

## Theme 3: Housing

Goal: to provide a home environment which will support older people to live independently, safe and secure, and ensure they receive the necessary support and have options when independence is no longer possible.

### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT:

As people age, they spend more time in their own homes. This means that older people's quality of life, and thus their health, can depend on the appropriateness of their home environment and the conditions in which they live e.g. better heating systems are known to lead to improved breathing and mental health for some older people. Older persons have specific housing requirements such as being in proximity to their family and social networks, the need for access to public and other essential services, recreation and amenities (links with Theme 1 & 2 above).

Across the country, there is a clear desire from people to grow old in their own home and community. This requires that, as people age, their homes are such that they can continue to live there in a manner that is safe, affordable and connected to the community where the supports and services they need are available.

The research findings from the 'Sliotar' Project explored future housing options for older people through the examination of a number of existing projects. It showed that providing suitable housing in close proximity to services and amenities and town centres (often on brownfield sites) with appropriate design emphasising adaptability as the persons needs change alongside technological 'smart home' supports has the dual benefit of meeting the changing housing needs of older people and is less costly than residential or long-term nursing care.<sup>13</sup>

Government policy is to support older people to live with dignity and independence in their own homes and communities for as long as possible. According to Home and Community Care Ireland, almost 34% of all people in long-term nursing care have low to medium dependency and, as such, could perhaps remain living at home with the support of enhanced home care packages. In terms of cost effectiveness, home care costs in Ireland are estimated to be consistently lower than hospitalisation and residential care costs. Rebuilding Ireland notes that 'for many, living in adapted or specialists housing reduces reliance on health and social care services and can result in measurably improved health status and lower rates of hospital admissions' (pg. 54).

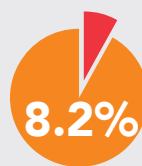
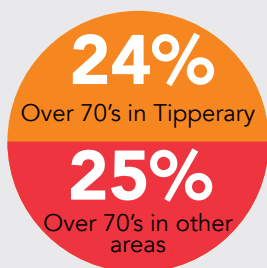
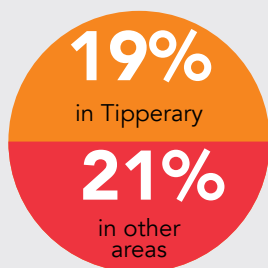
The Tipperary County Development Plans (North and South) note that the older people have certain housing requirements relating to access, medical case, security and personal safety, among other issues. In order to meet the housing demands of ageing population and to support independent living for older people, the Plan notes that there will be a requirement for a combination of

13. 'Housing for Older People: Future Perspectives', Age Friendly Ireland (2016)

supported group/community housing, assisted living and residential care accommodation, and new housing to be delivered in a manner that will allow older people to remain in their own homes and/or within their communities.

The other related issue around housing is safety and security. For many older people, the decision to age in their own community depends on whether they feel safe and secure at home and out and about (see Theme 1 above). The Tipperary Joint Policing Plan states that ‘where people face risks of violence and crime that threaten their physical safety, their quality of life is severely diminished’ and the perception of a threat and the resulting feelings of insecurity undermine a person’s quality of life and makes participation in their community difficult.

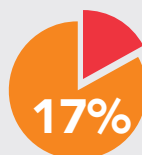
## HOUSING FACILITIES<sup>14</sup>, CONDITIONS AND UPKEEP



of people reported that their home does not have a downstairs toilet or bathroom facilities



of people reported that their home was too big for their current needs.



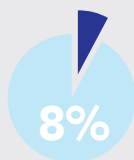
People Over 70 reported that their home was too big for their current needs



of people

AGED  
55+

had difficulty keeping their house adequately warm in the last 12 months.



of people

AGED  
55+

VS



of people

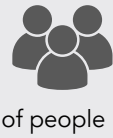
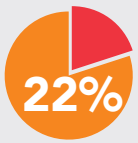
AGED  
55+

in other areas.

have problems with housing conditions. The most frequently reported problem is damp or leaks in walls or roof.

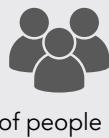
14. Facilities include shortage of space or too big for current need, lack of indoor flushing toilet, lack of bath or shower, lack of downstairs toilet/bathroom facilities, and lack of a place sit outside (e.g. garden, balcony, or terrace). Conditions include rot in windows, door or floors and damp or leaks in walls or roofs.

