



**Summary of Submissions to the Citizens' Assembly on the
second topic for consideration**

***How we best respond to the Challenges and
Opportunities of an Ageing Population***

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Appendix 1 – Submissions made by Advocacy Groups and Professionals/Academics

Submissions Process

The submissions process for the second topic “How we best respond to the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population” was open from 3rd April to 19th May 2017.

A number of steps were taken to encourage the public to engage with the submission process. Advertisements were placed in a number of national newspapers on 3rd April 2017. These papers included: The Irish Examiner, The Irish Times, The Irish Independent and The Irish Mirror. In addition an advertisement was placed in the Farmers Journal.

From the week beginning 8th May additional advertisements were placed in the following regional newspapers: Cork Independent, Dublin People Group, Limerick Post, Galway Advertiser, Meath Topic, Drogheda Leader, Wexford People, Clare Champion, The Kerryman.

The submissions process was also promoted on the Assembly’s Twitter Account @CitizAssembly and by using the hash tag #citizensassembly.

The Secretariat has created this summary to outline some of the key issues and some possible solutions identified by individuals, non-government organisations, and professionals on the second topic the Citizens’ Assembly is to consider “How we best respond to the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population”. This summary covers many of the areas highlighted from the submissions process; however it is worth visiting the Citizens’ Assembly website (www.citizensassembly.ie) to read the submissions in full. Where possible a reference number is provided to allow the members to consider the relevant submissions in more detail.

The numbers

129 submissions were received, of which 124 were received online and 5 were received by post.

Of these, 122 have been published to the Citizens’ Assembly’s website. In total 7 were not published. Of those originally received and not published the reasons were as follows:

- 1 online submission was withdrawn by author.
- 3 online submissions were resubmitted by the authors.
- 2 postal submissions were not signed and assumed anonymous.
- 1 postal submission was not relevant to the topic.

Category of respondent	Published Submission
Individual citizens	86
Professions	3
NGOs	33

Total 122

Key Issues arising from Submissions

The overwhelming view throughout the submissions is that while there are substantial challenges to be expected with an ageing population, we have a duty and a responsibility to care for our older members of society and we should welcome the opportunities and experience they present.

The challenges facing society with regard to the ageing population are primarily in the areas of care, health, housing, pensions, transport and technology. Valuing the older members of society and recognising and respecting the enormous contribution they can make at all stages of their lives is an integral part of ensuring that people can live with dignity as they age.

A number of key issues arose consistently in many of the submissions. It is important to note that individual submissions often presented more than one issue for consideration. Bearing this in mind, we have extracted the themes which arose most frequently through the submissions and some of the recommendations which came through with these.

1. Long-Term Care including End of Life Care

The most commonly raised matter was that of long term care for older people. The changing nature of society and the less family support available, the more need is emerging for appropriate alternatives to caring for older people in both their own homes and in nursing homes or other institutional settings. Suggestions also emerged around providing community type accommodation specifically designed for older residents which facilitates independent living for as long as possible with a range of available services on site (A1-186KDI8XMUPN). Another suggestion was for inter-generational solutions to this issue such as combination retirement home/childcare centres

One submission quoted the Minister for Health in an address to the Dáil in January last, acknowledging the differences between residential and home care and the importance of recognising the need for a properly funded system that will work for all older people wherever they can and wish to live (A1-YY2WAIQZIK9P).

The availability of adequate funding for and the effective regulation of both residential care and home care was also submitted as an important consideration in the provision of person-centred care. It was noted that the main source of state funding – the Fair Deal – is focused entirely on long term residential care in nursing homes irrespective of the care and support needs or indeed the choice or wishes of older people (A1-JO7USES10I4)

The difficulty accessing the grant application process to make an older person's home accessible, was reported as unnecessarily difficult, and often resulted in the older person having to go into a nursing home because of this (A1-VGO3DFXCFSME). Demand for both public and private nursing care, public hospital and community care for older people means that the services for this group are constantly under pressure. It was suggested that as home care is not a viable option for some older citizens, the Government must address the nursing home issue and with that, the funding issue, as soon as possible (A1-B5WJAUQFQHV).

