

AgeingMatters

in Ireland

Fighting for a fair State Pension

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AGE
DISCRIMINATION
IN THE WORK
PLACE
FOLLOWED BY
LOW PAY
AND TO END WITH
THE GENDER
PENSION PAY GAP

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This booklet is a publication of Age Action. It is published six times a year.

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AGE ACTION IRELAND LTD Company Limited by Guarantee Registered in Ireland No. 198571 Charity No. CHY 10583

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■ Cover photo: Protesting for a fair State Pension outside Leinster House.

Opinion

We need to talk about ageism



John Church

At the heart of so many of the problems facing older people in Ireland is ageism.

We hear it in the expressions ‘pensions timebomb’ and ‘bed-blockers’. We hear it when commentators suggest getting people out of their homes to make way for young couples to fix the housing crisis.

Think about that. If anyone suggested Catholics should move house to make rooms for Protestants, or vice versa, there would be outrage. Religious discrimination is unacceptable.

In Hollywood, and here in Ireland with the controversy around the Gate Theatre, we see sex discrimination in the workplace being courageously challenged.

So why is age discrimination still so acceptable?

There is a sense out there that once you’re in your 70s, or even your 60s, your race is run. It’s time to stand aside for the next generation.

Sometimes it is a sort of well-intentioned ageism because it’s assumed that every older person is desperately in need. Far from relying on others to help, it is often older people who are the volunteers, who are active in their communities, who ensure not one gets left behind.

False image

If we let others portray older people as dependants and as victims it feeds into a false image of what older people can, and do, achieve.

Ageism – any form of discrimination – is about seeing people as less than us, as inferior.

And if you can be portrayed that way, it’s easier to believe you don’t have the same rights, entitlements and opportunities as the rest of us.

So here’s the reality. People are living longer and healthier lives.

That’s a good thing, it’s a success story.

Some older people need help just like all of us do from time to time. But others are carers, volunteers, businesspeople, activists, sportspeople, teachers and community leaders who give an enormous amount to our society.

Enormous change

Ireland has changed enormously in the last 20 years or so. Language that was common one time about people who did not share our religious beliefs, ethnic background or sexual orientation is now – rightly – unacceptable.

In the coming months we are going to start working together to design the next Strategic Plan for Age Action, to set out what we as campaigners and advocates will work on for the next three years.

As part of that I believe we need to ask whether ageism is the last acceptable prejudice? And if it is, how can we as a movement of members, volunteers and activists identify it, confront it and bring it to an end?

– John Church

Lack of homecare fuels trolley crisis

The annual trolley crisis in Ireland hit record levels last month with nurses reporting 677 people waiting on trollies for a hospital bed.

Age Action spokespersons appeared on radio and television criticising the Government for failing to provide enough hospital beds.

The organisation was especially critical of cases of older people left for hours, without dignity or privacy, on hospital trollies in emergency departments.

"It's more than a decade since Mary Harney said that having less than 500 people on trollies was a national emergency," said Age Action's Head of Advocacy and Communications Justin Moran.

"And yet since then the problem seems to have only worsened as successive governments failed to invest in beds and additional nurses.

"The truth is our hospitals have never recovered from the bed cuts of the late 1980s and today we have a million more people living in Ireland and living longer lives."

Lack of homecare

Age Action highlighted the lack of homecare as something that is making the situation worse.

"There are people in hospitals right now who could go home tomorrow," Justin continued, "if they could get home help hours or get the grants to adapt their house.

"There's additional money coming into our home help services from the Government and that's absolutely welcome but it's alleviating the problem, it's not fixing it."

Experts agree that fixing the trolley crisis will require a completely different way of thinking



▲ Older people are among the worst affected by the annual trolley crisis.

about our health service.

They argue that we need to move away from prioritising acute hospitals to reforming the fundamentals of our system, expanding primary care, more GPs and living healthier lives.

