

An Garda Síochána **National Older Persons Plan**

2023 -2025



Garda National Community
Engagement Bureau

Garda Assistant Commissioner's Foreword

As Assistant Commissioner for Roads Policing and Community Engagement in An Garda Síochána, I am delighted to present An Garda Síochána's National Older Persons Plan for 2023-2026.

In developing this plan, An Garda Síochána has taken account of the views of key external stakeholders, including other policing organisations, community groups, and advocacy groups. It has also taken into consideration the recommendations made to the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland concerning older persons.

Census figures from 2016 illustrate that the number of persons aged over 65 saw the largest increase of population since 2011. This age group has increased since 2011 by 19.1 per cent (to 637,567) and represents 15.1% per cent of the total population. By 2026 there will be 1.15 million people in Ireland aged 60 or over, representing almost one out of every four persons.

I see and hear first-hand the positive results of the collaboration between An Garda Síochána and its stakeholders who all work together to support older persons in communities particularly those who are the most vulnerable members within our society. This was very evident through the COVID19 pandemic.

A strong partnership already exists between An Garda Síochána and Age Friendly Ireland which provides a platform for older persons and community stakeholders to address key challenges and new and emerging issues for older persons. The key aim for An Garda Síochána is to ensure the policing needs of older persons in Ireland are met to the highest standard possible. All Garda Divisions take their lead from the actions and commitments made in their local Age Friendly County strategies and accordingly, the National Older Persons Plan will align with, and reflect the format of Age Friendly Ireland.

This will ensure that a Garda response to older persons needs will provide a consistent national structure to the policing needs of older persons, provide a more co-ordinated and efficient Garda service to older persons, and encourage the capturing and sharing of good practices in keeping older persons safe and reducing the fear of crime.



Paula Hilman

Assistant Commissioner
Roads Policing and Community Engagement

Local Age Friendly strategies apply the eight themes based on the World Health Organisation's recommended structure of Age Friendly Cities & Counties. However, best practice experienced by An Garda Síochána has seen the need for an additional theme of 'Safety and Security' for older persons to be included so clear goals and actions can be set for An Garda Síochána both nationally, and at Garda Divisional level. This will be reflected in this plan through the following four objectives:



Reduce the fear of crime and crimes against older persons.



Increase Garda engagement and accessibility with older persons.



Support Community & Road Safety initiatives that assist older persons.



Utilise community partnerships and consultation to respond to the ongoing needs and expectations of older persons.

I want to reassure you that we in An Garda Síochána are committed to helping others and work in partnership to ensure the appropriate support and services are provided to older persons in Ireland.

Assistant Commissioner Paula Hilman

An Garda Síochána - Commitment to Older Persons

An Garda Síochána is committed to meeting the policing needs of older persons in Ireland. To deliver on this commitment, An Garda Síochána's National Older Persons Plan is inextricably linked to the Garda Community Policing Framework, the Garda Diversity Strategy, the Crime Prevention and Reduction Strategy 2021 – 2024 and Ireland's Government Road Safety Strategy 2021 - 2030.

Mission

The mission of An Garda Síochána is "Ag Coinneáil Daoine Sábháilte - Keeping People Safe"

Code of Ethics

Compliance with the principles of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), the nine ethical standards and commitments set out in An Garda Síochána's Code of Ethics, guide the community policing ethos within An Garda Síochána.

Strategic Approach

The National Older Persons Plan will contribute directly to achieving the corporate objective of ensuring a peaceful community by working with communities and more specifically, older persons and those working with and for older persons. This plan will complement existing support structures and communication methods already in place.

Strategic Objectives

An Garda Síochána will determine and respond to, on an ongoing basis, the needs and expectations of older persons. This plan will be realised through the following four objectives:

1. Reduce the fear of crime and crimes against older persons.
2. Increase Garda engagement and accessibility with older persons.
3. Support Community & Road Safety initiatives that assists older persons.

4. Utilise community partnerships and consultation to respond to the ongoing needs and expectations of older persons.

Strategic Roles and Responsibilities

In order to achieve these objectives, a number of roles and responsibilities will be allocated to include the following:

Strategic Lead

Assistant Commissioner for Roads Policing & Community Engagement as An Garda Síochána's representative on the National Age Friendly Advisory Group is the strategic lead in An Garda Síochána and will have overall strategic oversight for the implementation of this plan.

Strategic Implementation and Support

Assistant Commissioner Roads Policing and Community Engagement Bureau will be assisted by Chief Superintendent Garda National Community Engagement Bureau for the national implementation of this plan.

Operational Implementation

Chief Superintendents, Superintendents and departmental heads will have responsibility for drafting and implementing plans at a local level to deliver this plan. Managers, first line supervisors and all members of An Garda Síochána will be responsible for working towards delivering this plan.

Strategic Action

The World Health Organisation's Age Friendly Cities Programme has eight themes for the development of local strategies for older persons. However, it is recognised by An Garda Síochána that there is a need to add a ninth theme termed 'Safety and Security'. This is a theme that An Garda Síochána recommends placing in all local Age Friendly County strategies as it provides clearer purpose for the delivery of the strategic objectives for An Garda Síochána for older persons.

