

Theme 8: Community Support and Health Services

Goal: to provide older people with easily accessible health and community services and access to high quality support, when needed, to enable them to live independently in their homes for as long as requested.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT:

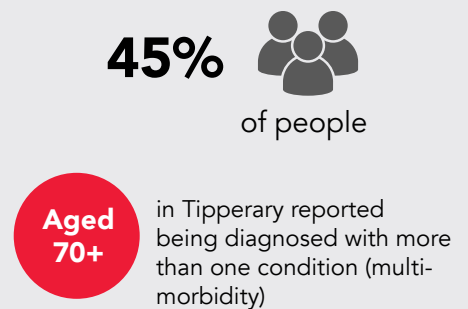
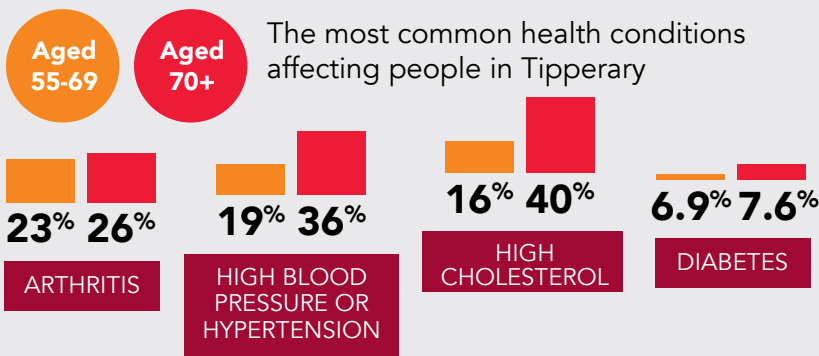
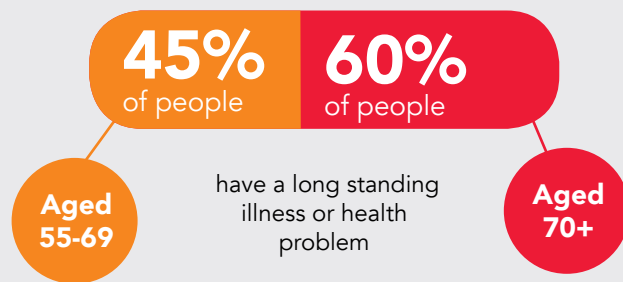
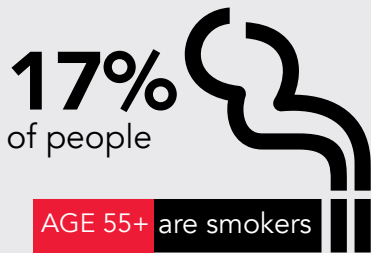
Older people want to stay healthy and independent for as long as possible. Investment in quality community-based health services - including preventative screening, mental health services and advice on healthy eating - can keep older people healthy and reduce their use of in-patient and out-patient hospital services. Home support services and, at the end of life, compassionate outreach services, make it possible for older people to stay in their own homes. This is something that is evidenced in the HaPAI survey and in consultations – people want to remain in their own homes and their own communities for as long as possible but often need supports to do so. It is this connectivity with family, with community, with friends and neighbours that contributes to positive mental and physical health and while it is not possible to provide health services and supports in every settlement in Tipperary, it should be possible to ensure access to the necessary services and supports.

KEY ISSUES FROM CONSULTATIONS:

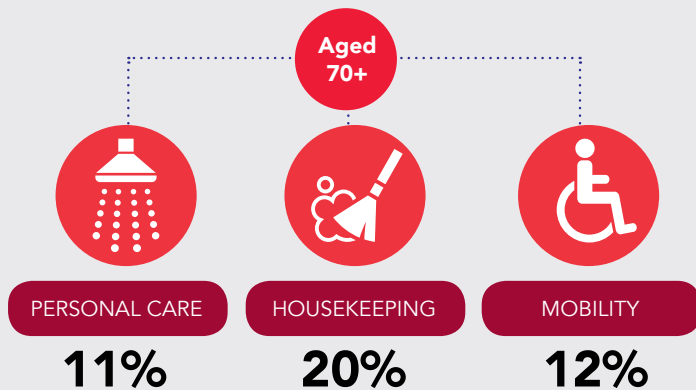
- lack of transport options and suitable times makes it difficult for people to attend appointments; co-ordination of medical appointments need to happen linking in with the local Primary Care Team.
- more supports are needed for older people to living on their own in their own communities
- Increased funding for home care packages and supports for older people to stay in their homes for as long as possible. There is a need to expand the range of services that are available to them including: home care (washing, dressing, meals etc.) and health care (e.g. discharge support from hospital, dressing wounds etc.); but home help alone is not enough to help people stay at home, more wrap around supports are needed. From January 2019, a new Home Support Service is being implemented which replaces what is currently in place with one point of contact and one application process. This should address some of the concerns of the current fragmented system.
- Better promotion and information needed around health supports (particularly mental health supports) and how they can be accessed
- Poor provision of mental health supports. Older people who are retired and whose families may be living elsewhere, often struggle with the issue of identity. The labels that defined them for most of their lives – bread winner, carer, home maker – are now redundant and many struggle with finding purpose and meaning in their lives.
- Advocacy support is needed for patients in hospitals, particularly for more vulnerable older people
- Greater stimulation and positive activity needed in Day Care Centres
- Big difference in health services between North and South of the County particularly in the areas of dementia, older care.
- Primary care services in the area - not enough information about what is available in primary care, how to access it, how long waiting lists are and what the options are; difficulty in getting quick GP appointment; follow up from GP's is often poor.

- The health service is not person centred – it is fragmented and not blended together. Most older people have dual or more health issues and spend a lot of time pinging between different parts of the health service and none of them seem to communicate in a case management, person centred way.

HEALTH



ASSISTANCE WITH ACTIVITIES



AMONG THOSE IN TIPPERARY



HEALTH

10%  of people

Aged 55+

are currently on a waiting list in Tipperary

95%  of these people

have been waiting more than a month

41%

reported health services to be very easily available

Aged 55-69

48%

Aged 70+

30%

1 in 4
24%




aged over 70 said that health services were either difficult or very difficult to access.

65% received the flu vaccine age 55+

88% received blood tests for cholesterol Age 55+

81% had a blood pressure check Age 55+

64% received a mammogram or breast x-ray (women aged 55-64)

18%  of people

Aged 70+

care for children or grandchildren every day or weekly.

1 in 5  of these people experience some level of caregiver strain.

20%  of people

Aged 55-69

care for children or grandchildren every day or weekly.

1 in 6  of these people experience some level of caregiver strain.

4.3% **Aged 55+** in Tipperary report feeling lonely 'often'

18% **Aged 55+** say they feel lonely some of the time.

5.8% **Aged 70+** in Tipperary report feeling lonely 'often'

3.1% **Aged 55-69** in Tipperary report feeling lonely 'often'

VS

ACTION 8.1 CO-ORDINATION AND IDENTIFICATION OF SUPPORTS TO FACILITATE LIVING IN OWN HOME

Provision of wrap around community and health supports that assist people to stay at home safely and comfortably and in their community are essential. There are supports available across the county (as is evidenced in the Information Guide to Services for Older People in County Tipperary) but they are often available in one area and not another or they are available but do not fully meet the need or there is an unmet need. For example, a Befriending service is available only in Roscrea set up by Age Friendly Roscrea; the phone support service, Good Morning Tipperary has an all county remit but reliant solely on fund raising; the current Home Help service only allows personal care but, as is evidenced from the HaPAI survey data above, it is the smaller jobs – the gardening jobs, housekeeping jobs, repair jobs – that give that little bit of extra, but much needed, help and support (links with Theme 3 Housing); the Local Development Companies operate a minor home care and repair scheme in some areas through the TUS scheme; meals-on-wheels service is available in a small number of areas around the County yet could provide an essential service to older people if operated on a bigger scale; primary care supports are available but some often only on certain days in the week or in certain locations.