"Fifteen hundred beds a night in Irish hospitals are occupied by the consequences of alcohol abuse," Dr Anthony O'Connor of Tallaght Hospital pointed out.

"A quarter of injuries presenting to Irish emergency departments are alcohol-related. The health service spends €1.2 billion per year on alcohol-related harm.

"This is not sustainable. I don't care if they drink more in France or England or wherever. This is our mess and we need to clean it up."



▲ Members of the ICA, Pensioners for Equality, Age Action, FÓRSA and the NWC briefing politicians and journalists.

We want a **fair** State Pension

Hundreds of pensioners protested outside the Dáil last month calling for the 2012 pension cuts to be reversed.

As *Ageing Matters* goes to print Minister Regina Doherty TD has published proposals that should help many of the more than 40,000 pensioners who lost out because they took time out from the workforce to rear their families.

However, she has not reversed the 2012 cuts and not everyone will benefit from the changes she has announced.

Age Action will continue fighting for a fair State Pension to ensure no one is left behind.



▲ Caroline Farrell of the Irish Farmers Association calling for a fair State Pension.





▲ Protesters outside Leinster House.



▲ Protesters outside Leinster House.



▲ The message is clear from Michael and Rosaleen Nolan.



◀ The campaign is strongly supported by the Irish Countrywomen's Association.



▲ Supporting older workers was one of the issues examined by the Citizens Assembly last year.

New plan to hire more older workers

The Government has announced a plan to assist older workers back into employment by providing a €10,000 incentive to employers who hire long-term unemployed workers over the age of 50.

Many who lost their jobs during the recession are struggling to get back into work and Age Action has called for more supports to be provided to help older unemployed people.

The most recent Live Register figures showed there are 40,571 people over 50 who are long-term unemployed.

The scheme was proposed by Independent Minister Kevin ‘Boxer’ Moran TD and is due to roll out in the second half of 2018.

“A lot of people who were affected by the recession ten years ago are finding it extremely difficult to obtain work now that the economy has picked up again,” he explained.

“I think it is only fair that an incentive is provided to employers to take on those who are over the age of 50 years.

“Despite an employer’s best intentions, employers can be unwittingly show bias through ageist stereotyping and yet, by doing so, they may miss out on the best person for the job.”

Age discrimination

A report on age and employment published by William Fry last year found that 87 per cent of a survey of unemployed workers aged 55 or over believed their age was a factor in their inability to get work.

“I am very aware that some

older jobseekers find it difficult to secure employment,” Minister for Employment and Social Protection Regina Doherty TD recently told the *Sunday Independent*.

“I am making the higher rate of the Jobsplus employer subsidy of €10,000 available to employers who hire people over 50 years of age who have been unemployed for more than a year.”

The current Jobsplus scheme has created 14,000 positions since 2013 but just 10pc of these jobs were provided to people over 50.

The refocused scheme will now see a greater emphasis on hiring older workers. Employers who hire over-50s will receive a total of €10,000 in monthly payments over the course of two years.

Welcome for increase in public sector retirement age

Age Action, Ireland's leading advocacy organisation for older people, has welcomed the announcement by Minister for Finance, Public Expenditure and Reform Paschal Donohoe TD that the mandatory retirement age will rise for public sector workers.

The abolition of mandatory retirement ages is a key campaign priority for the organisation.

"Many older workers are afraid of losing their job for no other reason than turning 65," said Justin Moran, Head of Advocacy and Communications with Age Action. "They want to be able to work a little longer to ensure a more secure retirement.

"Raising the mandatory retirement age, though falling short of abolition, will go a long way to addressing those concerns by allowing public sector workers to choose to keep working.

"This decision will be a relief to a lot of older workers fearful of being forced onto the dole at 65."

Giving people choice

It is important to note that public sector workers who wish to retire at 65 will still be able to do so. The proposals being brought forward by the Minister are about giving people the choice to continue working if that is something they would like to do.

