

# AgeingMatters

in Ireland

## Adventures in ageing

### Positive Ageing Week

Top tips for positive ageing 10-11

### Better budget

Still time to shape Budget 2017 4-5

### Pat the cyclist

From Dingle to the  
Shetlands 8-9

AgeAction

For all older people



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■ Cover photo: Celebrity hotelier Francis Brennan with Age Action supporters at the launch of this year's Positive Ageing Week.  
Photo: Naoise Culhane.

# Opinion

## Enabling everyone to age positively



Eamon Timmins

A few years ago I spoke at the launch of Positive Ageing Week and talked about the importance of ageing positively. I stressed the fact that the “third age” of our lives should be a period for great fulfilment and achievement.

I was having a cup of tea afterwards when I was approached by an older gentleman. “That was an interesting speech you made,” he opened. “But if old age is so great, how come Age Action spends the other 51 weeks of the year highlighting all the problems of ageing?”

I remembered his comments in recent weeks when Positive Ageing Week 2016 coincided with Age Action’s advocacy work in the run in to this year’s Budget.

Is it contradictory to highlight the positive aspects of ageing when many older people are struggling to get by? How can Age Action talk about older people learning new skills, achieving their goals and fulfilling their dreams, when other older people will be forced to choose between food, fuel and medication this winter?

### Ageing and campaigning

The reality is that our work to highlight positive ageing and to enable more older people to age positively is intrinsically linked with campaigning to improve policies and services for older people, and make Ireland an age-friendly society. The two go hand in hand.

A decent pension and reversing the cuts to payments made in recent years, along with increased investment in community-based care, are among the key demands in our pre-budget submission, outlined on page four.

If older people are to enjoy the benefits of positive ageing, as well as contribute fully to society, then the supports we are campaigning for must be delivered. People need an adequate income. They need a health service designed to meet the needs of our ageing population.

The Government must also begin implementing the National Positive Ageing Strategy if the full potential of our ageing population is to be achieved.

Transport, energy, employment for older workers and housing are just some of the issues addressed by the strategy, which impact directly on people’s ability to age positively.

It’s in everyone’s interest that Ireland addresses the needs of its ageing population and enables all of us to age positively.

You can play your part by contacting your local TD ahead of this month’s Budget. You will not only be acting for the current generation of older people, but on behalf of everyone who hopes to grow old in Ireland.

**Eamon Timmins**





◀ Many older people cannot afford rising car insurance premiums.

## Car insurance costs out of control

Frank, a 70-year-old Age Action supporter from Dundalk, recently faced a 68 per cent increase in his car insurance premium despite never having had an accident or making a claim.

His was one of a number of cases highlighted by Age Action to the Oireachtas Finance Committee last month as it investigated rising car insurance premiums.

“Over the last few months we have had members and older people contacting us who are facing astonishing increases in their car insurance premiums,” Justin Moran of Age Action told committee members.

“Contrary to the stereotype older drivers are safer drivers. They are less likely to speed, to drink and drive or to take drugs. They also tend not to drive when they don’t feel comfortable, such as at night or in wet weather.”

One of the members who contacted us, Carmel Kavanagh, felt so strongly about the issue that she spoke powerfully about the experience of drivers like her on RTE’s Claire Byrne Show shortly after the committee hearing.

Statistics from the CSO indicate that drivers over the age of 60 make up 22 per cent of licence holders but received less than 10 per cent of the

penalty points issued in 2013.

And at the start of September a report from Swansea University in Britain found that drivers aged 70 are involved in 3-4 times fewer accidents than 17-21 year old men.

### False belief

Professor Des O’Neill, the National Programme Director for Traffic Medicine with the Road Safety Authority, called the belief that older drivers are more dangerous a “tenacious and fixed false belief” that is not supported by the evidence.

“Some of the premiums quoted to our members come to twice the weekly pension and many older drivers are struggling to keep their cars on the road,” Justin continued.

“In large parts of Ireland, particularly outside the main urban centres, public transport is simply unavailable. For many older drivers it is an absolute necessity and may mean the difference between living in the community or being forced into residential care.”

# Pension and home care top budget priorities

As we go to print Age Action members are contacting their local TDs, senators and Ministers making clear that they expect the Government to deliver for older people in the budget.