The need for adequate home help for those living in their own homes was noted in a number of submissions (A1-L64K6GT361ZA)

Overall, the general feeling in the submissions which raise this issue is that people should be allowed to remain in their home, with appropriate supports, if they so wish. One Advocacy group pointed out that while it is well documented that most people in Ireland wish to die in their home, only 26% of people achieve their wish to do so. Another submission noted that our health system is already pressurised, so we need to ask the question - how can we meet the health and social care demands under this pressure? (A1-8L61UQ8P0B4R).

In relation to care of people with Alzheimer's, on submission noted that there appears to be evidence of a 'rush to institutionalise loved ones' and suggested, similar to other submissions, that funding for the 'Fair Deal' scheme should be diverted to care in the home (A1- M9SMDEB1XHIR).

It was noted from a number of the submissions that many older people are themselves, caregivers (A1-M02FNW75VJH3). A lack of support for long-term care is putting a great amount of pressure on these older people who have to consider those in their care as well as themselves.

It was suggested in one submission that while older people's issues are dealt with by the section within the Department of Health responsible for long-term residential care, older people will always be seen as patients and not as contributors to society. (A1-KY0T3EN2ILRN). A suggestion was made to appoint a full or junior Minister who could act cross-departmentally to implement the National Positive Ageing Strategy.

A significant number of submissions noted the need to ensure that appropriate end of life care is provided in Ireland (A1-924TNU7F1W8I)

Some recommendations included:

- "Nursing homes provide a vital service but need to be considered as an integrated, skilled, knowledgeable member of the multidisciplinary team" (A1-B5WJAUQFQHV)
- Establish a statutory entitlement to home care (A1- JW59JZ6K9JHC)
- Urgent review of the Nursing Home Support ('Fair Deal') scheme. (A1-KY0T3EN2ILRN)
- Ageing at home should be prioritised. (A1-KY0T3EN2ILRN)
- Importance of the state providing appropriate end of life care. (A1-OW4GQ6R7VI33)
- There needs to be a 'one stop shop' of information regarding all older people care services, rather than having family members having to conduct their own individual research (A1-M9SMDEB1XHIR)
- Greater funding for Home Care Packages/ home based supports so as to enable Older People to live at home as long as they wish. (A1-WZ50N9NOPH39)

- A submission notes that older people need choices regarding housing such as retirement communities, bungalows, semi-sheltered accommodation, space for visitors to stay, access to transport, shopping and leisure facilities. (A1-BZ7AMKDEEEKJ)

2. Pensions, Income and Retirement

The issue of retirement, income and pensions is of concern to older people, particularly those living alone. Poverty in the older population is of immediate concern in respect of those living alone who are dependent on the State pension.

Suggestions have been made throughout the submissions received that the compulsory retirement age should be abolished or raised and proper retirement planning to include financial planning should be available to all. One suggestion was made that assistance be provided by the Department of Social Protection to older people to explain pension entitlements prior to retirement (A1-K106EOLWVQAZ).

It was pointed out that those in self employment, such as farmers for example, are often to be found working into their seventies eighties and nineties. The question was asked “why do we have to retire because we are 65 years young?” (A1-IW7U2TENSG3V)

Of particular concern is the impact of a legacy of Government policy on female pensioners (A1-YK29GRHG2G4Y), health and welfare issues associated with older people living in homes that they can no longer afford to maintain and those with additional costs associated with having a disability.

Some recommendations included:

- Conduct a review of pensions and reverse cuts to pensions (A1-VGZ74FY8Z9WM).
- The State pension should be benchmarked in legislation as 35% of average weekly earnings, and the Government should launch a targeted awareness campaign targeted at younger generations (A1- JW59JZ6K9JHC).
- An Advocacy group emphasised for the greater involvement for the State in any enhancement to the pension system (A1-1WTSKJXNDPR).

3. Leadership & Implementation

A number of submissions recommended the appointment of a Minister for Older People and/or a Department for Older People. It was suggested that this Department could champion older people’s needs and represent them in many matters (A1-P9863ZVJLW8E).

A number of suggestions were made around the theme of leadership and implementation. One submission for example, highlighted that for many years there have been inconsistencies between policies on services for older people and their implementation (A1-JSL53WKNY30D).