The increase in the mandatory retirement age will require legislation to go through the Oireachtas and Age Action has written to the Minister urging that this happen soon.

"We want the Minister and all parties in the Dáil to work together to ensure that when this Bill is brought forward it is passed through the Oireachtas as quickly as possible," Justin continued.

"However, we have to remember there are many thousands of older workers in the private sector



▲ Legislation to abolish mandatory retirement has been jointly introduced by John Brady TD and Denise Mitchell TD.

who will not benefit from today's changes. They cannot be left behind.

"Legislation is currently stuck in the Oireachtas that would abolish mandatory retirement clauses, including in the private sector, and we would like to see the Government enable that Bill to move forward.

"While that is happening we would urge private sector employers to look to the example set by the Government and to stop forcing people out of their jobs simply because of their age."

Now you can apply **online** for a medical card

The HSE has launched a new website to enable people to apply online for a medical card.

The new service was launched by Minister for Health Simon Harris TD and Director General of the HSE Tony O'Brien.

"This new service enables people for the first time to apply online for a medical card quickly and easily, using the HSE's step by step guide," said Minister Harris.

"Users can find out if they are eligible for a medical card immediately, and if they are, the HSE has said that their application will be processed in 15 working days.

"The service allows applicants to scan and upload documents and other information. Almost 440,000 applications were received by the National Medical Card Unit in 2017 so this new, streamlined, service will bring great benefits for many people."

Modernisation

This new development is part of the ongoing streamlining and modernisation of the operation of the medical card scheme.

"The launch of the National Medical Card Online service makes it as easy as possible for people to apply for medical card



▲ Five-year-old Ella Treacy from Dublin launching www.medicalcard.ie.

eligibility," said the HSE's Ann Marie Hoey.

"This great new development brings considerable benefits for people in terms of turnaround times, convenience and security.

Applications that are fully completed will be processed within fifteen working days."

Full details about the National Medical Card Online service are available at www.medicalcard.ie.

Benefits of the new National Medical Card Online service

1. The online system guides you through each step of the application process.
2. Applicants can submit all supporting documentation digitally, including photographs of relevant material.
3. Your GP will be able to accept you onto their panel via the online system.
4. If we need to contact you about your application, we can email instead of writing to you.
5. When you have submitted your financial details as part of the online application, we will tell you straight away if you qualify for a medical card.
6. Complete applications will be processed in 15 working days.

Are **you** paying too much for health insurance?



◀ Many struggle to pay high insurance costs.

Many older people are determined to keep their private health insurance because they are nervous about relying on the public system but *Irish Times* consumer affairs correspondent **Conor Pope** recently suggested you could be overpaying by hundreds of euro.

Around half of Irish people have private health insurance and in many cases rely on it to ensure that they can get to a hospital consultant more quickly.

“The plain and simple truth is if you have had the same health insurance policy for three years or longer you are wasting money,” said Conor Pope.

“And it doesn’t really matter which company you are with, that basic rule of thumb still applies.”

If you have a gold-plated policy you could easily be paying thousands of euro more than you need to and you could switch to an identical – and in some cases better – policy either with your provider or with a rival and save a fortune.

“According to the price comparison website bonkers.ie, as many as three-quarters of people with health insurance overpay by as much as 35 per cent a year.”

Hugely overpriced

His advice echoes findings last year from a report by Total Health Cover which found that two out of

every five health insurance policyholders were on “hugely overpriced plans” and that the vast majority of those overpaying are aged over 60.

“When it comes to health insurance, people should review their plan every year just as they would home or car insurance, but they don’t, and this can be a costly mistake,” Health insurance consultant Dermot Goode told thejournal.ie.

“Older members are often afraid to switch as they are under the misconception that they will have to re-serve all their waiting periods again, or that existing conditions will not be covered, which is simply not the case.

“All insurers are required by law to give you full credit for time served with previous providers.”

