

Statement on Positive Ageing

Introduction

In 2011 the Irish Programme for Government committed to completing and implementing the National Positive Ageing Strategy so that 'older people are recognised, supported and enabled to live independent full lives'. The Vision of the strategy, which was published in 2013 is that: *Ireland will be a society for all ages that celebrates and prepares properly for individual and population ageing. It will enable and support all ages and older people to enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential. It will promote and respect older people's engagement in economic, social, cultural, community and family life, and foster better solidarity between generations. It will be a society in which the equality, independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment and dignity of older people are pursued at all times.*

KARE have developed this statement on Positive Ageing in line with the vision set out in the national strategy, with the aim of supporting individuals using the service to view and experience ageing as a positive life event.

Key principles

KARE endorses the following principles with regard to positive ageing for people who use the service:

- It is important that people continue to lead a full and meaningful life as they age, through active citizenship and engagement in activities that enhance their physical, mental and social health and wellbeing. KARE will support individuals to remain healthy, active and productive as they age.
- Loneliness and isolation is commonly experienced by individuals who are ageing, whether they live in the community, with families or on their own.
KARE will support individuals to:
 - maintain friendships and connections made over the years through meaningful opportunities
 - engage in leisure and social activities they enjoy.
 - get out and about, use their local community amenities
 - participate in community activities/groups for people who are ageing as they so choose
- Maintaining family connections becomes more important as a person ages. KARE will encourage and support individuals to maintain family connections as they choose e.g. by having their family to their home for dinner, attending family events, shared social events etc.
- While ageing may bring associated health conditions, reduced mobility and impaired vision and hearing, every individual, regardless of age, has the right to enjoy the highest possible standard of physical and mental health and wellbeing. KARE will support individuals to stay healthy as they age by providing them with relevant information, encouraging health checks and supporting them to manage any associated health conditions.

- Remaining physically active is important for people as they age. KARE will support individuals to remain as physically active as possible e.g. by participating in local walking groups, continuing involvement with sport, using the gym, classes etc.
- Assistive Technology, modifying activities and environmental adaptation can often enable an ageing person to remain independent for longer. KARE will support individuals to remain as independent as possible by assisting them to access assistive technology and make changes to how they do things as appropriate to their needs.
- Each person should be involved in decisions about their life as they age, including decisions about their living arrangements, care, medical intervention and end of life matters. KARE will support individuals to make informed decisions and will involve them and their family as relevant, in the development, review and updating of their Individual Support Plan. Individual's will continue to be encouraged to explore their wishes and dreams and set goals as they age. The Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act 2015 recognises a person's right to make their own decisions and provides for legally recognised supports where required. KARE will support the implementation of the Act once it is enacted.
- Peoples needs and preferences change as they age, they may prefer a slower pace of life, they may need longer to undertake daily living tasks or they may prefer a quieter environment. KARE will use individualised planning to identify the needs and preferences of individuals as they age, working together to seek alternative ways of doing things as necessary.