Some recommendations included:

- Appoint a Minister for Older People. (A1-P9863ZVJLW8E)
- Have a Department for Older People. (A1-T8QWXCPJEM3A)
- Appoint a Senior Civil Servant with a co-ordination role so as to report a whole of government action plan for the National Positive Ageing Strategy (A1-6M4PESDGXS40)

4. Health, Mobility and Transport

Health issues and access to appropriate and adequate health care is of concern to many. Some of the particular issues which were raised included waiting lists, deferred treatments, and insufficient beds/nurses/doctors.

Difficulties experienced by older people in navigating, activating and managing services need to meet their medical and personal care needs. (A1-W46NGVQXNDPE)

One advocacy group noted that statistically women have a longer life than men and suggested that it is important for policy makers and service providers to recognise both gender differences and impact of ageing on one's health. (A1-XM4S1CAGFV0J)

Proposal for an extensive and intensive educational campaign regarding health to operate as a 'prevention and not a cure' format – targeting those at age 50 to address physical and psychological problems. The submission notes that if successful, such a campaign should be self financing as it would reduce strain on state sponsored medical assistance. (A1-25KFRT2NK08O)

Loneliness and isolation of older people were issues which were raised in a number of the submissions received. Inability to access services, social outlets etc. is a problem faced by many people because of poverty, disability or lack of transport, particularly in rural Ireland. Accessible transport systems are required in the first instance to combat this particularly in rural Ireland, one submission noted. (A1-8XW00OGUNJL3)

One submission included a proposal for a voluntary initiative to be offered to nursing homes. With this initiative older people would be invited on bike rides with volunteers. The submission noted mental, physical, psychological and social health benefits accrue from the cycling experience. (A1-JXCAQI7GE235)

Some recommendations included:

- Review medical card qualification levels for older people (A1-NYBF9UQ59Z06)
- An advocacy group suggested the Citizens' Assembly examine the impact of socio-economic inequalities within older people and across the lifecycle in health and wellbeing. (A1-IDA0M1B5XQL1)
- The All-party Oireachtas Group on Dementia recommends that supports for people with dementia be a key component in any recommendations being made regarding law, public policy, strategies and investments in services of older people.(A1-MBK51SMM76H1)

- Income maintenance, transport, and infrastructural policies should be age proofed for older people from equality and social inclusion perspective (A1-P7AXX3O8WUNW).
- An advocacy group pointed out that they are often required to provide specific nutrition requirements to vulnerable older people, they suggested that a nutritional assessment should take place as part of a HSE Home Care Package (A1-Z2PQRY20ANS).

5. Participation/ Inclusion/ Ageism

One advocacy group submission pointed out that recognising the contribution of older people as volunteers and as active citizens will assist in addressing issues that add to the narrative of older people as a burden on society. The submission pointed to a TILDA report which suggested that older adults are active respondents in civic and religious activities, with more than 80% of this population having voted in the last general election (A1-BNDDC9XAZOQS).

One submission noted that ageism often goes unrecognised and unchallenged in Ireland. (A1-JSL53WKNY30D) Another went on to note that the effects of ageism are even more acute when coupled other discrimination issues, such as homophobia, sexism, and discrimination on the grounds of a disability (A1- S4Z4FOVSGG7T).

Some recommendations included:

- One suggestion made was that older people continue to work in a related field well into their retirement, possibly in a part-time or reduced capacity if required. Others suggested that health permitting, people should not be restricted in employment based on their age (A1-IW7U2TENSG3V).
- Intergenerational cooperation to enhance active citizenship. (A1-JSL53WKNY30D)
- Promote attitudes of respect and value. (A1-JSL53WKNY30D)
- The goal should be to create a dynamic older participating population who participate in developing society by continued use of their skills and experience (A1-BNDDC9XAZOQS).
- An individual stated in their submission “State sponsored Clubs for the elderly would be also ...helpful to both the elderly and their families. It would allow those elderly people living on their own to have a more sociable life which has been proven to have a positive impact on their quality of life especially their mental health” (A1-50RCVUOAYGZY).

6. Elder Abuse

A number of submissions raised the issue of elder abuse and suggested that urgent action be taken to address this problem. One submission from a member of the Oireachtas included the text of a Private Members Bill with respect to the issue (A1-VW0MRCBBT19H).

Another submission noted that 'the issue of elder abuse is widespread, secretive and hugely damaging to the person and families involved' (A1- 55UOSRUXO9W5).

