer ran **Go For Life Games.**

6-week Go For life Programmes were run in Fenagh and Manorhamilton. Blitzes were run countywide and a county team competed in the all-Ireland Go for Life Games in 2018 & 2019.



The LSP Sports Inclusion Disability Officer ran exercise workshops for active age groups, made easy exercise videos, sent out exercise sheets and positive mental health quotes, ran an outdoor handcycling programme, a gentle outdoor exercise programme, country music dancing programme via zoom, line dancing classes via zoom, chair exercise programme via zoom & a walking programme.

LSP in partnership with Healthy Leitrim ran Strength & Flexibility sessions in Fenagh, Ballinamore & Drumkeeran.

LSP delivered an annual body and soul day open to all older adult groups throughout Leitrim in partnership with Leitrim Development Company.

LSP delivered online chair exercises sessions with nursing homes & produced an exercise DVD for nursing homes to play to residents and keep them moving.

In 2020 many of these exercise and activity programmes were delivered again pre covid restrictions. Then the exercise programmes were delivered online. These included chair exercise programmes, line dancing, country dance, and proved to be very important, not only for physical, but also for mental well-being. The LSP promoted fresh air and walks, and had regular short videos on social media with simple exercises. Light-hearted videos with simple dance moves promoted a bit of fun while exercising.



Leitrim County Council

17 November 2020 · 🌐

Earlier this year Healthy Leitrim in conjunction with Leitrim Sports Partnership supported Strength and flexibility capacity building classes across Leitrim. The classes were a huge success and will continue again in 2021. Programme funded by Healthy Ireland supported by the DCYA. [#healthyleitrim](#) [#dcya](#) [#leitrim sportspartnership](#) [#keepwell](#) [#keepactive](#) [#Leitrim](#) PPN



LSP Outdoor Handcycling Programme

Triobikes:

A Triobike is a bicycle with electric battery, operated by a volunteer with seating for 2 people in front. Three of these were purchased and are currently in operation in:



- Drumsna Community Resource Centre
- Manorhamilton – Our Lady’s Community Hospital
- Ballinamore Primary Care, operated by Ballinamore Men’s Shed



Triobike in action in Drumsna



Exercises with the Sports Inclusion Disability Officer

Theme 5: Respect & Social Inclusion

Goal: To develop respect and understanding of older persons

Leitrim Development Company facilitate and support 32 Active Age Groups that cater for over 55's in Leitrim, including the establishment of four brand new groups in 2019/2020. Groups meet as a network in North and South Leitrim on a quarterly basis to share information, ideas and learn from each other. Leitrim Development Company run two events each year 'Body & Soul day' and an inter-generational event, attended by an average of 90 people at each event.

HSE in partnership with ETB continued to support Men's Sheds in Manorhamilton and Ballinamore to ensure Men's mental health wellbeing is positively supported.

LCC also supported the Men's Sheds with funding via various funding schemes such as Community Enhancement Programme

The LSP Sports Inclusion Disability Officer organised Chair Exercise & Movement to Music sessions with Ballinamore and Drumreilly Men's Sheds. Then they also participated in a Scooch league and had a competition at the end.



Leitrim Library Service worked to improve access, engagement and use of its services by older people. The service was delighted to be part of the National Age Friendly Libraries Recognition Programme where Ballinamore Branch Library was one of 48 participating libraries to be presented with an Age Friendly Charter which focused on putting measures in place to make library services more accessible, welcoming and inclusive.

The redevelopment of Mohill Library under Peace IV ensured that the library building could focus on age-proofing both the indoor and outdoor space. Upgraded shelving, seating and lighting as well as bathroom facilities and designated Accessible and Age Friendly car parking spaces close to the library entrance has removed many obstacles to library use and the inclusion of a Tovertafel (Magic Table) will ensure that elderly people living with dementia are enabled to be more active socially, cognitively and physically.

When library buildings were forced to close due to Covid-19 in March 2020, Leitrim Library Service very quickly worked to promote the use of the range of online services which included e-books, e-magazines, e-newspapers, e-courses and e-languages.

Staff were available to assist library members in accessing and using the various apps and were on hand to address any difficulties which arose. This ensured a level of continuity of service.