▲ Older people have been hit hard by energy prices.

Glór groups in Cork, Galway and Dublin have met or spoken to their local representatives to add to the pressure on the Ministers for Finance and for Public Expenditure to deliver on their commitments.

Over the course of the summer Age Action’s policy team has written to almost every government department and Minister to highlight the need for increased investment in a range of supports and programmes relevant to older people.

The team has also met with top officials from the Department of Finance, the Department of Social Protection and the

Department of Health.

“Our priorities are driven by our members,” explained Senior Policy Officer Naomi Feely. “From the start of the year we have surveyed Age Action supporters and organised budget meetings to ensure that the Government can be in no doubt just what older people need.”

### Need for action

At meetings with civil servants, Age Action has repeatedly emphasised the need for action on the State Pension and home care.

Between January 2009 and January 2015 the weekly in-

comes of older people dependent on the State Pension and secondary income supports (Household Benefits Package and the Fuel Allowance) fell by €13.18 per week.

While older people saw a very modest improvement in their income this year when the €3 increase in the State Pension came into effect, almost half of the income lost by pensioners between 2009 and 2015 has still not been restored.

Earlier this year Fine Gael were re-elected on a manifesto promise that they would increase the weekly rate of the State Pension by €25 during the lifetime of this government – or €5 per week in each budget over the course of five years.

### Our top priorities

- Increase the weekly State Pension by €5.
- Restore the Fuel Allowance and the Telephone Allowance.
- €74 million to provide an extra 4.1 million home help hours.
- Abolish prescription charges for medical card holders.





▲ Age Action members expect the Government to live up to its promises.

## Home care

The need for investment in home care and community supports to assist older people to stay at home longer is another priority for our members.

In 2016, 47,800 people aged over 65 received home help. This is more than fourteen thousand fewer than the HSE estimates need home care.

While Age Action is calling for substantial investment in home help hours this has enormous potential to free up hospital beds and save money. Research in Britain shows that for every £1 spent on these kinds of supports £1.20 has been saved.

“The budget is the Government’s opportunity to make clear to almost 600,000 people over the age of 65 that the promises made to them will be honoured,” warned Age Action’s Justin Moran.

## You can make the difference

**We will only get what we deserve if we are strong enough. There is still time to act.**

**Pick up the phone, ring 01 618 3000 and ask to talk to your local TD.**

## Property tax pain

Age Action met with officials from the Department of Finance at the start of September to warn them of the impact of the property tax on pensioners.

“Almost 90 per cent of older people own their own home,” Age Action’s Justin Moran explained, “but they rely on the State Pension. They’re especially vulnerable to the property tax.”

While not opposed to the principle of a property tax, Age Action believes that it needs to take into account the incomes of the people paying it, particularly those who are ‘asset rich, but cash poor’.

The organisation is calling on the Minister for Finance to abolish the property tax for those with incomes of less than €13,500.



# Alzheimer’s Society launches dementia mobile service

The Alzheimer’s Society has launched a new mobile information service that will be travelling around Ireland to provide advice and information to families affected by dementia.

Trained staff will be on site to provide help to almost 50,000 people living with dementia.

The new service is possible thanks to the support of the Peggy Mangan Foundation, which was set up by Peggy’s family in memory of the 67-year-old mother of three.

Three years ago last month Peggy, who had dementia, and her dog Casper went for a walk and never came home.

For four days friends and family searched for her across Dublin but sadly, when Peggy was found, she had already passed away. Casper, who stayed by her side until the end, died hours later.

## Peggy Mangan Foundation

After this terrible tragedy the family set up the Peggy Mangan Foundation with the aim of raising enough funds to get a mobile information service up and running that would provide advice and support to people living with dementia and their families.

Minister for Mental Health and Older People Helen McEntee TD was at the launch.

“Projects such as the Dementia Information Bus will go a long way towards bringing this information into the wider community,” she said.

“We are so incredibly happy to be able to fund the mobile outreach service,” said Louise Mangan of the Peggy Mangan Foundation.

“We’ve been able to do this because of the dedication and support that we’ve received from the community and their generous donations.”

If you would like more information on the mobile information service coming to your area, please contact the ASI national helpline on 1800 341 341.



