
Baseline Statement on a National Positive Ageing Strategy for Ireland



**older &
bolder**

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INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction To The Baseline Statement

The purpose of this paper is to set out Older and Bolder's baseline position regarding the development of a National Positive Ageing Strategy (NPAS) for Ireland. This paper has been informed by the contributions of all of the members of Older and Bolder's Executive Committee. (See Appendix One for details).

The paper :

- ⇒ **describes Older and Bolder;**
- ⇒ **presents Older and Bolder's perspective on consultation with older people in the development of the NPAS;**
- ⇒ **shares our perspective on older people as a demographic bounty for Irish society; and**
- ⇒ **points to some of the issues that require attention if the NPAS is to enable genuinely age friendly public policy and practice in the Irish setting.**

In the coming months, Older and Bolder intends to build on the baseline position set out in this paper and to articulate our views in further statements.

2. AN ALLIANCE

Older and Bolder is an alliance of eight non-governmental organisations that aims to champion the rights of older people and to combat ageism. The members of Older and Bolder are :

- ⇒ Active Retirement Ireland
- ⇒ Age and Opportunity
- ⇒ Age Action Ireland Ltd.

- ⇒ Alzheimer Society of Ireland
- ⇒ Carers Association
- ⇒ Irish Hospice Foundation
- ⇒ Irish Senior Citizens Parliament
- ⇒ Senior Helpline

Our vision is of an Ireland that affirms ageing and the rights of older people, including those with disability, enabling all of us to live with confidence and dignity as equal, respected and involved members of society as we age.

3. MEMBERSHIP OF OLDER AND BOLDER

In terms of their constituencies and the range of their goals and activities, the member organisations of Older and Bolder reflect both the diversity of older people and many of the opportunities and the challenges associated with ageing. Older and Bolder's members have expertise in, and a track record of, working in partnership with older people at national, regional and local levels.

Active Retirement Ireland is a national membership organisation of 457 local active retirement associations across Ireland. It promotes positive ageing by acting as a voice for older people over 55 years who organise and run social, physical, cultural and learning activities within their own local communities. It supports its membership through representation, development work and information.

Age and Opportunity promotes greater participation by older people in society, working in a broad range of areas from the arts to physical activity, from challenging ageism to promoting greater empowerment in settings as diverse as nursing homes, libraries, educational centres and sporting and arts organisations.

Age Action Ireland is committed to eliminating ageism and promoting positive ageing as the norm for all people. Its primary role is advocacy on behalf of all older people through mobilising older people, and gaining support from the general public and key interest groups to secure the right to high quality services including direct provision of selected services. Its 1,800 members include older people and voluntary, statutory and private bodies.

Its main activities include advocacy, information, working with the media, publications, research and a range of services for older people at local, regional and national levels.

Alzheimer Society of Ireland is the leading provider of dementia-specific services to people with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia, carers and their families. It offers a network of 98 day care, home care and respite care services, carer support groups and social club services; it operates the confidential Alzheimer National Helpline; and a pilot dementia advocacy rights service.

Campaigning for better services, increasing awareness and education, influencing policy and practice, provision of information and pursuing social and therapeutic research projects are also core activities. The Alzheimer Society has 3,000 members, 300 volunteers and over 700 full and part-time staff.

Carers Association is a national voluntary organisation for, and of, family carers in the home. The association aims to provide family carers with emotional and practical support; to promote the interests of family carers and those receiving care in the home through effective partnership, lobbying and advocacy and to gain recognition and social justice for carers' invaluable contribution to Irish society. The association provides a range

of services for carers from its 16 Carers Resource Centres and 2 service bases.

Irish Hospice Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation that promotes the hospice philosophy and supports the development of hospice/palliative care. The IHF does this through education and training, advocacy, promoting research, pioneering projects, fundraising and providing financial support for innovative end-of-life projects. Of the almost 30,000 people who die in Ireland every year, over 6,000 use hospice services.

Irish Senior Citizens Parliament is an autonomous organisation concerned with promoting the interests of retired and older people. The Parliament has 380 affiliated organisations and a total membership of 95,000 people.