By introducing the theme of Safety and Security it will realise the following strategic benefits:

- As the Age Friendly Cities Framework is a worldwide programme and Ireland are at the forefront of this, An Garda Síochána will deliver on its commitment to provide a world-class police service for older persons.
- As all Garda Divisions take their lead from the actions and commitments made in local Age Friendly County strategies, it will provide for a more coordinated and consistent approach for An Garda Síochána at national level.
- Local Age Friendly strategies operate for 2-3 years and on developing a new strategy each county hosts a consultation process with all relevant Older Person stakeholders. Adding the theme for Safety & Security presents the opportunity to include consultation on policing needs for older persons. This will also allow consultation information to feed back to An Garda Síochána at national level to inform the development of future strategies.
- National stakeholders can be consulted via the Age Friendly Ireland National Advisory Group. This would allow the national strategy to be updated every 2- 3 years.



Strategic Objectives

This plan will be implemented over a three year timeframe from 2023 to 2025. The plan is based on commitments to four key objectives which are:

Objective 1

Reduce the fear of crime and crimes against older persons.

Outcome: Older persons feel safer and reduction in crimes against older persons.



Work to reduce crime and the fear of crime, in partnership with key internal and external stakeholders, including older person groups, communities and statutory agencies.

Objective 2

We will increase Garda engagement and accessibility with older persons.

Outcome: Older persons feel more engaged with and have more accessibility to Gardaí.



Develop new and support existing Garda Engagement practices with older persons to be more visible and accessible in your community, by increased visibility both in communities and online.

Objective 3

We will support road safety initiatives that assist older persons.

Outcome: Reduce deaths and serious injury to older persons.



An Garda Síochána will support community and road safety initiatives that assists older persons, both as drivers and vulnerable road users.

Objective 4

We will utilise community partnerships

Outcome: Foster new relationships through the existing Community Policing network



Utilise and consult with community partnerships to respond to the ongoing need and expectations of older persons, taking into consideration international best practice.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1 - REDUCE THE FEAR OF CRIME AND CRIMES AGAINST OLDER PERSONS

CONTEXT

We will work to reduce crime and the fear of crime in partnership with key internal and external stakeholders including older person groups, communities and statutory agencies.

ACTION PLAN

No.	Commitment	Actions	Ownership	Timeline
1.1	Provide crime prevention advice tailored specifically to the needs of older persons	Ensure older persons feel safe, specifically in the areas of bogus callers, financial abuse and fraud, distraction burglary, elder abuse, and addressing anti-social behaviour in the community.	Garda National Community Engagement Bureau Divisional Crime Prevention Officers	Lifetime of Plan
		Divisional crime prevention officers to conduct public crime prevention meetings specifically aimed at older persons.	Each Divisional Officer	
1.2	Conduct media campaigns to promote safety awareness and crime prevention for older persons.	Plan specific themed awareness campaigns for specific times of year or events.	Garda National Community Engagement Bureau	Lifetime of Plan
		Make maximum use of social media tools to reach wider audiences in the community.	Garda Office of Corporate Communications	
		Utilise Crime Call programme.		
		Use traditional channels of communication to convey information to many older persons (e.g. local and national radio, newspapers, public notices, etc.).	Each Divisional Officer	
1.3	Encourage reporting and raise awareness of elder abuse.	Relevant material provided to all Garda members and staff on crimes against older persons and elder abuse on the Community Policing Toolkit.	Garda National Community Engagement Bureau	Q4 2024

1.4	Provide a safe, comfortable environment to encourage the reporting of any aspect of abuse.	Older Persons who are victims of crime will be given the right level of service and provided a victim call-back in person.	Each Divisional Officer Divisional Garda Victims Service Offices	Lifetime of Plan
1.5	Identify crime trends including rural criminal activity where older persons are being targeted as victims and use targeted approaches to tackle the problem.	Identifying crime trends will allow for the targeting response of crimes against older persons.	Garda Síochána Analyst Service Each Divisional Officer	Lifetime of Plan



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2 - INCREASE GARDA ENGAGEMENT AND ACCESSIBILITY WITH OLDER PERSONS

CONTEXT

Develop new and support existing Garda engagement practices with Older Persons to be ore visible and accessible in communities, by increased visibility both in communities and online.

