

Strengthening Community Bonds to Support Older People: A Dynamic Partnership between ALONE and the GAA

Pauline Rooney¹, Roisin Clarke¹, Stuart Moloney², Colin Regan², Dr Aileen O'Reilly¹³

¹ALONE, ²Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), ³University College Dublin



Introduction

- By 2050 there will be 2.1 billion older people, comprising one-fifth of the total global population (WHO, 2002)
- Movement to support integrated social and health care system that allows older adults to age in place (Wiles et al., 2011)
- ALONE and GAA entered formal partnership to improve understanding of older people's needs, build local capacity to support older people, and raise awareness of ALONE services
- Series of information events delivered by ALONE staff via GAA Healthy Club initiative in 9 locations

Method

- Survey for attendees measuring satisfaction with event, awareness of ALONE services, intentions to support older people
- Survey for Club Coordinators to provide feedback on organising event
- 228 attendees, 70% of audience was 65+
- Large turnout of older persons in rural clubs (Eslin, Inch & Drum)

Club	Attendees
Annacurra, Wicklow	21
Baile na nGalloglach, Milford, Donegal	40
Castlebar Mitchels, Mayo	6
Dr. Crokes, Kerry	49
Eslin, Leitrim	31
Inch and Drum	60
Louth County Event	5
Lucan Sarsfields, Dublin	16
Total Attendees	228

- 88 attendees, 6 Club Coordinators completed post-event surveys

Results

1. Overall rating of event from attendees was 4.81
2. 32% unaware of ALONE services before event
3. Increase of approx. 5-15 referrals to ALONE after events (fewer in smaller clubs)
4. 89% indicated more likely to support older persons in community after event
5. All Club Coordinators observed challenges with attendance



Conclusions

- Local community partnerships vital for services in supporting older people to age in place
- Significant willingness and capacity to support older people in local communities
- ALONE and GAA seeking to build on partnership by coproducing specific campaign for older people, and building capacity of GAA volunteers to support older people e.g. through digital skills training

References

- World Health Organization. (2002). *The world health report 2002: reducing risks, promoting healthy life*. World Health Organization.
- Wiles, J. L., Leibling, A., Guberman, N., & MSW, R. J. and Allen, RES, (2011). The meaning of Ageing in place to older people. *The Gerontologist*.