Senior Help Line is a confidential listening service for older people by older people for the price of a local call anywhere in Ireland. Launched in Summerhill, Co. Meath in 1998, the service is now operated by almost 300 trained volunteers in 13 centres nationwide.

Senior Help Line is open every day from 10am - 4pm and 7 - 10pm, a total of 63 hours per week.

4. COMMITMENT TO A STRATEGY

The Programme for Government incorporates a commitment to the development of a National Positive Ageing Strategy (NPAS), a goal for which Older and Bolder campaigned prior to, and during, the General Election of 2007. In fact all of the political parties had included a commitment to the development of a national ageing strategy in their manifestoes prior to the last election.

The rationale for a National Strategy is that it will provide a coherent framework that will guide policy-making, enable cross-sectoral planning and rational resource allocation, and facilitate public input into public policy. Against this backdrop, Older and Bolder now seeks a Strategy that affirms ageing and the rights of older people and is responsive to their needs and preferences. The corollary of this aim is that older people must have a real say in the design of a Strategy that will, once implemented, directly affect their lives.

The new National Positive Ageing Strategy will, according to the Programme for Government, include :

“the development of operational plans by Government Departments clearly setting out objectives relating to older people;

- ⇒ joined up thinking on initiatives serving older people;
- ⇒ ongoing mechanisms to monitor progress and identify challenges;
- ⇒ liaison with recognised voluntary groups in the area; and
- ⇒ consideration of the appointment of an Ombudsman for Older People.”

However the Programme for Government is not specific about the process of developing the National Positive Ageing Strategy. Apart from the commitment to “liaison with recognised voluntary groups”, it is silent about older people’s access to, and participation in, the planning process.

Older and Bolder wishes to highlight our perspective on the conduct of a public consultation with older people in advance of the development of the NPAS.

5. VALUE OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION REGARDING NPAS

The starting point is our belief that a meaningful public consultation should form a core part of the process of developing a National Positive Ageing Strategy.

In Northern Ireland where the 1998 N.Ireland Act imposes an obligation to consult stakeholders on public authorities, the Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister has stated that:

“Proceeding with no or token consultation may appear to save time in the short term, especially in the context of limited resources, but it can result in problems later.

For example, correspondence campaigns (to political representatives) due to lack of buy-in to the policy from key opinion-formers;questions and debates where Ministers have to be very much on the defensive; or policies which simply do not work effectively and have to be put right, possibly at considerable expense.” (Office of First Minister, Deputy First Minister, undated : 44).

Older and Bolder recognises that consultations may result in both ‘consultation fatigue’ and disillusionment. This is inevitable if there is a fracture between the consultation

process – no matter how exemplary – and the strategic outcome. Past experience has alerted members to the risk that expectations raised during a consultation process may not be met and that long anticipated governmental policies and strategies will not be implemented or will be watered down. Nonetheless, the alliance is convinced that the expression of a diversity of perspectives is healthy for society; that, with the exception of a small number of older people who hold positions of power, older people's voices are often not heard in society ; and that public ways of seeing and hearing the world are limited as a consequence (Moloney, 2006 : 23-24). While this baseline statement focuses on the need for consultation in advance of the development of the NPAS, Older and Bolder believes in the continuous value of consultation throughout the policy cycle, including implementation, monitoring and review phases.

The potential outcomes of a well-planned and implemented public consultation include the following :

- 5.1 Facilitation of the inclusion of older people's voices in public discussion and of their participation in public life, providing a tangible and cost effective demonstration of Government's commitment to existing social inclusion policy goals (Towards 2016, NAPinc 2007-2016).
- 5.2 Stimulation of a much needed, wider popular debate about key policy issues and choices facing Government and Irish society generally in light of the phenomenon of population ageing.
- 5.3 Conferral of legitimacy on the National Positive Ageing Strategy, assuming that the completed Strategy has engaged with the content of the public consultation.