Services also included weekly online storytelling, and art and craft activities for children as well as online talks and presentations as part of the Health Ireland at Your Library programme.

Library staff also worked in partnership with LCC's Arts Department in relation to online reading discussions involving book-clubs and other community groups such as Men's Sheds and Women's Groups and the Heritage Office on specific initiatives of local historical interest.

Leitrim Creative Ireland Positive Ageing and Wellbeing Programme

In 2020 Leitrim County Council worked with artists in the region to develop a number of projects that would provide meaningful opportunities for older people in our community to explore their creativity and to mitigate the impacts of social isolation.

These projects looked to support those that were comfortable using technology and older people that had no access or no capacity to use online technology.

'Modern Day Mummers' - Dancer Edwina Guckian, singer Fionnuala Maxwell and musician Brian Mostyn went to 32 houses in Drumsna, Leitrim village and Carrick on Shannon visiting elderly cocooners, re-enacting a mumming tradition and providing a unique and important opportunity to break the social isolation experienced by many older people in Leitrim. The houses were identified in collaboration with Meals on Wheels services. The project featured on RTE gaining huge national interest resulting in Leitrim Development Company extending the programme across the county and other local authorities taking up the idea and rolling it out in their regions. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=53uFUqxS8Fg>



The Mummers – Well Being Programming

'The Home Place' - Leitrim County Council developed this programme with author and previous Bealtaine Writer in Residence Brian Leyden whereby active age groups use Zoom or WhatsApp to host readings listening to Brian read from his work and discussing it with him and other group members. While many projects require active participation, The Home Place provided an opportunity to sit back and enjoy Brian's reading whilst maintaining connection and interaction amongst the members of groups that had physically met up before restrictions prevented this.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bpEEjVMpp9Q&t=2s>



'Back to the Future'

Singer Fionnuala Maxwell worked with Drumsna Community Resource Centre Senior Citizens Group bringing together a community who would have very little knowledge of technology and who normally meet face-to-face for a conversation; bringing them on a journey back through their childhood through songs, rhymes and stories. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aw5F5rl8s98>

'Conversations in Portrait' - Led by Roscommon County Council, Leitrim County Council were a partner in this joint project along with Mayo and Donegal. The project saw artist Andy Parsons paint the portraits of 12 people using Zoom over a number of weeks. The portraits will form part of an online exhibition as part of this year's Bealtaine Festival.

Theme 6: Civic Participation & Employment

Goal: Provide older people with easily accessible Community Education courses in the community

Mayo Sligo Leitrim Education and Training Board (MSLETB) has been delivering community based courses for older people since 2002, annually delivering 120 courses throughout the county mainly to older people. Every November ETB invites community groups to apply for funding for courses for the coming year through an advertisement in the local papers. The majority of the courses are chosen by the groups themselves.

MSLETB have delivered over forty different types of courses in Leitrim for example Bee Keeping, Horticulture, Basket Making, Tourism, Flower Arranging, Dance, Art, Cake Decorating, Hat Making, Sea Weed Harvesting, Wood Craft. Turbine Building, Irish Music and many others. Annually over five hundred individuals participated on these courses.

MSLETB worked closely with Men's Sheds and GPs to encourage individuals to participate in training in their local Community. They purchased additional suites of computers for learners to avail of in centres in Mohill, Carrick-on-Shannon, Manorhamilton, Rossinver and Tullaghan.

The Covid cocooning period had a very negative impact on older learners. However, ETB delivered numerous Wellbeing Courses, Digital Photography Courses, and a Positive Leitrim Course that over one thousand individuals linked into.

While online learning offered opportunities for larger numbers to participate, the social connection of learning as part of a physical group is very important, especially for older people. MSLETB looks forward to older learners returning to their local community centres in September 2021 or sooner to participate in courses again, in person rather than virtually.

Goal: To increase employment, volunteering and civic participation among older people

Leitrim Development Company operated www.volunteerleitrim.ie until 2020, connecting volunteers and not-for-profit organisations in the county.



Leitrim Volunteer Centre
@leitrimvc · Non-profit organisation

Support for Volunteers and Not-for-Profit Organisations



Volunteers

We offer a one stop shop for volunteering in Leitrim for individuals and groups.



Organisations

We support Not-for-Profit organisations to set up and run volunteer programmes.