In relation to elder abuse one submission noted the following report and the suggested follow up actions required:

"In 2013 the National Positive Ageing Strategy reported that the prevalence of elder abuse in Ireland was 2.2 per cent but that the prevalence of elder abuse in other developed countries is between 3 and 5 per cent, and that the number of people experiencing elder abuse may be greater than reported. The Commission has recommended that 'research should be commissioned by the government to establish the reasons for the significant lower reported rate of elder abuse in Ireland compared with other developed countries'" (A1-UFQ5874GEPHS).

Some recommendations included:

- Structures/ professional bodies required to fully implement presumption of capacity enshrined in the Assisted Decision Making Act 2016 must be put in place without delay (A1-WZ50N9NOPH39).
- Increase the number of HSE Case Workers assigned to process and combat elder abuse (A1-VW0MRCBBT19H).

7. Technology

The advances in technology in society have made accessibility to services even more difficult for many older people and in some cases leaves them more isolated than ever. Many services are now automated or require internet access and an ability to navigate some form of technology.

A concerned 80 year old noted in his submission that the state and private bodies insist 'he go to their website for further information', which he finds very difficult to do (A1-3QSV1LVLE1K9). The submission goes on to note that Ireland needs a Minister for Older people, and that such a request would help represent older people going forward. Another representation from an advocacy group emphasises the importance of tackling this issue, and notes, even phone calls are difficult due to the use of 'menu systems' by call centres (A1-55UOSRUXO9W5).

A submission from a PHD candidate made an observation that technology is on its own evolutionary path, and the public's task should be to actively engage with the challenges and changes 'evolving technologies' bring our way, and start that conversation sooner rather than later (A1-TDJUZI30PTIZ)

Some recommendations included:

- Continuing assistance for those who are able to use certain technologies prior to entering a nursing home, to ensure older people do not become isolated (A1-USA6HWVE4IIH)

8. Housing

In relation to housing, one submission noted that the State seems opposed to state-subsided housing, but that the only way to ensure people of all ages and backgrounds have the same standard of housing is large scale State intervention. The submission went on to say that special segregation in housing is a sign of failed policy (REF A1-4EE20D3P48OU).

A submission from one of the advocacy groups in this area notes “the importance of the housing adaption grant and its importance in enabling people with an acquired disability to remain in their own house”. However the submission goes on to say ...the housing adaption grant...“as it currently operates, falls short of what it is supposed to do, due to slow administration and limited funding for the grant” (A1-P7AXX3O8WUNW).

Another submission noted that “older people who do not have private wealth are likely to live in poor-quality accommodation not suited to their needs” (A1-4EE20D3P48OU).

Some recommendations included:

- A scheme to allow older people or remain in their houses, and for the house to be gradually adapted to their needs as required (A1-JC3XBCBGL2AW).

9. Demographics

One submission pointed to a report published by the UN in 2015 entitled ‘World Population Ageing’. According to the submission, “by 2050, the number of older persons will have doubled reaching 20% of the global population”. There is no doubt, the submission emphasises, “ but this change in demographics represents one of the most significant challenges of our time” (A1-N4LW1QUWE2PA).

Another submission questioned the validity of claims that the population is ageing and suggested that this is a myth put forward to advance an agenda (A1-1EGRD944NTOT). One submission suggested that an ageing population is based on projections which is really guesswork and is being used as a way of extending retirement age to ensure people are at the end of their life before they can claim a pension (A1- 369VK2AB5CLA).

Some recommendations included:

- One advocacy group noted that the increase in ageing demographics should be seen as a positive change rather than viewed as a burden on the systems of the state. The submission goes on to say that “older people are not just patients of a health system rather they are participants in communities as volunteers, act in caring roles from family, contributors to the economy and active citizens as voters” (A1-BNDDC9XAZOQS).

10. Education

The development of an awareness program to allow for middle age adults to plan for when they are older was suggested in a submission. A university made a submission offering courses tailored to this topic.

Some recommendations included:

- Modules should be included in all professional education and training for individuals working with older people (A1- JW59JZ6K9JHC).

Appendix 1

Submissions made by Advocacy Groups and Professionals

1. Table of Submissions Made by Advocacy Groups

The following submissions were made by Advocacy groups.

In the table below, you will find the name of the person who made the submission on behalf of the Advocacy group.