To find out more about how you can save money on your health insurance check out the Health Insurance Authority website www.hia.ie which allows you to compare your plan against other policies.



▲ Phil Cooley, fifth from left, with some of the other activists who campaigned to save their post office.

How Rialto Post Office **was saved**

Age Action information officer Phil Cooley explains how her local community rallied round to save their local post office.

On 24 November 2016 there was a large queue of people chatting outside the post office in Rialto where people went to collect pensions, disability and other social welfare payments, pay bills and carry out banking.

A note on the door said that the post office was closed for business and offered Dolphin's Barn as an alternative.

Rialto has a large number of older people and others who depend on the post office. Many with mobility issues use rollators and Zimmer frames. Accessing Dolphin's Barn was very difficult.

They were using taxis they couldn't afford to get their pension. One older resident told me she, "wouldn't be able to pay towards her heating this week as it went on the taxi".

The closure was done without notice or any form of consultation, just a note stuck on the door.

Another issue was the detrimental effect the removal of the post office would have on the local businesses which always benefitted from its proximity.

If this sudden move from Rialto to Dolphin's Barn became permanent it would lead to loss of community spirit and dereliction of the local area. For many people the post office was the only place they might talk to someone all week.

Campaign formed

A small group of local residents, myself included,

gathered in our local community centre to form a campaign and we wrote to An Post to seek a meeting.

That Saturday we started collecting signatures on a petition to reopen Rialto Post Office and we did so every Saturday at the Rialto shops throughout Christmas.

Though we never met with An Post they were very aware of our campaign as it gathered momentum.

We produced banners and fliers with the help of local businesses. I would also like to thank our local elected representatives – from all parties – who were very supportive of the campaign and contacted An Post directly.

In late January 2017 we learned that it was not An Post's intention to terminate the post office service in Rialto but they needed a new location.

This was good news and very hopeful but we needed to be vigilant to be sure we did get our post office back. We kept in contact with suitable businesses in the area and we continued our campaigning.

Re-opened

In early April we learned that Rialto Centra had been successful with the tender and it reopened on 12 June.

We continued the campaign for a few weeks urging people to now use the service and return to Rialto Post Office.

Our very strong campaign lasted seven months with great local support and we were thanked even by the few who said during our petitioning "sure you're wasting your time, it'll never happen, it's gone".

I wanted to tell you the story of our campaign as a way of acknowledging all of the local people and representatives who supported us.

For more than seven months, right through winter and spring, we collected signatures, ran stalls and organised meetings. Many told us we were wasting our time and that the post office would never come back.

While I am proud our campaign succeeded, I know similar campaigns in other places have not, and I believe communities should not have to fight so hard to protect our essential services.

Keep our post offices open, says Age Action

An Age Action delegation met with the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Communications, Climate Action and Environment at the end of last year and urged politicians to do more to save our post office network.

They told the committee the closure of post offices in rural communities is forcing older people to rely on a transport system that is not fit for purpose or the kindness of friends and family members to get to the next town.

While welcoming additional funding committed by the Government to the post office network, Age Action said this needed to be used to protect our post offices and to reopen others.



▲ Many postmasters are struggling to get by.

Dear Age Action,

My family have been told our mother can no longer look after herself. We're looking at the cost of long-term care and wondered if there was any way to reduce the bills?

Lucy from Ballyfermot

Saving money on long-term care

In Dublin the average yearly cost of nursing home care is roughly €76,000 while in Cork it is €67,000 so you really do need to find ways of saving money, writes **Gerry Scully**.

For many people the Nursing Home Support Scheme, known as Fair Deal, may be the best option while others could be cared for while at home.

There are tax credits and reliefs available to people who are paying for care, whether for themselves or other people.

Tax relief can be claimed at the end of the tax year on any nursing home fees you pay. This is paid at your highest rate of tax so if you pay tax at 40 per cent this is the rate at which the relief is calculated.