Leitrim Volunteer Centre staff are here to support you. Information on Restarting your Group or Volunteering from Home currently available.



Training and Support

We run training events to keep skills up-to-date. We support groups with their volunteering needs.



Resources

Find a range of resources on our website and social media. Or give us a call if you need something in particular.

This led to the opening of a volunteer centre for Leitrim which will open in 2021 and will be operated by an Independent board of directors.

The volunteering website www.volunteerleitrim.ie was launched in 2020 under the Volunteer Ireland umbrella: <https://www.volunteer.ie/>

 **Leitrim Volunteer Centre**
26 March 2020 · 🌐

If you know a local group helping the vulnerable/isolated that needs more volunteers, please log it here: <https://bit.ly/2ISuxwD> or PM us with details and we'll call you. We have a lot of people signed up to help & the technology for contacting people en masse. #COVID19 #Leitrim



I-VOLIE
Register Your Organisation – I-VOL

The Facebook page was very active, promoting volunteering opportunities and volunteering from home, especially during Volunteering Week. Local organisations looking for help or offering help were promoted consistently throughout the year. Volunteers were thanked and encouraged and were central to the huge Community Response in Leitrim.

Theme 7: Communication & Information

Goal: To ensure that older people can access timely, practical information

ACCESS TO INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

One-to-one IT training was facilitated by Carrick Library through 4 weekly sessions (2hours) per person in 2018. Under Covid restrictions, services had to move mainly online, and the range of online services was expanded and promoted. Library staff compiled user guides and were happy to talk to people over the phone, guiding them through the steps involved in accessing books, magazines and newspapers online. Six tablets, specifically designed for older users, were purchased and placed in Árus Carolan, Mohill.

LDC provided Zoom training and distributed a Zoom user guide.



PROVISION OF AGE FRIENDLY INFORMATION

Leitrim Library Service continued to offer a range of library material in a variety of formats. These include Large Print, Physical Audio and Electronic formats. The library also signposts access to accurate and factual information and is an important access point in terms of e-government.



The HSE completed a directory based website for older persons

North Connacht & Ulster Citizens Information Service (NCU CIS - Leitrim, Donegal, Cavan, Sligo & Monaghan) continues to provide a free information, advice and advocacy service to the public. In addition booklets and information are readily available and easy to read.

General guides are also available and provided by the Citizens Information Board.

Booklets include:

- Guide to Entitlements for Over Sixties,
- Bereavement - A Practical Guide,
- Guide to Entitlements for People with Disabilities,
- Supports for Farmers and
- Information for School Leavers.

In Leitrim the Citizens Information Service assist clients in person, via telephone, email, community presentations and via radio information programmes on both Shannonside and Ocean FM radio.



Radio topics vary monthly and included Budget Changes, Pensions, Medical Cards, Carers, SUSI, Fuel Allowance and Household Benefit. Callers can telephone and/or text in their questions which are answered on air or directly with the caller. The radio programmes greatly assist in reaching many people in the community who have difficulty in accessing services, e.g., transportation, illness, Covid-19 restrictions.



Customer Surveys are conducted throughout each year (excluding 2020) and aim to Improve service offer.

Social Policy is an ongoing piece of work within Citizens Information Services nationwide and aims to bring about change in response to national trends identified in Services nationwide. A recent example includes issues with Driving Licence applications and renewals. The Social Policy Update newsletter is published every two months with the aim of keeping the public informed of the social policy work of the Citizens Information Board and delivery services throughout the country.

The Citizens Information Service in Leitrim have 2 centres located in Carrick-on-Shannon and Manorhamilton, with a standing Outreach service available in Mohill. Community presentations, talks and information evenings were continually provided throughout each year (excluding 2020) on topical subjects such as Budget Changes, Pensions, Medical Cards, Consumer matters, etc.

A Free Legal Advice Clinic (FLAC) was held monthly by appointment (excluding 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions).

In 2020 and in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Citizens Information Board introduced the "Request a Call Back" feature via the Citizens Information website.