## HOUSING PREFERENCES



of people

VS



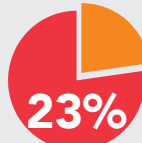
of people



have problems with upkeep



in both Tipperary and other counties had problems carrying out maintenance themselves



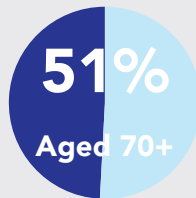
had problems with the cost of maintenance.



positive about moving into an adapted house

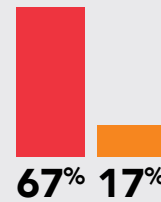


were opposed to moving into an adapted house

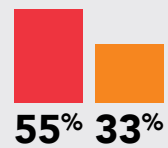


were opposed to moving into an adapted house

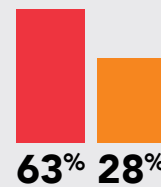
negative reaction positive reaction



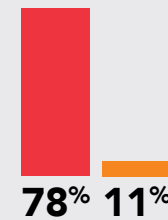
Moving in with their children



Moving in with other older people



Over 70s - Moving in with other older people



Moving into a nursing home

## SAFETY AND SECURITY



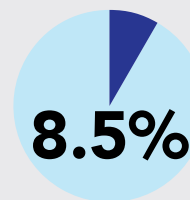
Over 55's feel safe at home during the day



Over 55's feel safe out and about at night in Tipperary



Over 55's feel safe out and about at night in other areas



of respondents in Tipperary had an experience that left them concerned about their personal safety

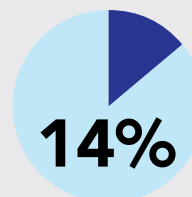


of women don't feel safe out and about a night



of men don't feel safe out and about a night

VS



of respondents in other areas had an experience that left them concerned about their personal safety

## KEY ISSUES FROM CONSULTATIONS:

- Assistance is needed with garden maintenance, minor house repairs, smaller jobs like changing light bulbs, cleaning gutters etc. but there is the constant fear of being 'ripped off'. This is also supported by the HaPAI survey findings.
- In most parts of County Tipperary there is a lack of options for older people, other than their own home or a nursing home. There is a strong demand for more housing options with additional supports in local communities such as sheltered housing or modified homes. Housing needs to be planned and designed better – planning for a variety of needs that a house could grow with you.
- The need to feel safe and secure in a person's home emerged strongly during the JPC consultation process. Anti-social behaviour arising from abuse of alcohol and drugs causes people to feel unsafe in their own homes
- Burglary, theft and drug possession are areas of priority concern for the guards and residents
- Poverty, particularly hidden poverty among the older people, with fuel poverty a particular area of concern affecting people's ability to stay warm.
- More general information needed around housing supports – assistance with form filling, housing adaption grants. Older people would apply for help but are deterred by the form filling.
- Many older people are in houses that are now too large for them (as evidenced in the HAPAI survey) or too isolated from services. Many are willing to downsize but need to be incentivized and supported to do this.
- The 'dreaded nursing home' would not be so dreaded if there were smaller nursing homes available in the community. The reason they are so feared is that someone often has to move miles from their community to access a nursing home, away from their friends and community who then find it difficult to come and visit them (transport issue). A new model of smaller, localized care for older people is needed.
- Loneliness and isolation is a real issue for older people. The Good Morning Service operates throughout Tipperary (call service for older people) but it can be difficult to get older people to avail of the service. Many people do not know about it so it needs to be expanded and promoted with more active support for older people in getting involved with the service e.g. assistance with form filling.
- Panic buttons, neighbourhood watch and the text alert are great and help keep older people feeling more safe and secure.
- Rural crime among the farming community is rife with people stealing livestock, machinery and diesel.

### ACTION 3.1 AGE PROOF HOUSING IN TIPPERARY

The County Development Plans North and South commits to facilitate the provision of accommodation to meet the needs of the older people, those people who wish to continue living at home with a little support (which from the HAPAI survey is the majority) and those that may wish or may need to have more support through supported housing or residential care. There are a number of specific actions that will take place in this regard (a) ensure a support service is in place to assist people with the home modifications and filling out paper work with respect to same – this could be provided (by agreed arrangement) by the Citizens Information, Family Resource Centres, the Good Morning Service or any other service provider with links to older

people (b) review Tipperary Housing Strategy to ensure that future builds and developments are mindful of Age Friendly principles, particularly in relation to location, proximity to amenities and health care facilities, transport and community services (c) incorporate universal design guidelines into future planning applications (d) highlight the importance of town centre location and access to services including zoning urban centres within Local Area Plans for partial provision of older persons housing (e) proactively work with Voluntary Housing Bodies to promote the development of increased social housing schemes and co-identifying suitable sites and locations, with particular attention paid to derelict urban centre sites that could be suitable for housing for older people (f) explore a pilot 'house-swap' scheme (complete with incentives, supports) identifying older people willing to downsize to smaller more centrally located premises thereby freeing up their larger more family friendly home.