▲ Louise Hollywood and Orla Lynch from the Peggy Mangan Foundation, Minister for Mental Health & Older People Helen McEntee TD and ASI Interim CEO Miriam Enright.

## Sharp fall in housing grants

The number of Housing Adaptation Grants has fallen by almost 50 per cent since 2010 according to new figures revealed in the *Irish Times*.

The grant scheme includes housing aid for older people and is generally provided to fund alterations to the house to enable people to stay home longer.

The number of grants handed out to older or disabled people has fallen to 7,596 from 13,588 in 2010. Funding has likewise fallen almost by half although there has been some improvement in recent years.

The figures were released in response to a parliamentary question from Fianna Fáil.

“In our pre-budget submission we’re looking for an additional €16 million for housing aid for older people,” said Age Action’s Justin Moran. “Supports like these, that enable people to stay home longer, are vital to ensuring older people can age with dignity and independence.”

# Older people need **more** protection – UN expert

The UN Independent Expert on older people and human rights, Ms Rosa Kornfeld-Matte, has published a report which campaigners hope will energise the fight for a new international human rights treaty specifically for older people, writes **Lianne Murphy**.

Regular *Ageing Matters* readers will know that discussion has been ongoing at the UN level for a number of years on whether a new treaty is necessary with some countries arguing that older people have enough protection.

However, Ms Kornfeld-Matte's report concludes that the current international policy document on older people, the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, falls far short of what older people need.

She goes on to call on all UN member states, including Ireland, to consider a new treaty on the rights of older people.

Age Action strongly supports this position and believes that a convention would help older people here in Ireland and around the world.

It would bring clarity to the nature of older persons' rights and



▲ The UN building in Geneva.

also provide a way to deal with challenging issues that primarily affect older people such as elder abuse, long-term care and pensions.

## **Older people failed**

The current international human rights system has failed to do this and older people are almost never mentioned in existing human rights law. Like so many other areas, older people are invisible.

Age Action has written to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Charlie Flanagan TD asking the Government to support the growing call for a new treaty

at the next UN Human Rights Council where Ms Kornfeld-Matte's report will be discussed.

To date, the Irish Government has been reluctant to support a new treaty. However, we hope that the independent expert's report and support from TDs and senators backing the campaign will encourage Ireland to act to effectively protect the rights of older women and men.

**You can help! Write to Minister Charlie Flanagan TD, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 80 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2 and tell him to support a new human rights treaty for older people.**



◀ Pat Smith with Age Action's Sam O'Brien-Olinger in Dublin.

# Lifelong learning and the odd puncture

**Pat Smith pedalled all the way from the Shetland Islands to the Dingle peninsula. She spoke to Sam O'Brien Olinger about why she cycled 8,000 miles in just eight months.**

When asked why she took on this very public, yet deeply personal, journey she said that one day she wondered, "as a grandmother in her mid-sixties, what am I able to do at my age?"

Then she asked herself, "wait a minute, what's age got to do with it?" As she set about planning her trip she had a new question: "Why not?!"

But Pat does not want to be famous for being 'old' and being

'able' to complete such a challenge.

She is against labelling people by their date of birth. She is on another kind of journey, the Elderflower Project; capturing the wisdom we have to offer one another but which will never be written down in a book, recorded for television or broadcast over the radio.

Simply put, Pat gathers 'tales of wisdom and insight' from older people as she meets them on her travels be they farmers met along the side of an overgrown back road or B&B owners when she takes a well-earned stop overnight. Then she blogs about her experiences.

"Age is no guarantee of anything (good or bad!)," she told

me. "I think we should all try to see the person not the label, not only their age.

## Ripples

"My advice to anyone thinking of taking on any kind of a challenge is just to drop your stone in the pond and see where the ripples go."

Pat poses a bigger question to all of us – with the increasing pace of daily life and constant blasting of information – how often do we take time to reflect on life's lessons and share them with each other?

On certain occasions, perhaps at a funeral or a birthday party, we may get a rare opportunity to pass on our life experience to someone close, a younger



member of the family perhaps. The Elderflower Project is about encouraging us all to capture, learn and share some wisdom. So she describes being on a spiritual journey too.