6. CRITERIA OF GOOD CONSULTATION PRACTICE

Ideally, Older and Bolder would like to see a public consultation process that is developmental for participating older people and groups. In other words, benefits would accrue in terms of the content of the NPAS; but the process would also be capacity-building for participants and the benefits would extend beyond the once-off consultation meeting i.e. people coming together, local needs identified, network enhanced, report available for future independent work by the local group. Members of the Older and Bolder alliance see this approach as a practical way to build social capital. Social capital is defined “as the social networks that, together with shared norms, values and understandings, facilitate collective action and cooperation within and among groups. Social capital can take many forms - having regular social contact with other people, trusting other people, feelings of mutual obligation, a willingness to reciprocate, engagement in your community, volunteering, a shared sense that one can effect change in the community, participating in the political life of one’s community and having trust in institutions (NESF,2008:67).

The member organisations of Older and Bolder, working together through our Executive Committee, combine: the know-how to advise on a consultation strategy that would achieve these goals; the ability to mobilise people at local level; and the willingness to work constructively with the Office for Older People in this regard.

In terms of initial advice on the conduct of a public consultation, Older and Bolder proposes a set of minimum criteria, informed by consultation experience in the Irish and other settings (Cabinet Office, 2004; N. Ireland Act 1998; Personal Communications). An effective public consultation would incorporate the following :

- 6.1 A preliminary period of informal consultation, early and proactive identification of interested parties by the Office for Older People, and direct contact and discussion with stakeholders i.e. not confining consultation solely to colleagues in other Departments.
- 6.2 Clarity and transparency about the Terms of Reference for the Consultation.
- 6.3 A high visibility campaign by Government to heighten public awareness of the NPAS and of the intention to hold a public consultation; to generate enthusiasm for participation in the consultation; and to prompt popular discussion about ageing and older people.
- 6.4 Recognition of the multiple audiences for an NPAS consultation process i.e. older people and their advocates, sub-groups of older people, the general public.
- 6.5 A public commitment given by the Minister for Older People to listen to the voices of older people and others and to proactively respond to the views expressed.
- 6.6 A formal consultation period for a minimum period of 12 weeks with the use of multiple consultation methods: written submissions, regional “roadshow”, themed meetings with stakeholders with specific areas of expertise/interest, use of electronic methods.
- 6.7 An inclusive approach to the consultation that will take account of the particular barriers to participation experienced by vulnerable groups of older people i.e. people with dementia, in nursing homes, with significant disability or frailty.
- 6.8 Independent, authoritative and trusted individual(s) to chair public consultation sessions.
- 6.9 Clarity about specific questions and issues to be addressed by participants in the course of the consultation.

- 6.10 Accountability to participants in the public consultation, demonstrated by the provision of written public feedback about the responses received; specifically an analysis of responses to questions asked and how it is proposed to handle those responses. Feedback should also be provided on themes that came out of the consultation which were not covered by the initial questions posed.
- 6.11 Provision of a fund to enable local groups to organise their own consultative meetings regarding older people's issues and concerns (thus building local awareness, networks and capacity).

7. LEADING OUT ON THE NPAS

Though arrangements for the development of the NPAS have not yet been disseminated, it has been stated that the Office for Older People will lead the process. Older and Bolder looks forward to hearing more in the coming months about the vision of the Office for the NPAS with regard to the process for development, time-line for public consultation and content.

As with the development of the National Children's Strategy, Older and Bolder favours Governmental leadership and the establishment of an Inter-Departmental Group (IDG) to oversee the strategic development of the NPAS. The alliance would also favour membership at Secretary/Assistant Secretary to maximise "buy-in" to the Strategy at the highest level. Opportunities for all Government Departments to contribute to the deliberations regarding the NPAS will benefit the work. In terms of representation on the Inter-Departmental Group, Older and Bolder proposes that the membership should include representatives from the Health Service Executive, the Attorney General's Office, the Central Statistics Office (given the importance of a data strategy for policy and planning purposes) and representatives of all relevant Government Departments.