A screenshot of a web browser displaying the 'Request a call back' page on the Citizens Information website. The browser's address bar shows the URL 'https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/callback.html'. The page has a yellow header with the text 'Have questions during COVID-19? Request a call back from an information officer.' Below this is a blue navigation bar with the Citizens Information logo and menu items like 'Categories', 'My Situation', 'Find a Centre', 'What's new', and 'Twitter'. The main content area has a white background and includes a breadcrumb trail 'You are here: Home > Request a call back', a search bar, and the heading 'Request a call back'. The text explains that during Covid-19 restrictions, eight Citizens Information Services and the Phone Service are working together to provide a national call back service. It asks users to submit their details in a form, with input fields for 'First Name:' and 'Last Name:'. On the right side, there is a 'Contact Us' section with contact information for the Citizens Information Phone Service (0761 07 4000) and instructions on how to reach local centres or request a call back from an officer. The Windows taskbar is visible at the bottom of the screen.

Theme 8:: Community Support and Health Services

Goal: To provide older people with easily accessible health and community services

ADVOCACY, BEFRIENDING AND SUPPORT

Volunteer Befriending Project:

Leitrim Development Company continued to operate the Volunteer Befriending project in South Leitrim. Volunteers visit one or more older people for approximately one hour per week in their own homes, to offer company and support. At end 2020, they had 27 volunteers and 36 older people accessing the service. When the Covid-19 restrictions started all physical visits ceased and those volunteers already matched contacted their older person by phone each week instead. There are a large number of older people waiting to be matched with a volunteer and a number of new volunteers who are trained, Garda vetted and ready to be matched with an older person when restrictions allow.

Leitrim Calling and Rossinver Calling provided a friendly phone call every week, checking in with all those registered with the services.

Leitrim Calling was set up 13 years ago, and runs 5 days per week, all public holidays and throughout Christmas.

The Service assists people access other supports and services if required.

Leitrim Calling and Rossinver Calling continued to grow and were vital for older people in Leitrim in 2020, especially during the cocooning period.



COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH

Six Integrated Day Care Services attended by Older People and People with Mental Health Difficulties are funded by HSE. Drumsna Day Centre provides a service to people with mental health difficulties on 4 days per week and The Bee Park in Manorhamilton provides a service on 5 days per week.

Day Services are also accessed across the county.

Leitrim Development Company continued to operate four HSE-funded Day Care Centres in Leitrim, located in Ballinaglera, Mohill, Carrigallen and Drumkeeran. These services provide a hot meal, assisted showering, laundry service, occupational activities and social interaction.

These services were closed in March 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. During this time, service users were contacted regularly by Leitrim Calling and LDC, Meals on Wheels services in Ballinaglera and Carrigallen expanded to meet demand, including an outreach laundry service for those that required it.

The HSE Dementia Friendly Resource Centre continues to operate from St Patrick's Community Hospital.

LSP Sports Inclusion Disability Officer ran many programmes including easy exercise videos, sent out exercise sheets and positive mental health quotes, ran an outdoor handcycling programme, a gentle outdoor exercise programme, country music dancing programme via zoom, line dancing classes via zooms, chair exercise programme via zoom & a walking programme.



The Unexpected Challenge of 2020

The Covid19 pandemic in 2020 was not in our wildest dreams when the 2017-2020 Age Friendly Strategy was developed. However, agencies who worked together over the term of 2 consecutive age friendly strategies were well placed to respond to the immediate physical, social and emotional needs of our older population in Leitrim. The cocooning phase early in 2020, where older people were requested to stay in their homes, was particularly difficult, especially for those who are normally active, fit, involved in their community, and indeed key people in many community organisations.

Therefore, although not specified under the themes in the strategy, the following actions are included in this review as they addressed the goals and ethos of the Leitrim Age Friendly Strategy.

Community Response Forum

The Community Response Forum was formed in March 2020.

Leitrim Co Council coordinated the meetings and work of the Forum for the county .

A database and map was drawn up of local volunteer groups such as the GAA clubs, Family Resource Centres, Community centres and others.

All the groups provided volunteers who agreed to deliver shopping fuel, medication, etc.

Leitrim COVID-19 Community Response Forum

Our helpdesk will respond to the needs of vulnerable members of our community

Lines open 8am to 8pm, 7 days per week

Phone: 071 9650473

Freephone: 1800 852389

Email: covidsupport@leitrimcoco.ie



Comhairle Chontae Liatroma
Leitrim County Council



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Community call helpline:

The Community Call Helpline opened on 29th March.