### Take life on

When asked what she would say to others who may be thinking of taking on a new challenge, she talked about her experience of being in her “third age” and of choosing to “take life on” but doing so on her own terms; enjoying the highs while also accepting and learning from the lows.

She also specifically highlighted the contributions made by carers. She described situations where ordinary people face far greater challenges than she has on her travels.

“Every day presents a new and different challenge...but carers face a daily struggle which can become an endless routine,” said Pat. “They have no choice.”

And that is a situation, she humbly remarked, that is one of the biggest tests anyone could ever have to endure and overcome. Pushing her bike uphill in the cold, wind and rain doesn’t come close to the kind of bravery which carers show to the world every day, every month and every year.

Pat spoke very highly of the warm welcome she received in Ireland, especially from members of U3A groups she met along her route. She said that the whole world, and all age groups, would benefit greatly from more



▲ Pat’s all set for the next stage of the trip.

lifelong learning and increased awareness about positive ageing.

So, however many candles are on your next birthday cake, why not take a moment to share some wisdom with someone and in your own way make a contribution to Pat’s Elderflower Project?

For more information about Pat and the Elderflower Project visit her blog at <http://patsmith-writes.co.uk/category/the-elderflower-project>.

For more information about Life-long Learning and U3A groups, email Sam at [u3a@ageaction.ie](mailto:u3a@ageaction.ie).



▲ Celebrity hotelier Francis Brennan with Age Action supporters at the launch of this year's Positive Ageing Week.

Photo: Naoise Culhane.

# Ten tips for **positive** ageing

To celebrate Positive Ageing Week, supported this year by Bank of Ireland, we have some top tips to help you make the most of the opportunities out there for us in later life.

**1. Plan ahead:** Maybe the most important tip is to plan ahead. Think about how you'll ensure you have a sufficient income in retirement. Where are you going to live? Would you like to downsize or is there somewhere you hoped to retire to? It's smart to think this through in advance.

**2. Take up a hobby:** This can be a great way



to meet people as well as to try something new. You could take up something active, like sports or dancing, or something a little more sedate like painting or fishing. There are lots out there to choose from and you're only restricted by your imagination!

**3. Get healthy:** As we get older, it's more and more important to take care of your health. Try and ensure you get a regular check-up. Enjoy a



balanced diet, don't smoke and drink alcohol in moderation. The healthier you are, the more you're going to get out of life.

**4. Volunteer:** Whether it's your local community group, sports club or charity, there are some amazing organisations out there, including Age Action, that are always looking for people to lend a hand and it can be a hugely rewarding experience.

**5. Exercise:** Stay physically active. At the very least, aim for a brisk walk for 30 minutes every day but don't be afraid to be ambitious. Take up an exercise class or even join a gym. Some people are running marathons into their 80s and while that's not for everyone, it shows age is no barrier.

**6. Learn something new:** None of us ever really stop learning and later life can be a great time to focus on something that really interests you. There are lots of lifelong learning groups around the country with people learning new languages or new skills and having a great time doing it.

**7. Travel:** Later life can be a terrific opportunity to take that trip you've always dreamed about.

There are travel and adventure companies that specialise in organising holidays that cater to older customers that are well worth checking out.

**8. Get online:** Only 37 per cent of Irish people between 65 and 74 use the internet, way below our British neighbours at 70 per cent. We're really missing out! Ask a friend or family member to help or sign up to an Age Action Getting Started course. The first step is the hardest and after that there's a whole world to explore.

**9. Dating:** It's never too late to meet that special someone! Why should romance be left to young people? We're living longer, more active lives, and it can be even better with a special person to share it with. A number of agencies, on and off line, offer services or you can try the tried and trusted way of asking out someone you like!

**10. Positive attitude:** Any successful athlete or businessperson will tell you of the importance of thinking positively and it's no different with ageing. Don't let yourself be held back. Don't let anyone tell you that you're 'too old' for something.



▲ Celebrating Positive Ageing Week last year in Kinsale.

Dear Age Action,

My house is very cold. I don't have central heating and my windows are single glazed. Are there any grants available to help me get work done on my house?

Denise, Leitrim.

## Help to keep your home **warm**

Firstly, there is a grant available from local authorities called Housing Aid for Older People. It is a means-tested scheme aimed at people aged 66 and over.

