



Rights of Older People

Census figures from 2011 indicate that the number of older people (aged 65 and over) in Ireland has exceeded 500,000 for the first time, which is a 14.4% increase since the previous census.

In 2013, the Department of Health and Children published the *National Positive Ageing Strategy*, which aims to “act as a catalyst for action and innovation to promote the health, wellbeing and quality of life of people as they age in Ireland by focusing attention on issues relevant to older people across the policy development and service delivery process.” The operating principles underpinning the Strategy are derived from the UN Principles for Older Persons which are **independence, participation, care, self-fulfillment** and **dignity**.

A commitment to publish and implement this strategy was made in the current Programme for Government (2011-2016), however, repeated concerns have been raised regarding the continued failure to provide details, including a timeframe, for the full implementation of the strategy.

Recommendations

Introduce an implementation plan for the National Positive Ageing Strategy

Examine the impact of austerity measures on older people with a view to ensuring support services are sufficiently resourced

Introduce targeted measures to combat waiting times under the Nursing Home Support Strategy

Ensure that funding and allocation of home help hours matches the growing ageing population and demand for such service

Develop a care system which enables older people to have a choice around their long term care needs

The Government has failed to introduce an implementation plan for the National Positive Ageing Strategy which was published in 2013.

Older people have been negatively affected as a result of reductions in secondary income supports, rising prices and the introduction of new taxes and charges, in addition to the lack of waiver system for those on low incomes. Lone pensioners are particularly disadvantaged and research indicates that those living alone and solely dependent on the state pension are unable to attain an adequate standard of living.

Cuts to funding for the Nursing Home Support Scheme in 2014 led to significant increases in waiting lists and times. In 2015 the government provided additional funding for nursing home care and reduced waiting times. However, similar financial support to enable older people to remain at home has not been forthcoming. This is most evident by the fact that, despite an increase (11%) in the number of people aged 85 and over, home help hours have not increased from 2012 levels.

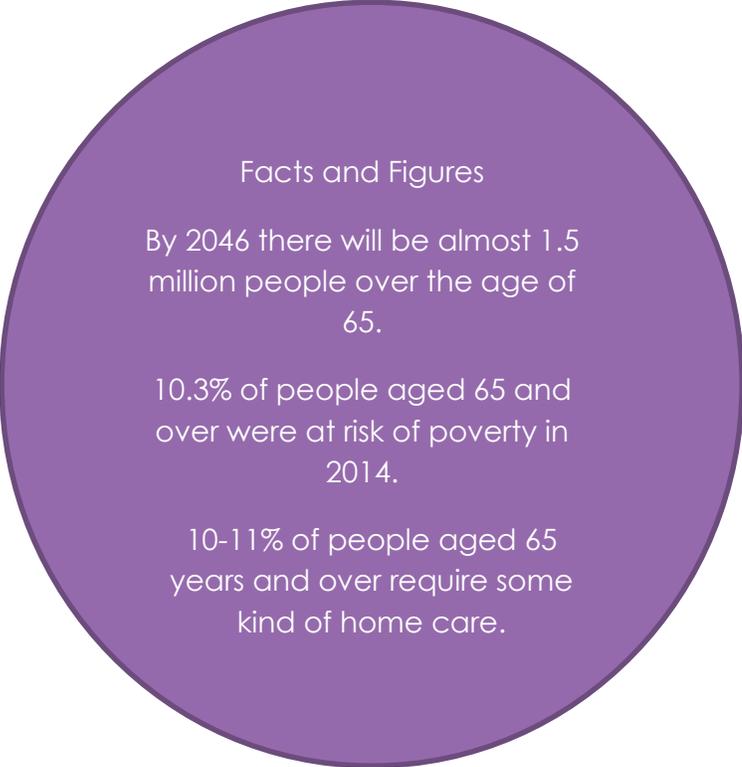
About Your Rights. Right Now

Your Rights. Right Now is a coalition of 17 Irish NGOs, trade unions and civil society groups established by the Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL) in 2010 to coordinate the civil society response to Ireland's first examination under the Universal Periodic Review. This group was re-convened in 2015 in advance of Ireland's second examination. The coalition conducted a number of general and thematic consultations and invited written submissions to inform its report which was submitted to the UN in September 2015.

Members of the coalition are:

- Age Action
- Educate Together
- Free Legal Advice Centres
- Gay and Lesbian Equality Network
- Immigrant Council of Ireland
- Irish Congress of Trade Unions
- Irish Council for Civil Liberties
- Irish Family Planning Association
- Irish Penal Reform Trust
- Irish Traveller Movement
- Mercy Law Resource Centre
- NUI Galway, Centre for Disability Law and Policy
- Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre
- Transgender Equality Network Ireland
- Union of Students in Ireland
- Disability Federation of Ireland

For more information see www.rightsnow.ie



Facts and Figures

By 2046 there will be almost 1.5 million people over the age of 65.

10.3% of people aged 65 and over were at risk of poverty in 2014.

10-11% of people aged 65 years and over require some kind of home care.