It was supported by staff from the Council's Community section, Sports Partnership, Corporate Services, Arts and Library sections.



Leitrim Community Call

We're here if you need practical support or someone to talk to.

We can help with:

- Delivery of food, medication, fuel or other household items
- Someone to talk to or keep in touch with
- Other practical supports
- Signposting and referral to reliable information and services

1800 852 389 or 071 9650473 – 8AM to 8PM 7 days/week
covidsupport@leitrimcoco.ie

The Helpline ran initially 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, with Gardaí manning the phone overnight.

This was later reduced to 8am to 8pm, and when demand decreased, by 2021 it was 9am -5pm

KEEP WELL
IN YOUR COMMUNITY



Comhairle Chontae Liatroma
Leitrim County Council



Údarás Áitiúla Éireann
Local Authorities Ireland



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Leitrim Development Company:

The pandemic had a disproportionate effect on older people in our community, who were cocooning for over a year as an 'at risk' group, away from family and friends. Many older people were not willing and/or able to access online supports and in many cases became very isolated, alone at home.

Anecdotally LDC heard many accounts of older people seriously deteriorating without social stimulation; losing the ability to walk, memory and cognitive functions reducing, losing the ability to drive, anxiety, depression and a general sense of hopelessness. Leitrim Development Company tried to find ways to keep in touch with older people throughout this time, in the following ways:

- Offered online courses to those who want to learn how to use online supports – 20 older people availed of courses
- Funding of the Modern Day Mummings Project to extend it across Leitrim to visit 150 older people that live alone with no family supports and identifying those older people in partnership with public health nurses and other relevant agencies
- Extension of Meals on Wheels and outreach laundry services in Ballinaglera and Carrigallen
- Establishing a teleconference phone number for meetings with older people that don't use the internet – used by OPC, North Leitrim Feel Good Forum and South Leitrim Active Age Forum
- Monthly information packs posted out to all over 55 groups to share information on services and projects
- Regular phone calls to over 55 group members to 'check in'
- Increased requests for advocacy, information and support from older people and their family members previously unknown to LDC services.
- LDC groups and day services have found innovative ways to stay in touch with their members, including Christmas hampers, newsletters, photobooks, vouchers.



Meals on Wheels services:

Day Care centers increased the number of meals being provided from 397 to over 700.

Day-care centres worked with volunteers to deliver the meals, so that all of these meals were delivered in person

HSE

The HSE Supported Day Care at Home as an alternative to attending Day Care, an innovative approach to support Older People who were socially isolated.

HSE Home Respite service was further developed to support family carers. This included day respite and overnight respite based on Carer burden assessment. And provided through Leitrim Development

Leitrim County Council staff put together 3,000 Wellbeing packs for people who were cocooning in the home or self-isolating. They were distributed by An Post.

The packs contained the Helpline number, how to make masks, an exercise program, meal suggestions & recipes, link from the Arts office to online items, a bird watch poster, a link from the County GAA, brain teasers and a small gift.



IT'S GOOD TO TALK GAA




Covid 19 has impacted hugely on our communities, but especially on the older members who are being asked to stay at home. This is a lonely and isolating experience for many in particular those who live alone.

Leitrim GAA in conjunction with Leitrim Age Friendly is here to help

Perhaps somebody you know has a special occasion upcoming in their life and you would like to mark that for them in a special way.

A phone call from a GAA Player past or present or an Official can be arranged to break the silence.

If you know of somebody who may benefit from this service please **call 087 6888978 or email secretary.leitrim@gaa.ie**

We make this offer in conjunction with the excellent services that are also being provided by these organisations:

Leitrim Calling
 Phone: 087 9585029 Hours: 9.00 am until 2.30 Monday to Friday.
 Services: Friendly telephone call service for older people.