<b>Lead Partner:</b>	Tipperary County Council – Housing Section
<b>Support Partners:</b>	Age Friendly Ireland, Tipperary County Council – Planning Section, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Centre of Excellence on Universal Design (National Disability Authority), Private Developers, Voluntary Housing Bodies, Older Persons Council, SPC on Housing
<b>Link to Plans:</b>	County Development Plans – North and South

### **ACTION 3.2: ESTABLISH A HOUSE REPAIRS AND TRUSTWORTHY TRADE SERVICE**

Trust in trades people entering homes is particularly important for older people along with the issue of affordability. Jobs that can appear small such as changing light bulbs, fixing shelves, moving furniture etc. are important to people who can no longer easily carry out these jobs and require support. The provision of a comprehensive, affordable, trustworthy, home repair, odd job and maintenance team which has been Garda vetted will be explored generating a number of benefits - stimulating local employment opportunities in the service sector (possibly through a Social Enterprise model) while at the same time meeting these care needs. It could be linked in with the Good Morning service currently operating in Tipperary and modelled on the 'Care and Repair' scheme run in Tipperary Town by Muintir na Tire and Age Action in other areas. In addition, a registered list of capable and reliable contractors with guidance pricing will be put together and ensure wide circulation among the community, particularly targeting older people.

<b>Lead Partner:</b>	Good Morning Tipperary Service (or Local Development Companies)
<b>Support Partners:</b>	Local Enterprise Office, Muintir na Tire, LCDC Support Staff - TCC, Volunteer Centre, Tipperary LCDC Health and Wellbeing Alliance, Older Persons Council, Local Traders & Private, Community and voluntary organisation, Department of Social Protection, Local Traders and Chamber of Commerce
<b>Link to Plans:</b>	County Development Plans – North and South

### ACTION 3.3: IMPLEMENT COMMUNITY SAFETY INITIATIVES

Conduct a county audit to identify where Garda-supported programmes such as the Text Alert scheme, community Alert, Neighbourhood Watch and Community Policing Clinics exist, where there are gaps and put steps in place to address these gaps. A range of other community safety initiatives will be explored and implemented targeting older people or vulnerable people living alone as outlined in the Joint Policing Strategy including (a) supporting the rollout of the Senior Alert Scheme to provide personal monitored alarms to vulnerable older people through the Buddy Programme or other peer-to-peer supports (b) implementing a volunteer initiative that specifically encourages neighbours to visit and look out for older vulnerable people living alone (c) hosting a series of community clinics for older people by An Garda Síochána providing face to face human contact between the Gardai and older people (d) adopt the Crime Prevention Ambassador Programme across the county which ensures that vulnerable and isolated older people are receiving crime prevention information on a peer to peer basis.

<b>Lead Partner:</b>	An Garda Síochána
<b>Support Partners:</b>	Tipperary County Council, Joint Policing Committee, Muintir na Tire, IFA, Tipperary LCDC Health and Wellbeing Alliance, Older Persons Council, Tipperary Volunteer Centre, Community and Voluntary Sector, Resource Centres, Local Development Companies
<b>Link to Plans:</b>	Joint Policing Strategy; LECP
<b>Expected Outcomes:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older people are able to live in a safe and secure environment in their own home connected to their family and local community</li> <li>• Quality housing, timely supports and residential options are available to older people as they age and their needs change</li> <li>• Older people are aware of home to make their home safer and what supports are available to them</li> <li>• Planning, design and delivery of future developments will reflect an understanding of Age Friendly principles</li> <li>• Effective communication links between Gardai and older people living across county Tipperary</li> <li>• Increased trust and confidence and decrease in the fear of crime amongst older people</li> <li>• Positive impact on social enterprise initiatives and job creation</li> </ul>