The type of work carried out under the scheme differs between local authorities as does the waiting period. You should apply for the scheme as early in the year as possible as many local authorities run out of funding as early as May although some councils keep a small emergency fund for extreme cases.

If you are earning over €60,000 you will not get a grant but if you earn below €30,000 you may get 95 per cent of the cost up to a maximum of €8,000 and there is a sliding scale available based on your income.

### Mobility problems

If you have disability or mobility problems, two other grants are available from local authorities, the Mobility Aids Grant and the Home Adaptation Grant. You can get information on these schemes



▲ Our Care & Repair team can help with small jobs to keep you warm.

from our Information Service.

The other main source of assistance is from the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) who, through the Warmer Home Schemes, will insulate homes (including attics), and put lagging jackets on boilers among other measures. This is a free scheme to people who are in receipt of the winter fuel allowance.

If you are not in receipt of the winter fuel allowance you should contact the SEAI and ask about their Better Energy Home Scheme. You can contact the SEAI at [www.seai.ie](http://www.seai.ie) or

1850 376 666.

If you are paying income tax you may qualify for the Home Renovation Incentive which offers a 13.5 per cent tax credit on work carried out on your home. This scheme will close on 31 December and there is more information at [www.revenue.ie/en/tax/it/reliefs/hri](http://www.revenue.ie/en/tax/it/reliefs/hri).

**Please contact our information team on this, or any other issue, at 01 475 6989 or [helpline@ageaction.ie](mailto:helpline@ageaction.ie). The line is open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm, and closed for lunch.**





▲ Eileen Adams with former Lord Mayor Criona Ní Dhálaigh and Councillor Mary Freehill

Photo: Dublin City Council.

## Celebrating Dublin's finest

**This year's winner of the Dublin City Good Citizen Awards was Age Action member, Eileen Adams, who won in the Community & Neighbourhood category.**

I've lived in Ballymun around 40 odd years. I do a lot of voluntary work in the community, and have done since I came here. I've been on the board of the Poppintree Youth Centre since we set it up 20 years ago. It's all about prevention; we don't want the kiddies to get into trouble. We have a lovely centre, our own little space, and we cater for over 100 children.

I'm also involved in Work4u, which is for people with disabilities. I've been with them a long time and feel it's very important. It's bad enough when you're able to fight for yourself for a job, but when you have a disability you need whatever help you can.

I also was involved in the setting up of the Ballymun Job Centre. I was on the board there for 16 years, and that was fabulous, because it got jobs for people in the area.

### Cancer

I've done a couple of women's mini marathons for

cancer. When I say the marathon, we don't run, we walk! Twenty-five years ago I got breast cancer, and I got the works, the chemo and radiotherapy, all my hair fell out...but here I am today.

I have two boys, men, I should say, eight grandchildren, and one great-grandson, Mason. He's two years old, and he's fantastic.

I'm also involved in Age Action. We fight for our rights and that's very important. They think we're all little old people with zimmer frames, and we're not. The majority of us are able to get out there and be independent.

I'm kind of a busy bee, part of a team. We don't draw attention to ourselves, we just get on with it. Why do I do it? Because I love it (laughs). I just love helping people. The results are amazing. You don't think anything will come of it, but in the end it all works out.

This piece originally featured on Dublin.ie which profiled the winners of the Good Citizen Awards 2016.

# Schools and businesses drive

**Volunteers from local schools and businesses in Cork have helped expand the local Getting Started programme, giving lots more older people the opportunity to master new technologies, writes Julie Oates.**

Every year Age Action provides computer training to more than 3,000 older people across the country and we are always looking for ways to expand.

Getting secondary schools involved, particularly at Transition Year level, has benefits beyond simply recruiting more tutors. The classes are great opportunities for really positive intergenerational exchanges between older learners and younger tutors.

They help build confidence among the students, show them how they can make a difference in their communities and encourage them to learn from the older person's experiences.

## Youthreach

This year, Youthreach Bandon invited Age Action to run a Getting Started class. Youthreach is a second chance education and training programme run by the Department of Education and Skills for early school leavers.

The young people shared their skills with the older learners along with their tea and toast! As the weeks went on, the tutors learned to trust their ability to teach, while the learners grew more excited about the opportunities ahead of them as they mastered new technologies.