Relief under Fair Deal

It's important to remember that even if you are in a nursing home under the Nursing Home Support Scheme you can still claim this relief on the portion of the nursing home cost that is not paid by the HSE.

You can also claim tax relief



▲ Age Action's Gerry Scully assisting another client.

if you are paying for a home carer, either employed by you or through an agency. The maximum relief for paying for a home carer is €75,000 in any tax year.

There is also a tax credit available to married or cohabiting (partnered, civil union) couples if one of the partners cares for a dependent person (not their spouse or partner).

This is available if the couple are jointly assessed and the income of the lower paid partner

is less than €7,200 (you can get a reduced credit if their income is less than €9,600).

There is a difference here as this is a tax credit, not a tax relief. The main difference is you claim the tax relief at the end of the year while a credit reduces your tax liability on an ongoing basis.

For more information you can ring our Information Service on 01 475 6989 or email us at helpline@ageaction.ie.

MoneyBack with An Post's new smart account

An Post's new smart account is now available in 700 post offices around Ireland but it is its innovative MoneyBack feature that is attracting savvy savers.

With the MoneyBack feature account holders can earn between five and ten per cent cashback from a range of retailers.

Participating companies include Lidl, SSE Airtricity, Intersport Elverys, Kennys.ie bookstore and Oxendales.

With Lidl, for example, you're entitled to five per cent cashback on all transactions of €25 or more while there are discounts of 10 per cent available on car and home insurance from An Post Insurance.

The An Post Smart Current Account keeps track of your spending at the participating retailers and makes a MoneyBack payment into your account the following month.

There is no limit on how much account holders can earn, as long as consumers meet any minimum spend thresholds which apply. Users can check on their MoneyBack total online at any time.

Savings on energy

"With the Smart Account providing cashback on purchases from the likes of Lidl, InterSport Elverys and Oxendales there is a wide range of retailers to choose from," said John Lowe, The Money Doctor.

"We're also entering a season where energy consumption is highest and with 10 per cent cashback on energy spend with SSE Airtricity as part of the smart account package, it makes even more sense to sign up to An Post's Smart Current Account to maximise savings."

An Post Smart Current Account users can also lodge, withdraw or check their balance at participating post offices across the country.



▲ Postal clerk Debbie Gilligan and Lucy Kennedy launch the An Post Smart Account.

The Smart Account debit card can be used at any ATM, online or at any retailer worldwide, wherever the Mastercard acceptance sign is displayed and the account can also be managed online.

"Many people contact us who are concerned about supporting our post office network," said Justin Moran of Age Action.

"We'd encourage everyone to see if this new service from An Post is the right fit for them because the best way to ensure we have a decent postal service is to support their products."



▲ A Fáilte Isteach class in Bray, Co Wicklow.

Giving a ceád míle fáilte to our newest neighbours

Hundreds of older people are volunteering to welcome migrants and refugees to Ireland, writes Claire Dalton.

Fáilte Isteach began a decade ago with a handful of students and volunteer tutors. It now has 110 branches, with 3,200 students from over 50 countries receiving 72,000 hours of tuition during the academic year.

This dramatic expansion illustrates the need in today's Ireland and the organisation today finds itself working with a growing number of refugees. Fáilte Isteach is a community project welcoming migrants through

conversational English classes.

The project provides the necessary language skills in a student-centred and inclusive manner, while involving older volunteers as tutors, and recognising their skills, expertise and contribution to the community.

The work of Fáilte Isteach is featured prominently in a national report launched recently in Dublin by David Stanton TD, Minister of State for Equality,

Immigration and Integration.

Challenges faced by migrants

The Report on Language and Migration in Ireland is the result of collaborative research between NUI Galway and the Immigrant Council of Ireland funded by the Irish Research Council.

The report looked at the linguistic challenges that migrants face daily and the centrality of language to an individual's identity.