From the experience of our member organisations, we know that each of the following Departments have an influence on the lives of older people :

Departments of

- ⇒ An Taoiseach,
- ⇒ Arts, Sport and Tourism,
- ⇒ Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs,
- ⇒ Education and Science,
- ⇒ Enterprise, Trade and Employment,
- ⇒ Environment, Heritage and Local Government,
- ⇒ Finance,
- ⇒ Health and Children,
- ⇒ Justice, Equality and Law Reform,
- ⇒ Social and Family Affairs, and
- ⇒ Transport.

Replicating the approach adopted to the development of the National Children’s Strategy, Older and Bolder would like to see a Cross-Departmental Team (CDT) established to provide operational support to the Inter-Departmental Group.

The CDT should have clear terms of reference, membership at Principal/Assistant Principal Officer level, and a remit to make specific arrangements for inter and intra- departmental information-sharing and action regarding the development and implementation of the NPAS.

Older and Bolder believes that regional and national strategic and implementation issues should be considered from the outset and considers that local authorities should be involved in the NPAS planning process.

Access to academic and international expertise, whether as part of the Inter-Departmental Group or by means of another mechanism, will aid the development of a world class NPAS for Ireland.

8. ROLE OF THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL SECTOR

As stated earlier, the Programme for Government refers to the intention to liaise with recognised voluntary groups in the development of the NPAS. Older and Bolder would like the Minister for Older People and the Office for Older People to go further than this and to set out how the Governmental sector intends to engage with, and involve, the non-governmental sector in this project of mutual interest to both sectors.

We would, for example, be concerned to hear that the plan is to invite comments on a draft strategy as it nears completion. From our perspective, an opportunity to contribute to the shaping of a strategy while it is in the early stages of development would be more fruitful. During the preparation of the National Children’s Strategy, a non-governmental advisory panel was established. If specialist panels are to be established to contribute to the development of the NPAS, Older and Bolder advises that these facilitate collaboration, direct interaction and exchange of information, views and documents between statutory, non-governmental and governmental stakeholders throughout the process.

For its part, Older and Bolder would like to make clear its readiness and commitment to playing a constructive role in the development of the NPAS. As an alliance of eight NGOs who are both service providers and advocacy groups in the ageing sector, we believe that we have a contribution to make on behalf of, and with, older people – and a right to make that contribution.

In terms both of Older and Bolder's role in the development of the NPAS and the conduct of a meaningful consultation with older people, we note the findings of the Taskforce on Active Citizenship.

Active citizenship, according to the Taskforce, is about engagement, participation in society and valuing contributions made by individuals, whether they are employed or outside the traditional workforce (Taskforce, 2007: 2). The Taskforce drew the conclusion that :

“Civic engagement can only be sustained if people believe that they can influence decision-making and that their views are taken into account.”

Taskforce recommendations to Government, based on a recognition of the distinctive but complementary and mutually respectful relationship between citizens and the State, were accepted in full in 2007.

9. A FIT FOR PURPOSE STRATEGY

Older and Bolder is concerned that the institutional arrangements for the development, implementation, monitoring and review of the NPAS should ensure that it is placed high on the political agenda and remains there.

This would entail a developed role for the Minister for Older People and the Office for Older People, enabled by legislation, and the establishment of a Cabinet sub-committee. Government has already indicated that consideration would be given to the appointment of an Ombudsman for Older People and we believe that a specific mechanism to promote and protect older people's rights is necessary.

In general, we can draw lessons from experience in other

sectors in terms of identifying other essential elements of a “fit for purpose” national strategy on ageing:

- 9.1 A set of core values and principles and Older and Bolder has previously proposed the United Nations Principles for Older People in this regard.
- 9.2 A conceptual and evidence-based understanding of the ageing process that is holistic, developmental and inclusive of a life span perspective; and that is reflective of an ‘ethos of potential’ as people age, regardless of their physical capabilities.
- 9.3 A legislative framework.
- 9.4 A range of policy goals that cross the determinants of ‘active ageing’ as set out by the World Health Organisation : gender, culture, health and social services, economic, social, personal and behavioural determinants and the physical environment (WHO, 2002; IPH, 2008).
- 9.5 Goals that are translated into specific, measurable and time-scheduled targets/objectives, underpinned by baseline data and an action plan for implementation.
- 9.6 Clear arrangements for reporting, monitoring and evaluation, including accountability to older people, their advocates and to An Oireachtas.
- 9.7 Planning from the outset for implementation and delivery at national, regional and local levels
- 9.8 A dedicated, multi-annual budget
- 9.9 An institutional mechanism for independent monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the strategy. This could take the form of a National Consultative Group on Ageing and Older People comprising all interests – policy, service providers, academics, older people themselves.

10. PRINCIPLES AND VALUES FOR NPAS

The UN General Assembly adopted the United Nations Principles for Older Persons in 1991, encouraging governments to incorporate the principles of independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity into national programmes whenever possible (UN General Assembly, 1991). The UN Principles were incorporated into the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing in 2002 and subsequently into the Regional Implementation Strategy (RIS) adopted by the members of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)- including Ireland. The Regional Implementation Strategy was reviewed at the UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing held in Leon, Spain in October 2007 and attended by the Minister for Older People, Maire Hctor, T.D.

Older and Bolder has previously recommended that any new Strategy for Older People should embrace the UN Principles for Older Persons (O'Shea, 2006). Older and Bolder re-states our recommendation and further recommends that a public consultation process should be conducted with reference to the implications of those principles for public policy.

Older and Bolder also favours the inclusion in the NPAS of a life-course perspective and a commitment to the promotion of inter-generational solidarity, both fundamental to an age friendly society (NCAOP, 2005).

11. WHAT IS THE DEMOGRAPHIC BOUNTY ?

In his 2006 paper for Older and Bolder, Professor Eamon O'Shea, NUIG wrote of the demographic bounty represented by the growing proportion of the Irish population made up of older people (O'Shea, 2006).

This paper highlighted the contribution of older people in families, as carers, as volunteers, as service givers, as consumers, as a cohesive glue and source of stability in a changing world and as artists, musicians, writers and dramatists whose contributions deepen and become more refined with age.

Older people are a heterogeneous group, a fact not always acknowledged or understood. In later life, people move through stages from young-old through mid-old to old-old. Equally, there are widespread disparities between people in the same age cohort in terms of physical and mental health, income levels, living arrangements, productivity, support systems, activities, interests, attitudes and personality. These differences between individual older people and between groups of older people must be taken into account in strategy planning. One size fits all will not do. There is a value in economic and philosophical terms in choosing policies which are actively designed to extend the number of years older people spend in health, well-being and independence and to postpone dependency for as long as possible.

This is not to diminish the value of people experiencing dependency or to compromise on the care, consideration and responsibility they are owed. It is to acknowledge that the longer older people – of whatever age – can remain self-actualising, the better for older people as individuals and

for society. This attitude also benefits people experiencing dependency in that resources can be targeted more usefully and meaningfully to them. At a policy level, positive ageing means developing and implementing policies that integrate rather than segregate older people as they move through later life stages.

A helpful and inclusive attitude towards old age is that daily, yearly, we are all growing older, that our bodies are constantly changing and developing, our ideas and attitudes are constantly forming and reforming as we move from childhood to adolescence to adulthood to middle age and older age – and that we hold within us as we age our younger and our older selves (See also Dempsey, 2005:1-18).

12. AGE-FRIENDLY POLICY AND PRACTICE

Older and Bolder's view is that the realisation of the potential of our demographic bounty is dependent on age friendly public policy and practice, underpinned by the UN Principles for Older Persons.

International experience shows that there is a commonality in terms of the policy themes that a national ageing strategy must address. The themes include income, housing, transport, the continuum of health and social care services, security, education and the participation of older people in society. There is also a commonality in terms of the issues faced in meeting older people's needs. These include:

- ⇒ the pervasiveness of ageism;
- ⇒ the challenge of developing flexible, cross-sectoral and person-centred systems and processes; and
- ⇒ the urgency of the problems faced by vulnerable sub-groups of older people whose lives are blighted by poverty, abuse and social exclusion.