It was very moving to hear Vanda, the tutors' representative, thanking the learners for trusting them and for not doubting them.

## Local industry

Working with local businesses and industry also has mutual benefits for the learners and tutors. For the companies, often in Cork's growing high-



▲ Volunteer tutors from Gaelcholáiste Mhuire, Cork, receive their certificates with IT Tutor Ciara Ní Mhaolagáin.

tech sector, it's an opportunity to reach out to local people and showcase their work in the community in which many of their employees are based.

Age Action is extremely grateful to the volunteers of VMware, EMC, Eli Lilly, Apple and Qualcomm for encouraging their staff to volunteer with the Getting Started programme.

Many of these corporate partners are world leaders in their fields and generously allow the classes to be run on their state of the art premises.

The benefit to Age Action from both the schools and the corporate programmes is that it has enabled us to find new volunteers interested in giving their time to provide mentoring and one-to-one training to additional older people.

**If you know a school or business that might be interested in getting involved in the Getting Started programme, why not let us know at 01 475 6989 or email [gettingstarted@ageaction.ie](mailto:gettingstarted@ageaction.ie).**



# Getting Started in Cork



▲ ABOVE: Learners and their young tutors at Bandon Youthreach.

▶ RIGHT: Graduation day at EMC's facility in Cork with Vice President of EMC Ireland, Bob Savage (bottom right).



◀ LEFT: Volunteer leader Kevin Lydon and other tutors from Eli Lilly enjoying their "high tea" break with their learners in Dunderrow National School, near Kinsale. Certificates were presented by the author, Alice Taylor, and thanks to the principal, Mary Cottrell, for hosting everyone.



▲ Ombudsman Peter Tyndall.

# Older people **must** be allowed live at home

**In June, I was glad to launch the research report *Meeting Older People's Preference for Care: Policy, but what about practice?* which was published by Age Action along with the IASW, the Alzheimer Society and UCD, writes Ombudsman Peter Tyndall.**

The report highlighted the manner in which so many older people are directed towards nursing homes, when they would

prefer to remain in their own homes with appropriate support if necessary.

I have no doubt that many

nursing homes are working to provide a good quality environment with opportunities for social engagement and recreation. Equally, for some older people, a group setting may well be a preferred option.

However, if the funding system is designed to discriminate in favour of residential provision, and there is insufficient support



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**For my office, this is a human rights issue. Everyone has a right to a home and to family life. As a society, underpinning these rights with services and accommodation should be among our highest priorities.**

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available to enable people to remain at home, then many people will continue to be denied their right to choose.

Ireland has been slow to tackle the issue of institutional care settings, or congregated settings as they are often referred to. In many other countries, services for groups of people who require support to live and participate in their communities have been provided to individuals and this allowed institutions to be closed.

### **Active and engaged**

The default assumption is that people should be able to live in ordinary accommodation and live their lives as active and engaged members of their communities.

I have personally known people who are suffering from progressive illnesses who have been able to remain in their own homes after they have had to use wheelchairs, be fed with a Peg and use a ventilator. Because of the support they received, they have been able to retain friendships and remain at the heart of their family life and community.

There is no technical difficulty

to supporting older people in their own homes if that is where they want to live. We just need the will as a society to do so. We need to have funding mechanisms which default to supporting people at home and not placing them into nursing homes if this is their preference.

The packages we put in place need to be designed to provide a decent quality of life, not a bare minimum. We need to be quick to adapt housing if people are less mobile, and in any event, ensuring that all new build housing can be readily adapted to wheelchair access.

### **Human rights**

For my office, this is a human rights issue. Everyone has a right to a home and to family life. As a society, underpinning these rights with services and accommodation should be among our highest priorities. We are keen to look at any complaints from individuals themselves, their families or advocates where these rights are not being upheld.

Resolving the issue of support for people in their own homes will have beneficial effects be-

yond those experienced by the individual themselves. Many older people are forced to remain in hospital for far longer than is necessary. This is bad for them, as they are exposed to infection and can quickly become more dependent in the long term.

In addition, they suffer the loss of autonomy and often dignity which is hard to avoid in a hospital context. The beds they occupy can also be badly needed by others, and this has knock-on consequences both for routine treatment and for emergency departments.