"The work of Fáilte Isteach

represented one of the few opportunities for migrants to have real interaction with Irish people and Irish accents," said Dr Anne O'Connor, NUIG, report author.

Fáilte Isteach is a national programme of Third Age, a not-for-profit organisation committed to social inclusion in 21st-century Ireland. All Third Age programmes provide a bridge of friendship, connection and contact for people, who may be isolated by age, language, technology or frailty.

The programme is funded by the Department of Justice and Equality and the Iris O'Brien Foundation.

Education and integration

"We are different in that we combine education with integration," explains Liam Carey, Programme Manager with Fáilte Isteach. "Our Irish volunteer tutors are drawn from the local community.

"As well as passing on conversation language skills, their aim is to welcome new migrants into their community. This helps break down any barriers and facilitates friendships and neighbourliness."

This point is echoed by Dr O'Connor. "A central recommendation of the report is the support of community initiatives such as Fáilte Isteach which allow for opportunities for linguistic exchanges which are valued greatly by migrants."

To find out more about Fáilte Isteach contact Third Age at 046 955 7766.

Volunteer: Migrants have so much to offer our country

Marie Bradley is a volunteer tutor with Fáilte Isteach in Dun Laoghaire, county Dublin. She uses books and teaching materials, and a lot of conversation!

"I might ask them about their family, their lives and so on," she said. "I would not correct them for the first few weeks, just let the language flow to build up their confidence.

"It is important that I speak simply and clearly. Every week I come with new words for them. If they don't understand, they look these up on their iPhone – the aim is to be building vocabulary week on week."

Greater opportunity

Some students are highly qualified but, in Ireland, they can struggle to find work in line with their qualifications.

Marie feels greater language proficiency will open doors to more opportunities, and has seen where improved language skills have done this. She loves her volunteer role.

"I've learnt to be patient and to go at their pace," she said. "Sometimes you feel you have explained something and then realise you need to go over it again. It is whatever helps them best to learn."

She would like the Government to recognise the value of English classes in helping migrant integration and improving their quality of life in Ireland.

"I also feel the migrants themselves should be much more valued. They have so much to offer our country, in terms of their experience, skills and attitudes. We can learn a lot from them."

Interested in setting up a Fáilte Isteach Group?

Follow our five-step guide

- Identify if there is a local need and contact us;
- Recruit eight to 10 volunteers;
- Find a suitable venue;
- Receive training from a Fáilte Isteach team;
- Advertise for students and begin classes.



▲ Choreographer Mary Nunan developing her commission 'the Movement', Bealtaine 2017

Photo: Eamon O' Mahony for Age and Opportunity.

Celebrate the arts and **creativity** in 2018!

We are gearing up for another inspirational Bealtaine festival this May celebrating the arts and creativity as we age, writes Anne Kearney.

The festival is produced by Age & Opportunity, whose mission is to turn the period from age 50 onwards into one of the most satisfying times in people's lives.

We are one of the largest festivals in the country, with close to 100,000 people taking part in almost every county during a typical Bealtaine and hundreds of partners representing the arts, culture, health, social and voluntary sectors.

For 23 years now, we have been creating and promoting access to challenging and provocative arts and creative experiences for all of us as we get older, as well as supporting and honouring the work of older artists.

We do this to ensure that no matter what age we are, we can continue giving meaning to our lives through the arts, but also to challenge stereotypes and negative perceptions of 'old', ageing and age.

Hospitality

Each year the festival celebrates a particular theme, and for the next three years we will celebrate Hospitality.

Through Hospitality we want to show the warm welcome offered by the festival, but also to mark more serious global migration issues through accepting the strange/r in our lives.

As part of our 2018 programme we will be showing exciting new projects including:

Everybody Sings – a theatre project exploring challenging social issues such as sexuality and intimacy in older age (for which we currently are seeking participants);

Let's Play – a dance project by Coiscéim celebrating the importance of play in our lives; and

Unexploded Ordnances – an intergenerational theatre work around ageing, unexplored desires and unexpressed tensions.