The challenge in Ireland will be to create and implement a strategic framework that is responsive to the individualised and group needs of a heterogeneous older population.

13. INDEPENDENCE

Independence is possible at all stages of life and in diverse circumstances. These include the circumstances of people with significant disability, frailty and/or using hospice and palliative care services. Independence is enabled by :

- ⇒ a willingness to remove artificial barriers to independent living;
- ⇒ an understanding of the degree to which individual dependency and disablement is socially created; and
- ⇒ a commitment to the creation of supportive environments that will maximise people's quality of life as they age(O'Shea, 2006; Goode & Fitzgerald, 2005; Walker, 2004); and
- ⇒ a pledge to provide adequate and appropriate resources on an ongoing basis.

A core requirement is a commitment to learn from older people what their own understandings of independence are, how those understandings evolve over the later life course and how resulting support needs change in light of evolving understandings.

For example, a UK study, conducted for the Dept. of Work and Pensions, found that ideas of self-reliance and autonomy were key to pensioners' understandings of independence; and that support systems needed to adapt to pensioners' evolving understandings and meet needs through periods of acute challenge and transition (Parry et al, 2004). Older and Bolder is also aware of the challenge we will face in seeking to define

independence for, and with, people with dementia or other cognitive capacity issues.

14. PARTICIPATION

Older people's participation in all areas of life including work, volunteering, civic life and family life is necessary, of benefit to society as well as to individuals, and should be actively enabled. Older and Bolder's members repeatedly hear concerns from their local groups about the lack of rural transport and security. Enabling participation requires :

- ⇒ action to counteract older people's exclusion from all spheres of life including work, cultural, social and educational activities;
- ⇒ participation of older people in the policy process, including the consultation process informing the development of the NPAS;
- ⇒ participation of older people in the delivery and evaluation of public services;
- ⇒ recognition and acknowledgement of the value of older people's contribution to family, community and public life.

Social networks play a strong role in supporting participation of older people in all areas of life. Clear policy guidelines and resources are required to encourage and support social networking of older people with particular relevance to physical, arts, cultural and life-long learning activities.

15. CARE

Care of older people, as of all citizens, must be person-centred, integrated and provided when and where people need it. The key is the provision of a continuum of care to enable the fulfilment of principles first set out in The Years Ahead (1988).

These included the maintenance of older people at home in accordance with their own wishes as expressed in many research studies and restoration to independence at home of those older people who do become ill or dependent. A continuum of care requires :

- ⇒ entitlement, underpinned by legislation, to core health and social care services;
- ⇒ person-centred assessment of health and social care needs;
- ⇒ access to a range of comprehensive support services for carers, taking account of the fact that specific groups of carers have specific needs e.g. people aged 65 years and over are one such specific group comprising 11 per cent -18,152- of all carers(Census 2006); carers of the sick and dying are another such group;
- ⇒ adequate and accountable health information systems for policy and planning purposes;
- ⇒ configuration of health and social care services to meet individual rather than administrative needs i.e. access to generic health and social care services and to dementia, disability, palliative and other specific services on the basis of need;
- ⇒ barriers to access to health and social care services identified with older people and removed e.g. arbitrary age limits, administrative categories, geographic disparities;
- ⇒ proactive promotion of healthy ageing at all ages and stages of life, optimising opportunities for physical, social and mental health and well-being;
- ⇒ commitment to the implementation of healthy ageing initiatives and activities in residential care settings;
- ⇒ recognition of the human and economic merits of maintaining older people in good health, postponing the onset of disability and illness in so far as is possible through

attention to the social determinants of health(IPH, 2008);

- ⇒ recognition of the fear and insecurity experienced by older people in the event of falls and other health setbacks in a context of inadequate health and rehabilitation services;
- ⇒ a commitment to systematically identifying and removing age discrimination against older people in the health services, such has been undertaken in England with the development of the National Service Framework for Older People.