ACTION PLAN

No.	Commitment	Actions	Ownership	Timeline
2.1	Making policing services more visible and accessible to older persons.	Promote engagement with older persons and sharing of best practice with operational Gardaí.	Garda Office of Corporate Communications	Lifetime of Plan
		Utilise the Community Policing Framework to engage with Older Persons.	Garda National Community Engagement Bureau Each Divisional Officer	
2.2	Support Neighbourhood Watch and Community Alert Schemes.	Support existing Neighbourhood Watch and Community Alert Schemes and develop plans to revive and extend these schemes and encourage older persons in communities to take an active part in these schemes.	Garda National Community Engagement Bureau Each Divisional Officer	Lifetime of Plan
2.3	Support the use of Garda Clinics.	Host Garda Clinics in communities specifically aimed at the needs of older persons.	Garda National Community Engagement Bureau	Lifetime of Plan
		Develop support material for Garda Clinics	Each Divisional Officer	
2.4	Develop systems and practices to help older persons, especially those with visual or hearing impairment to identify genuine members of An Garda Síochána.	Examine use of braille on the Garda identification badge and raising awareness with older persons.	Garda Procurement	Q4 2024
		Work in partnership with stakeholders on awareness for older persons on how to identify members of An Garda Síochána.	Garda National Community Engagement Bureau	
2.5	Garda Age Friendly Communication Training	Garda members to participate in training modules on Age Friendly Communication Training provide by Age Friendly Ireland and other agencies.	Each Divisional Officer Garda National Community Engagement Bureau	Lifetime of Plan



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3 - SUPPORT COMMUNITY & ROAD SAFETY INITIATIVES THAT ASSIST OLDER PERSONS

CONTEXT

An Garda Síochána will support community and road safety initiatives that assist older persons, both as drivers and vulnerable road users

ACTION PLAN

No.	Commitment	Outcome	Ownership	Timeline
3.1	Explore the potential development of an electronic Garda Older Person's Register for all Garda Divisions.	Have a digital enabled up-to-date Garda Older Person's Register for An Garda Síochána.	Garda ICT Garda National Community Engagement Bureau	Q3 2024
3.2	Where we have identified older persons living alone and isolated who may benefit from supports, we will signpost them to partner agencies.	Raise awareness with our stakeholders and partners to help identify those most isolated in our community and ensure the most appropriate resources provide support.	Divisional Officers Garda National Community Engagement Bureau	Lifetime of Plan
3.3	To promote and support road safety Initiatives and campaigns for Older Persons including commitments made in Ireland's Government Road Safety Strategy 2021 - 2030	Road safety Initiatives and campaigns for Older Persons to run in partnership with the Road Safety Authority. Support commitments made in Ireland's Government Road Safety Strategy 2021 - 2030 aimed at protecting vulnerable road users.	Garda National Roads Policing Bureau	Lifetime of Plan
3.4	Launch nationally the Herbert Protocols for An Garda Síochána to support persons with dementia.	National Herbert Protocol forms introduced for persons with dementia who may be at risk of going missing.	Garda National Community Engagement Bureau Garda Office of Corporate Communications	Q2 2024
3.5	To promote and support the use of the Senior Alert Scheme.	Community Gardaí actively promote the Senior Alert Scheme and liaise with local organisations that distribute the Personal Pendant Alarms. An Garda Síochána to engage with Pobal, to assist with the promotional use of the schemes.	Each Divisional Officer Garda National Community Engagement Bureau	Lifetime of Plan

3.6	To promote and support initiatives to ensure older persons are safe (e.g. the Message in a bottle Scheme).	Community Gardaí in partnership with local community groups support initiatives to ensure older persons are safe.	Divisional Officers	Lifetime of Plan
		An Garda Síochána to engage with Muintir na Tíre and Lions Club Ireland, to assist with the promotional use of safety schemes.	Garda National Community Engagement Bureau	
3.7	Promote opportunities and initiatives to engage with older persons (e.g. Garda chatting benches).	Garda initiatives established locally in partnership with communities to assist with engagement with Older Persons.	Each Divisional Officer	Lifetime of Plan
3.8	Support and promote the use of the Directory of Age Friendly practices	Garda Initiatives supporting Older Persons to be submitted for inclusion in the Directory of Age Friendly practices available at www.agefriendlyireland.ie	Garda National Community Engagement Bureau	Lifetime of Plan



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 4 - UTILISE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

CONTEXT

We will utilise community partnerships and consultation to respond to the ongoing needs and expectations of older persons.

ACTION PLAN

No.	Commitment	Outcome	Ownership	Timeline
4.1	An Garda Síochána will proactively engage with our stakeholders who represent older persons.	Engagement with Age Friendly Ireland at national and Divisional level.	Each Divisional Officer Garda National Community Engagement Bureau	Lifetime of Plan
4.2	Support the work of Local Authorities and associated organisations on the planning developments for older persons.	Crime Prevention Officers will engage with regard to the planning process for new builds for older persons to ensure that public safety is factored into plans for new buildings, public spaces utilising crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED).	Divisional Crime Prevention Officers Each Divisional Officer	Lifetime of Plan
4.3	Participate in joint training and joint workshops with community partners.	Garda members to participate in joint training and joint workshops with community partners where available.	Divisional Officers Garda National Community Engagement Bureau	Lifetime of Plan
4.4	Use SARA Problem Solving Model in partnership with communities to tackle recurring crimes against older persons in communities.	Promote the use of the SARA Problem Solving Model to community partners.	Garda National Community Engagement Bureau	Lifetime of Plan
		Provide support material for SARA Problem Solving.	Each Divisional Officer	

Garda National Community Engagement Bureau



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