In the visual arts we will be showing a film exploring the memories and experiences of an active aged group in Dun Laoghaire and we have commissioned a film-poem from artist Anita Groener and poet Enda Wylie.

National visual arts institutions around the country will also be exhibiting the work of older artists and people during May, including a specially-curated exhibition at the High Lanes Gallery in Drogheda.

Top Irish authors

In literature, John Banville and Claire Kilroy will discuss their literary influences and legacy and the inspirational Jennifer Johnston is our Bealtaine 2018 Book Club author with her novel, *Naming the Stars*, the Bealtaine Book for 2018.

The Dawn Chorus (outdoor choral event) has been part of Bealtaine for over a decade and once again groups around the country will gather to celebrate their creativity through song.

Any group can organise their own Dawn Chorus event. If you love to sing why not find a Dawn Chorus in your area or start your own with our helpful guide (*see right*).

Finally, don't miss our first Bealtaine @ Temple Bar event consisting of three packed days of family-friendly events, our annual Dawn Chorus and our series of discussions and debates exploring the arts, older people, collaboration and community design.

So go on and join in and make this May your best ever by meeting new people and having fun with like-minded people at Bealtaine! Find your nearest event by visiting www.bealtaine.ie.



▲ Forever Young Choir, Bealtaine 2017.

▼ Macushla Dance Club at Bealtaine 2017.

Photos: Sasko Lazarov for Age and Opportunity.



Why celebrate the arts and creativity in older age?

- To address inequality by giving new opportunities to those of us who might not have had the chance to explore art and our own creativity;
- To demonstrate that our creative potential can improve as we age;
- To demonstrate that the individual spirit is as strong in someone of 80 as in someone of 30;
- To address the under-representation of older people in public life;
- To ensure arts experiences are accessible and comfortable for older audiences and participants;
- To honour and mark the incredible contribution of older artists with significant careers;
- To support artists as they age.



▲ Delighted bargain-hunters visiting our Galway store.

Photo: Lydon Images

We **need** your clothes!

Also, your books, shoes, handbags, furniture and unwanted gifts to meet the soaring demand in Age Action's charity stores.

In less than 18 months Age Action has doubled its number of stores from three to six with new outlets opening in Galway, Ballincollig and Terenure.

And now we're expanding again with a new facility in Cherry Orchard in Dublin that will serve as a headquarters for our stock collection service and a furniture showroom.

More stores means more funds for Age Action's services to support older people but it also means a lot more demand for items to sell in our stores.

"We always need donations for our stores," explains Head of Re-

tail Gail Kennedy, "and with our new stores proving so popular the demand has absolutely gone through the roof.

"More and more people are discovering that our stores are the place to go for great bargains on quality vintage and secondhand goods.

"That means more money to support services like Care & Repair and our campaigns for quality homecare and a decent State Pension.

"But it also means we need more clothes, books, small items of furniture and other gift items to meet the demand."

Keen for bargains

Charity stores often see an increase in customers in January and February as people are keen for a bargain after Christmas.

"Lots of people are coming in with gifts they might have got over Christmas that they're looking to donate," said Gail.

"Maybe someone bought you a book or a top that you already own or a dress or a pair of shoes that don't fit you.

"Dropping these into our stores is a way of celebrating the generosity of the person who gave you the gift in the first place by ensuring that their presents are raising money for a great cause.

"And if you've made a New Year's resolution to help out your favourite charity, then this is a great way to get started!"

You can drop donations into any of our stores or contact our stock collection service on 01 475 6989. Find out more at www.ageaction.ie/charityshops.

New policy officers join Age Action

Age Action's Advocacy & Communications team is back to full strength after two new appointments. Corona Joyce has joined us from the Irish Red Cross and from the ESRI where she was a senior policy officer for many years.