I don't want to make the case on economic grounds, although it is there to be made. Rather, I believe older people should be able to receive the support they need to live valued lives within their own communities because that is their right, and the appropriate response of a decent society.

It's time our services and funding mechanisms were re-focused, to show that we in Ireland value the older members of our communities and ensure that they can continue to enjoy their homes for as long as they choose.



▲ Hollywood legend Meryl Streep, seen here with co-star Amy Adams, is one of the few prominent older actresses.

# Hollywood **ignores** older people

**New research suggests older people are significantly underrepresented in movies and often are the butt of ageist jokes.**

The study was carried out by the Media, Diversity and Social Change Initiative at the University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism.

It found just 11 per cent of some 4,066 speaking characters in the 100 top US films of 2015 were 60 or older. Only 10 leading roles were held by actors 60 or older at the time of the film's release.

The figures are even worse for women. Of the few older characters featured in movies, only 27 per cent were played by women actresses and only three – Meryl Streep, Helen Mirren and Lin Shaye – had lead roles.

Even where films portrayed older characters, this wasn't always good news, with most of them containing ageist language or stereotypes about older people. Characters were called things like, "a relic," "a frail old woman" or "a senile old man".

## Competition Time: Name your favourite film

Not every film portrays older people badly and we at Age Action want to celebrate that!

We're inviting you to write to us and suggest your favourite film that shows older people as the capable, active, passionate and funny people we know we are!

It can be any kind of film – romance, action, comedy or horror, Irish made or direct from Hollywood, and it can be from any era.

To enter, simply send your name, address, the name of the film you picked and why to *Ageing Matters*, Age Action, 31 Lower Camden Street, Dublin 2. Or you can email us at [info@ageaction.ie](mailto:info@ageaction.ie). The winning entry will be revealed in the next edition of the magazine and will receive an All4One gift voucher.

**Closing date for entries is Friday 4 November.**



# Sad passing of dedicated Galway volunteer

Age Action West was deeply saddened to learn of the sudden passing of Patricia Knight, one of our most dedicated volunteers.

Patricia worked as a volunteer with Age Action since 2009. She was a tutor with our Getting Started programme and worked with Care & Repair as a home visit technician for people who had problems with their computers and could not come in to the office.

Patricia was also a devoted animal lover. She volunteered

with Galway Cat Rescue, running the mini-marathon to raise funds, and at the time of her passing was looking after nine rescue cats.

She did all this while also working as a full-time carer for her mother, May.

Patricia was loved by the learners she worked with who will miss her friendly and patient manner. She will be sadly missed by her mother and brothers, nephews, nieces and extended family and friends.



## U3A groups

### 📍 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

Margaret at (086) 837-2934

### 📍 Club 50, Donegal U3A

Anne at Annegallagher60@yahoo.ie

### 📍 Dublin City U3A

John at (01) 201-7490

### 📍 Dun Laoghaire, Dalkey, Killiney U3A

Dónal at donal.denham@gmail.com.

### 📍 Galway U3A

Livio Rocca at u3agalway@gmail.com.

### 📍 Maynooth U3A

Helena at (01) 628-5128.

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

### 📍 Lucan U3A

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### 📍 Monaghan U3A

Mary at (047) 75942

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

Matt at (01) 458-9007

### 📍 Roscommon U3A

Vivienne at (087) 126-7639

### 📍 Rusheen Woods, Galway, U3A

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### 📍 Sutton-Baldoyle U3A

Christine at (01) 832-3697

### 📍 Tramore U3A

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### 📍 Waterford U3A

Josephine at (051) 871-037

# Wedding dress bargain for brides

Our Camden Street store is currently selling almost a hundred wedding dresses after one of the most generous donations our charity shop team has ever received.

“These are all designer dresses kindly donated by De Stafford Bridal in Dublin,” said Retail Manager Gail Kennedy.

“Normally, these would sell for between €1,500 and €3,000 but we’re open to any fair offer. There’s an amazing mix of styles and sizes suitable for every bride.”

A number of dresses have already been sold so time is running out for this bargain, and for fashion conscious brides!



To make an appointment for a viewing call Age Action on 01 475 6989.

## 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