



Antrim and Newtownabbey DRAFT Age Friendly 3-year Strategic Work Plan 2024-2027



Age Friendly Antrim and Newtownabbey aims to improve the quality of life for older people and make the Borough of Antrim and Newtownabbey a better place to grow older.

We work with older persons and with partners across the public, private, community, and voluntary sectors to do this.

This plan sets out the eight themes of the Age Friendly work and some of the actions under each theme.

What does it mean to be age friendly and what are the eight domains?

Antrim and Newtownabbey became members of the World Health Organisations (WHO) Network of the Age Friendly Cities and Communities in October 2019. This affirmed the commitment to make Antrim and Newtownabbey a great place to grow old in, enabling the inclusion of older persons to help make our Borough a more age friendly place.

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, and its partners, are committed to the age friendly agenda and will work through the Community Planning process to deliver this. A dedicated age friendly officer works from the Environmental Health – Health and Wellbeing team and will co-ordinate and assist in the delivery of actions under the age friendly three year action plan.



Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

The outside environment and public buildings have a major impact on mobility, independence and quality of life in later years. Having accessible buildings, walkable spaces, seating and public toilets all contribute to being age friendly and can make a difference to people of all ages and abilities.

Aim:

We will work to increase the infrastructure supporting the age friendly community. We will look at increasing accessibility at public buildings and at our community spaces across the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough.

Actions:

- We will carry out assessments of how accessible and age friendly our Council facilities, public buildings and spaces are. From these assessments we will highlight improvements and create an action plan to carry out the improvements on an on-going basis.
- We will encourage and promote more access and use of our outdoor spaces for all ages, including looking at the provision of benches, accessible paths with distance markers, as well as other essential facilities such as parking and toilets.
- We will promote the "Take a Seat" campaign to local businesses and organisations and will raise awareness of the businesses who sign up to this programme.
- We will work to create inviting, safe, inclusive environments that are free from littering and dog fouling and will encourage outdoor activities for all abilities.

Transportation:

Transportation is a key issue for people in later life – the most frequent reasons for not utilising public transport for those over 65 is that it is not convenient and that it does not go where they want. Driving rates decrease with age and the need for better transport in age friendly communities starts to become clear.

Aim:

We will work with partners to ensure we improve transport options to create improved accessibility, equity and safety.

Actions:

- We will engage with current transport providers that operate across the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough to map out current provisions and to identify and encourage opportunities for improving the accessibility and affordability and ease of transport across the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough.
- We will regularly promote community transport, volunteer driver schemes and SMART passes, through a variety of means so residents are aware of all transport options available to them.
- We will engage with residents who use public and community transport to discover current use and the barriers people face when utilising public and community transport provision. We will develop a report on these findings and will engage with decision makers to maintain and improve on current provision in line with report recommendations.
- We will promote and encourage uptake of shopmobility and GOmobility services across the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council area by promoting the services available and hosting showcase events for people to come along and learn how the services work.

Housing:

Most people want to stay living where they reside. Housing and support allows people in later life to age comfortably and safely within their home and community.

Aim:

We will work to ensure that people in later life can age comfortably and safely in their home and community.

Actions:

- We will provide a proactive Home Accident Prevention Service to reduce the potential for accidents occurring in the home for those aged 65 and above.
- We will collaborate with partner organisations such as the Public Health Agency, The Northern Health and Social Care Trust, Police Service of Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue, and Antrim and Newtownabbey Seniors Forum, to maintain existing support services and create new innovative projects which will support people to live safely within their homes. For example, these would include projects such as, the minor adaptations programme and a handy man service.
- We will work with key partners to maintain and promote existing services which aim to keep people safe and comfortable within their own homes, for example in regard to heating, security, and accessibility and provision of in home supports.
- We will identify and raise emerging housing issues with key decision makers to influence and encourage decision to be made to ensure that those in later life can maintain independence and stay in their home and community for as long as they would choose to.

Social Participation:

Being able to stay connected with friends and family is essential for ageing well and social connection is strongly connected to good health and well-being throughout life.

Aim:

We aim to increase accessibility and opportunities for social participation and connection across the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council area.