The third column in the table contains a reference number. You can use the reference number or person's name in the first column, to find the submission on the Citizen's Assembly website via the search function.

Find the submission you would like to view. Visit <http://citizensassembly.ie/> and then select 'submissions' from the navigation menu.

You can also visit this short URL to take you directly to this page <http://goo.gl/d1zXNT>

<u>Name</u>	<u>Group</u>	<u>Find this submission online</u> Enter the reference number below at this URL: http://goo.gl/d1zXNT
Sheila Devane	Medical Missionaries of Mary (MMM)	A1-55UOSRUXO9W5
Meredith Raley	Disability Federation of Ireland	A1-MN2S07J51D9M
Sandra MCCullagh	Inclusion Ireland	A1-8SNAGMBW5UJC
Tadhg Daly	NHI Nursing Homes Ireland	A1-YY2WA10ZIKGP
Maurice A O'Connell	The Alliance of Age Sector NGOs	A1-T8QWXCPJEM3A
Zoe Hughs	Care Alliance Ireland	A1-U0P84RY5LDEX
Brendan O'Hara	All Ireland Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care	A1-VCC00B9MMRZ6
Anne Donnellan	Glór Age Action Galway	A1-6IDIDY2PGN9F

Louise Lennon	Irish Rural Link	A1-DBDYG2X4EM0U
Karan O Loughlin	SIPTU	A1-6V1FPAZLAP9T
Age Action	Age Action	A1-JW59JZ6K9JHC
Angela Edghill	The Irish Hospice Foundation	A1-UZ0PFTPJO49J
Chris Noone	National LGBT Federation	A1-HYUC0UET9QQK
Lelia O'Flaherty	Council for the status of the Family	A1-NTJXBICHMFO2
Niamh Clowry	Irish Association For Palliative Care	A1-ES236FUL8JOY
Deputy Mary Butler & Senator Colette Kellehr	All-Party Oireachtas Group on Dementia	A1-MBK51SMM76H1
Rodger O'Sullivan	IPH, Institute of Public Health in Ireland	A1-IFA0M1B5XQL1
Geralyn McGarry	Citizens Information Board	A1-P7AXX3O8WUNW
David Byrne	COPE Galway	A1-Z2PQRY20ANS
Derek Bell	Retirement Planning Council of Ireland	A1-RJE1VTKCZQZU
Madeleine Clarke	Genio	A1-LFYJESYHQ8C3
Maureen Kavanagh	Active Retirement Ireland	A1-BNDDC9XAZOQS
Peter Harper	Fine Gael LGBT	A1-S4Z4FOVSGG7T
Caoimhghin Ó Caoláin	Sinn Fein	A1-N4LW1QUWE2PA
Mattie McGrath	TD	A1-VW0MRCBBT19H
Barry O'Brien	IBM Ireland	A1-GYLDJ8739C9E
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission	Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission	A1-UFQ5874GEPHS
Peter Kavanagh	Green Party	A1-KY0T3EN2ILRN

Noreen Walters	Limerick Seniors Forum	A1-XWGW616IP0TS
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2. Table of Submissions made by professionals/ academics

<u>Name</u>	<u>Group</u>	<u>Find this submission online</u> Enter the reference number below at this URL: http://goo.gl/d1zXNT
Christine Kelly	Age Friendly University, DCU	A1-48WAK815H9I9
Michelle Maher	Irish Pension Policy Research Group, Trinity College	A1-1WTSKJXNJ DPR
Dr. Lorna Roe	Centre for Health Policy and Management, Trinity College	A1-W46NGVQXNDPE
Dympna Tuohy	Lecturer, Dept Nursing and Midwifery UL	A1-XM4S1CAGFV0J
Adrian Smyth	PHD candidate, DIT	A1-TDJUZI30PTIZ
Gerard Griffin	Rooskey Retirement Home	A1-186KDI8XMUPN
Dr. Elizabeth Healy	Doctor	A1-JC3XBCBGL2AW
Dr. Ursula Nusgen	Doctor	A1-A0KZEWV34K04
Dr. Donn Brennan	Doctor	A1-SKAO9US92AOM
Dr. Sabina Brennan	Trinity College Dublin	A1-6M4PESDGXS40
Prof Desmond (Des) O'Neill	Tallaght Hospital and Trinity College Dublin	A1-K1MV53W9GOWS