Rosslinver Calling Friendly Call
 Manager: Mary Daly
 Phone: 087 7932784 Email: managerballagh@gmail.com



- GAA (Friendly chats/calls from past local GAA legends, Links with Club players etc)
- Friendly Call services increased by 60%
- The Library provided a drop box & delivery service
- Meals, shopping and medication were delivered by volunteers and the Community Garda unit
- Hospital runs to Dublin, Sligo and Carrick on Shannon were provided by Civil Defence.
- Sports Partnership and Healthy Leitrim ran Strength & Flexibility Programming for older persons groups
- Flower baskets were made by residents of Loughran House in Blacklion for older people, and distributed by Civil Defence
- Leitrim Arts Office delivered 3 new projects to older people: Moving the Feather, Dance & Singing program, and writing programs





Leitrim children connected with older people in their community at Christmas 2020 through an initiative rolled out by the Gardaí and Leitrim County Council under the Healthy Ireland, Keep Well, Stay Connected Campaign.

The Community Policing Unit supplied Christmas cards to schools; students wrote and drew messages of hope, and the Gardaí distributed the cards to older and vulnerable people in Leitrim



Leitrim Library service partnered with 5 Schools in Leitrim in a Christmas post initiative. In December 2020 letters and books were delivered to residents in 6 nursing homes in Leitrim

Wednesday, December 30, 2020 www.leitrimobserver.ie

School children send special letters to nursing home residents

As part of the government's 'Keep Well' campaign, which aims to support people and communities to mind their physical and mental health over the coming months, Leitrim Library Service partnered with five schools around the county, in a 'Christmas Post' initiative.

Children from St Clare's NS Manorhamilton, Drumlease NS Dromahair, Cloone NS, The Hunt NS Mohill, Seoil Mhuire NS Carrick-on-Shannon and Seoil Chlann Naofa Ballinamore wrote letters to residents of Lough Erril Nursing Home, St Phelim's Nursing Home, Ballinamore Community Nursing Unit, Arus Carolan Community Nursing Unit, Arus Breffni Nursing Home and St Patrick's Community Hospital.

These letters, together with a book for each resident, were delivered by library staff on Friday, December 18.

County Librarian, Pauline Brennan, said that "Leitrim Library staff were very keen to engage with the care home residents, particularly this year which has been so challenging for so many."

"Staff felt that a hand written letter is such a tangible engaging thing that involves that personal touch and the initiative provided the opportunity to engage in a caring and special way."

"Each resident was also gifted a book which hopefully brought some joy over the Christmas period."

Library staff were also keen to thank the Care Home staff who take such wonderful care of the residents and who are such important people in their lives.



Leitrim library staff are pictured with staff members of Arus Carolan Nursing Home, Mohill after a special presentation on Friday, December 18. From left: Caroline Farrell, Ballinamore Library; Siobhan McMurray; Dairde Connolly; Ann McCaffrey; Bernie Moore; Rosemary Mitchell; Eileen McTague and Kim Taylor, Mohill Library. Front of picture: Geraldine Mulligan and Margaret Gallogly PICTURE: WILLIE DONNELLAN

Leitrim Sports Partnership encouraged people out in the fresh air:



Leitrim County Council

15 December 2020 · 🌐

It's important to keep active this winter to help physical and mental health and wellbeing

Sign up to some of our 12 walks of Christmas below

#HealthyIreland #KeepWell #KeepActive

<https://ecs.page.link/3vbLp>

12 walks of Christmas

- ★ Acres Lake Drumshanbo
- ★ Kinlough Forest Park
- ★ Keeldra Lake Walk Cloone
- ★ Shannon Erne Blueway Kilclare
- ★ Troll Wood Dromahair
- ★ Ballinamore Canal Walk
- ★ Manorhamilton to Boggaun
- ★ Miltown Wood Manorhamilton
- ★ Garadice Lake Loop
- ★ Castlecara walk Carrick on Shannon
- ★ Derrycarne Wood Dromod
- ★ Bothar Na Naomh Cloone

For more details on each of these walks visit www.leitrimsports.ie

or call 071 9650498 or email sports@leitrimcoco.ie

Attending an organised walk must be pre booked. Places at each walk are limited due to covid restrictions and all restrictions will be adhered to.



Age Friendly
LEITRIM

The great spirit of community and support was evident through this most challenging of times. The Covid pandemic impacted on every generation, and all ages rallied to support each other.

In tribute to all who suffered illness or loss 2017-2021,

Leitrim Age Friendly Alliance will build on the great Leitrim spirit

evidenced during the pandemic,

and work together

to make Leitrim

a great county to live in

for the duration of our lives.