Corona will head up the development of Age Action's policy and research programme ensuring that it is shaped by the lived experience of older people and the views of our members.

Our new health policy officer is Audry Deane who has extensive experience working as a policy researcher. She previously worked as a policy analyst for St Vincent de Paul and for the National Women's Council of Ireland.

We'd like to wish the very best to their predecessors Naomi Feely and Dr Marita O'Brien.



▲ Age Action's new policy team of Corona Joyce and Audry Deane.

U3Agroups

📍 Active Virginians U3A

Patricia at (087) 235-0515

📍 An Cosán U3A Tallaght

Imelda at (01) 462-8488

📍 Ballymun U3A

Peter at (087) 292-4001

📍 Ballyroan U3A

June at (01) 494-7030

📍 Blackrock U3A

Eileen at (087) 418-8607

📍 Blessington U3A

Peter at (087) 815-1018

📍 Bray U3A

Linda at (086) 045-1600

📍 Carrick-on-Shannon U3A

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Anne at Annegallagher60@yahoo.ie

📍 Dublin City U3A

John at (01) 201-7490

📍 Dun Laoghaire, Dalkey, Killiney U3A

Email dldk@gmail.com

📍 Maynooth U3A

Helena at (01) 628-5128.

📍 Lucan U3A

Mary at lucanu3a@gmail.com.

📍 Monaghan U3A

Eamonn at (087) 918-6567

📍 Newcastle, Dublin 22 U3A, Retired Active Men's Social

Matt at (01) 458-9007

📍 Roscommon U3A

Sam at (01) 475-6989

📍 Rusheen Woods, Galway, U3A

Angela at rusheenwoodsu3a@gmail.com

📍 Sligo U3A

Kathleen at katemf@eircom.net

📍 Sutton-Baldoyle U3A

Christine at (01) 832-3697

📍 Tramore U3A

Mollie at molliehunt@eircom.net

📍 Waterford U3A

Josephine at (051) 871-037

For more information, email Sam O'Brien-Olinger, U3A Development Officer, at u3a@ageaction.ie or phone (01) 475-6989.

Still seeking Silver Surfers

There are only a few weeks left before nominations close for the open eir Silver Surfers 2018 on Wednesday 21 February.

Maybe you have a friend uploading his own videos to YouTube? Or a sister keeping in touch with her family through Skype? Is your cousin using the internet to download his favourite music or is your Dad sharing pictures from his holiday on Instagram and Facebook?

Help Age Action and open eir to celebrate everything older people are doing and achieving online by nominating the Silver Surfer in your life but hurry – there’s not much time!

Make nominations at www.ageaction.ie/silversurfer or call us on 01 475 6989.



▲ Brendan Courtney, who will present this year’s Silver Surfer Awards, with former winner Betty Smith.

Annual membership application

I wish to join Age Action and enclose € membership fee, plus €..... voluntary donation payable to Age Action Ireland Ltd.

If you are already an existing Age Action member and wish to renew your membership, please write your membership number here

Full name:
(Block capitals please)

Address:.....
.....

Tel:

Email:
(Block capitals please)

Date:

FEES

- €20 Individual – retired/unwaged
- €40 Individual – employed
- €60 Voluntary Body
- €200 Statutory Agency
- €500 Commercial

STANDING ORDER

To the Manager
(Name of Bank/Building Society)

Bank Address:

Please pay annually to Age Action Ireland,
Permanent TSB, 70 Grafton Street, Dublin 2,
BIC: IPBSIE2D

IBAN: IE82 IPBS 9906 2587 7790 21

the following amount €.....
until further notice. Starting on: 1st day of
January 20

Name:
(Block capitals please)

BIC:

IBAN:.....

Signature:.....

Please return to:

Membership Development,
Age Action Ireland Ltd,
30/31 Lower Camden Street, Dublin 2.
Email: membership@ageaction.ie
Tel: (01) 475 6989
Fax: (01) 475 6011