Action:

- We will highlight and promote current opportunities for social participation across the Borough through a range of approaches including the age friendly "News for You" newsletter, the Council website and District Electoral area specific activities.
- We will create a database of community and voluntary groups and identify any areas which have less social participation opportunities. We will work with local communities to support and encourage the maintenance and the development of activities.
- We will work closely with the Antrim and Newtownabbey Loneliness Network to provide opportunities across the Borough to connect with others.
- We will investigate the possibility to develop and support the U3A model, across the Borough, which creates opportunities for persons of 50+ to share information, keep learning and connect with others.

Respect and Inclusion:

Feeling valued and respected is important for everyone, especially older people from all backgrounds.

Aim:

We will work with older people and service providers to ensure that older persons feel that they are valued, respected and can contribute to the Borough.

Actions:

- We will co-ordinate Positive Ageing month each year and during this celebration month we will promote activities and events widely to residents highlighting the contribution older persons make in our Borough.
- We will create an older persons age friendly voice group, which will co-produce key priorities and will consult on policies.
- We will create, in partnership, an intergenerational action plan which will look to develop intergenerational opportunities across the Borough.
- We will engage and work with statutory organisations as well as community and voluntary and businesses to develop and deliver a programme of work which will have respect and social inclusion as its core aim.

Civic Participation and Employment:

An age friendly community provides options for people in later life to contribute back to it, opportunities in employment and volunteering can have a measureable positive impact on a person's mental health and wellbeing, as well as finances and often these opportunities diminish with age.

Aim:

We will create options for people in later life to contribute their skills through employment or volunteering

Actions:

- We will work with economic development to support people who want to contribute or develop new employment in later life.
- We will engage and work with businesses within the Borough to assist and encourage them to prioritise age friendly planning and retention of older workforce members by assisting with the provision of age friendly training and policies to support roles.
- We will provide opportunities to ensure individuals can access benefits and supports they need to have financial well-being through engaging with local community advice services and the promotion of regional services and provision.
- We will work with Volunteer Now and other organisations and groups – both regionally and Borough specific to ensure that volunteering opportunities are promoted and supported.

Communication and Information:

Staying connected with people and events, as well as receiving timely, accessible and practical information around to manage life and meet personal needs is vital for active ageing.

Aim:

We will create a communications strategy that will ensure regular communication around issues that are important to older persons.

Actions:

- We will create and issue four editions of the “News for You” age friendly publication for Antrim and Newtownabbey. These will be available in print as well as digitally and will be reviewed taking on the views of those it is aimed to, to ensure it is relevant and useful. Past copies will be available on the council website.
- We will ensure there are dedicated age friendly webpages on the Antrim and Newtownabbey Council website which are reviewed and updated regularly – these updates will include progress updates on the three year action plan, as well as useful contacts and links and to other relevant groups and services.
- We will run digital training programmes across the Borough to help people in later life increase their knowledge and skills in digital technology.
- We will work on the development and maintenance of an age friendly Geographic information system (G.I.S) map which will highlight age friendly assets across the Borough of Antrim and Newtownabbey. This GIS map will be available as an information tool for both older persons to find out what is available in the Borough, but also by strategic partners as a mechanism to map services and identify gaps in age friendly provision which can be addressed.

Community and Health Services:

As the older population grows in size the need for health services and support within the community grows too. Accessible and affordable health care services, coupled with community support is strongly connected to good health and wellbeing throughout life.