16. SELF-FULFILMENT

Self-fulfilment for older people requires that their autonomy and sense of personal identity is respected and validated. This involves:

- ⇒ attention to the impact of care structures on perceptions of the self and identity in older age e.g. residential care should enhance positive images of the self, rather than dismantle personal identity;
- ⇒ opportunity for older people to make care choices and engage in meaningful activities in all care situations and settings; and to have their choices respected;
- ⇒ advocacy services for people who cannot speak for themselves in care settings;
- ⇒ commitment to an “ethos of potential” as people age, no matter what stage they are at;
- ⇒ the development of educational programmes that will nurture the role of older people as mentors and educators;
- ⇒ identification by older people of definitions and images that challenge ageist stereotypes, and public awareness initiatives to support this process.

As with the principle of independence, Older and Bolder is

aware of the challenge of defining self-fulfilment with and for people with dementia or other cognitive capacity issues. This too will be a work in progress.

17. DIGNITY

Older people's dignity is respected, and their self-respect maintained, when they are accorded full citizenship rights on a basis of equality with other citizens of the Irish State. With regard to this principle, the UN states that older people should be free of exploitation and physical or mental abuse and be treated fairly regardless of age, gender and race or ethnic background. The population data that are available to us about older people's experiences of inequality and abuse in the Irish setting are patchy.

With regard to elder abuse, we do not have Irish prevalence data. Internationally, the prevalence rate for elder abuse is estimated at 3-5 per cent of older adults living in the community (Working Group on Elder Abuse, 2002).

Experience of discrimination has been reported by 6.3 per cent of persons aged 65 years and over.

Of the total population, just over 3 per cent report experience of discrimination on the basis of age (and that is age discrimination at both younger and older ages).

In terms of knowledge of their rights under Irish equality law, 27.5 per cent of persons aged 65 years and over say that they have no understanding of their rights; 53.7 per cent report that they understand a little; and 18.9 per cent report that they understand a lot (CSO, November 2007 : 13-14).

18. CONCLUSION

With respect to older people's knowledge and understanding of their rights, and societal understanding of older people's priorities in this regard, clearly we have a distance to travel.

Older and Bolder's belief is that consultation with older people, in advance of the development of the National Positive Ageing Strategy, is the next step on that societal journey.

APPENDIX ONE

MEMBERS OF OLDER AND BOLDER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chairperson	Tom O'Higgins
Active Retirement Ireland	Maureen Kavanagh Kevin Molloy
Age Action Ireland	Robin Webster Eamon Timmins
Age and Opportunity	Catherine Rose Ann Leahy Sue Russell
Alzheimer Society of Ireland	Maurice O'Connell Sarah O'Callaghan
Carers Association	Enda Egan Seán Dillon
Irish Hospice Foundation	Eugene Murray Caroline Lynch
Irish Senior Citizens Parliament	Máiread Hayes
Senior Helpline	Mary Nally Anne Dempsey
Older and Bolder Grantee	Pat Montague, Montague Communications
Older and Bolder Project Director and Atlantic Philanthropies Consultant to Older and Bolder (Middlequarter) (Observer status)	Patricia Conboy Owen Keenan

APPENDIX TWO

UNITED NATIONS DEFINITIONS OF THE PRINCIPLES FOR OLDER PERSONS

Independence

The UN states that Older persons should have access to food, water, shelter, clothing, health care, work and other income-generating opportunities, education, training and a life in safe environments.

Participation

The UN states that Older persons should remain integrated into community life and participate actively in the formulation of policies affecting their well-being.

Care

The UN states that older people should have access to social and legal services and to health care so that they can maintain an optimum level of physical, mental and emotional well-being. This should include full respect for dignity, beliefs, needs and privacy.

Self-fulfilment

The United Nations states that older people should have access to educational, cultural, spiritual and recreational resources and be able to develop their full potential.

Dignity

The UN states that older people should be able to live in dignity and security, be free of exploitation and physical or mental abuse and be treated fairly regardless of age, gender and race or ethnic background.

APPENDIX THREE

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