Building on the 'Information Guide to Services for Older People in County Tipperary', it is recommended that this Guide continue to be updated and widely distributed and promoted but that an additional piece of work be carried out. This would involve a review of two areas in Tipperary (one urban and one rural) looking at exactly what home supports and services (community and health) are available to older people living in those communities – what is offered, when they are available, where they are available and how they are co-ordinated. This review would allow an examination of what is actually available to older people in their communities and then compare it with a 'good practice' scenario (what should be available in these communities to facilitate staying in a persons own home) and this should give planners and service providers something to aim for.

Lead Partner:	Tipperary LCDC Health and Wellbeing Alliance
Support Partners:	Tipperary County Council, HSE – Health and Wellbeing, Local Link Tipperary, Older Persons Council, Local Development Companies, Family Resource Centres, PPN, Citizens Information, Age Friendly Ireland
Link to Plans:	County Development Plans (North and South); LECP.

ACTION 8.2 GOOD MORNING SERVICE & BEFRIENDING INITIATIVES

Provide ongoing funding for the Good Morning Service so that it can expand its service across the county. This service needs to be supported as older people are slow to engage and need encouragement to do so and this requires resourcing. The Service should also explore the establishment of a 'Befriending Service' to more isolated, frail and vulnerable older people, similar to the project initiated by Age Friendly Roscrea, and look to develop a locally appropriate county model in Tipperary.

Lead Partner:	Tipperary LCDC Health and Wellbeing Alliance
Support Partners:	LCDC Support Staff – TCC, Good Morning Service, Age Friendly Roscrea, HSE Health and Wellbeing, Active Retirement Groups, Joint Policing Committee, Muintir na Tire, Older Persons Council, Tipperary Volunteer Centre, Community and Voluntary Sector, Resource Centres, Local Development Companies
Link to Plans:	LECP; Joint Policing Committee Strategy; Healthy Tipperary

ACTION 8.3 MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION AND INFORMATION CAMPAIGN

Develop a county wide mental health education and information campaign with a particular targeted approach for older people over the age of 55. This would have a number of benefits (a) address mis-information around dementia, alzheimers and other age related conditions (b) increase awareness among older people of the supports that are available to them and how to access these supports (c) highlight the health risks associated with loneliness and isolation (d) promote the importance of positive mental health and ways to maintain wellness.

Lead Partner:	HSE Health and Wellbeing
Support Partners:	Tipperary LCDC Health and Wellbeing Alliance, Primary Care Teams, Media outlets, Older Persons Council, Mental Health Voluntary Groups, Community and Voluntary Association, Resource Centres
Link to Plans:	Connecting for Life (MW and SE); Healthy Tipperary.

ACTION 8.4 RESEARCH ON LONELINESS AND ISOLATION IN TIPPERARY

Design and implement a research project specific to Tipperary and based on the recent Age Friendly Ireland study 'Only the Lonely', to document issues related to loneliness and isolation among older people in Tipperary. The research would also set out recommendations for solutions to be implemented by key service providers across public, private and the community and voluntary sector. This could be linked to the proposed Central Action (2) in the Healthy Tipperary Strategy relating to the measurement of the quality of life and wellbeing in the County over time.

Lead Partner:	LCDC Support Staff
Support Partners:	Tipperary LCDC Health and Wellbeing Alliance, Older Persons Council, Age Friendly Ireland
Link to Plans:	Healthy Tipperary Strategy; LECP.
Expected Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved health for older persons and awareness raised of the wider mental health and wellbeing issues for older persons • Improved seamless person centred care provided at Primary Care level • Combating rural isolation and supporting older persons to remain at home • Promotion of independent living and peer support • More and greater access to information on services • The risk of loneliness and isolation substantially reduced for older people because of initiatives put in place arising from the local research on loneliness in Tipperary.