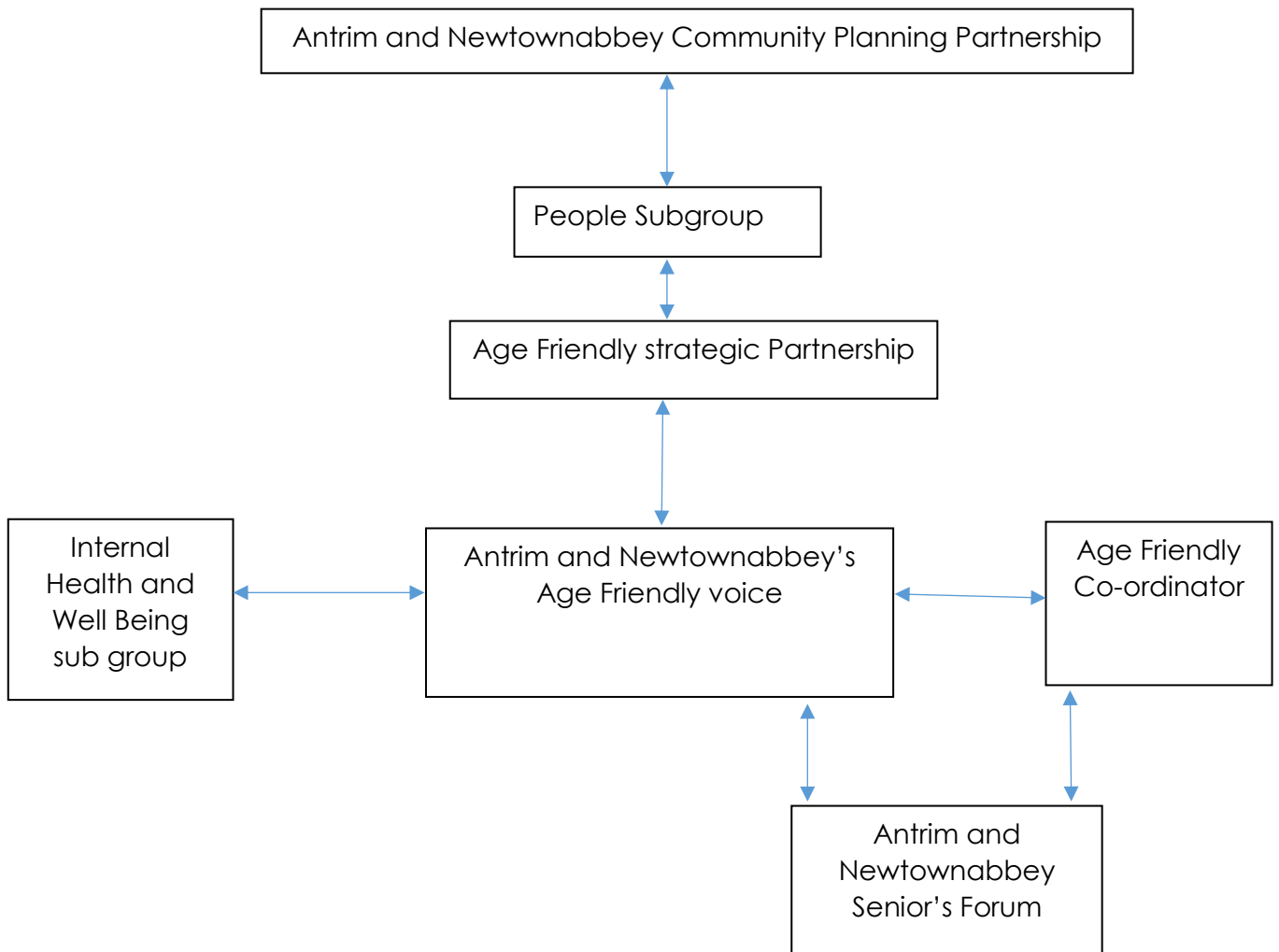
Aim:

We will help people stay well, and feel good for longer, by ensuring appropriate services are available, and individuals can connect and utilise these services to live healthy and full lives.

Actions:

- Maintain and promote existing programmes and services available which encourage active lifestyles such as the strong and steady programme, the MacMillan move more programme, Nordic walking groups and others.
- Share information on health and well-being issues and relevant services throughout the year, using a variety of approaches.
- Run health and well-being interventions and initiatives on topics such as nutrition and hydration, movement, social connections, community resuscitation and end of life care, planning and support.
- Identify and promote positive mental well-being interventions such as the Take 5 steps to wellbeing.

Implementation Structure:



Measuring the impact and Progress reporting:

An extended action plan contains targets and identifies the lead partner from the Age Friendly strategic partnership. Information will be collected from lead partners on a regular basis and collated to measure the impact of the action plan. Regular monitoring of the Actions will be completed using the Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) Approach. Report cards on progress under each action shall be developed and these shall be published on the Council website to ensure full transparency.

It is important that we ask ourselves three questions:

1. How much did we do?
2. Was the work of excellent quality?
3. Is anyone better off?

A progress report will be shared at the Age Friendly Strategic Partnership as well as with the Community Planning partnership.

The age friendly action plan will be scheduled to be reviewed annually, however actions can be updated through-out the year if deemed necessary by the age friendly partnership and the People subgroup of the community plan.