

EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES ON POLICY DEVELOPMENT

➤ Isolation and loneliness in older people- Fingal libraries approach to connecting people and services

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BACKGROUND

- “The library is the place information, recreation, inspiration”

National public library strategy 2023-2027

- Fingal library service development plan 2024-2029

Fingal

330,000 population

450 sq. kms

Largest towns: Blanchardstown, 80,000. Swords 40776

coastline of 88km. Large rural areas

Fingal libraries

10 branch/service points

Housebound service

4 mobile vans



CHALLENGES AND OBJECTIVES

The objective: to provide an accessible, democratic, inclusive space to support wellbeing, lifelong learning and to enable all citizens to participate fully in society, helping to eliminate isolation and loneliness

Challenges

Isolation in rural and urban areas

Large county

27% residents born outside Ireland

Aging population

Areas that score highly on the social deprivation index

In a public library context, the provision of appropriate programming and ensuring reach to all



ACTIONS AND ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN

- Mobile library stops in 62 locations per month
- Housebound library service delivery to 142 clients plus residential care settings
- Actions relating to Alzheimers patients and their families, Silverlinings choir online sessions and Creative Brainwaves
- Age friendly monthly movies
- Hi 5 digital tablets
- University of the 3rd age meetings
- Healthy Ireland and age friendly programming in libraries
- Fondly Fingal, a new pen pal initiative for older people
- Chatty Cafes
- Creative Connections



RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

All 10 libraries in Fingal are now Age Friendly with an age friendly ambassador in each one
Delivery of programming across all libraries that reflects the needs of a broad population base
Expansion of Skills for Life and Digital literacy programming
3 programmes a year- Spring/summer, Autumn, Winter. 2500+ activities per year

Lessons:

Consult with the audience, where they are.

Tailor programming in terms of timings & locations

Simple activities easily replicable work well- chatty Café with tea and coffee



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT

- Fingal Libraries occupy a unique position at the intersection of policy and practice. They are both a delivery mechanism for policy objectives and a trusted source of evidence about community needs, behaviours and outcomes
- Ongoing engagement with older people generates evidence on local needs, helping to shape future policy priorities and service design
- Using libraries as conduits for policy implementation in relation to wellbeing allows for wide community reach in a democratic environment



Thank you!