



Policy Options to Support Ageing Well at Home

Budget 2026



As society faces several major transitions, including demographic shifts, the way we navigate these changes is crucial. ALONE and *Social Justice Ireland* believe that all individuals should be supported to age well in the community, and that this should be Government's overarching policy goal for an ageing population. Meeting the social care, health and housing needs of an ageing population is a key challenge in achieving this goal.

ALONE is a national organisation that enables older people to age at home. ALONE's work is for all older people and aims to improve physical, emotional and mental wellbeing. *Social Justice Ireland* is an independent think tank and social justice advocacy organisation. Both organisations support a vision of Ireland where older people can age happily and securely at home and are strongly connected to their local communities.

Based on projections by the Central Statistics Office (CSO, 2024a), the proportion of individuals aged 65+ will increase by 70 per cent between 2022 and 2040; an increase of more than half a million people. Public policy must support the additional needs that arise as more people live longer and as the demography of our population changes. The Budget recommendations outlined in this paper provide a pathway towards ensuring a greater quality of life for older people in Ireland. By creating the right conditions, we can enable people to remain a part of their community and age in place in maximum comfort and dignity in their homes. These recommendations align with aims of the 2013 *National Positive Ageing Strategy*: to promote older people's health and wellbeing so that older people can continue to contribute to social, economic, cultural, and family life in their own communities for as long as possible.

We believe that equity of access should be a guiding principle in this vision, ensuring that everyone, regardless of income or location, has the same opportunities to age well at home. More comprehensive analysis underlying our Budget recommendations is available in both our 2024 and 2025 reports, *Policies for Ageing Well at Home in Ireland*.¹

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE

Policymakers need to plan for the growing needs of an ageing population. According to the CSO, the number of people aged 65+ grew by 21.8 per cent between Census 2016 and Census 2022, with the largest increases among those aged 70+ (27 per cent) and 85+ (25 per cent).

The CSO projects the number of people aged 65 and over will grow by 548,850 to 1,330,149 people by 2040 (see Table 1), making up 22 per cent of the population, up from 15 per cent in 2022. This age group will account for 63.5 per cent of the overall population growth. Additionally, nearly 400,000 people will be aged 80+ by 2040, twice the current number.

¹ ALONE & Social Justice Ireland, (2024) [Policies for Ageing Well at Home in Ireland](#); and ALONE & Social Justice Ireland, (2025) *Policies for Ageing Well at Home in Ireland: Health and Wellbeing*.

Table 1: Projected population by age group (including as a percentage of total population).

Age	2022		2025		2030		2035		2040	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
All Ages	5,183,966		5,423,289		5,674,843		5,875,333		6,048,300	
65+	781,299	15.07	859,195	15.84	1,004,866	17.71	1,157,389	19.70	1,330,149	21.99
65-69	240,482	4.64	255,735	4.72	295,238	5.20	321,992	5.48	364,453	6.03
70-74	204,684	3.95	218,863	4.04	242,715	4.28	281,354	4.79	308,187	5.10
75-79	155,017	2.99	175,755	3.24	198,194	3.49	221,896	3.78	259,289	4.29
80-84	96,758	1.87	112,734	2.08	145,761	2.57	167,433	2.85	190,490	3.15
85+	84,358	1.63	96,108	1.77	122,958	2.17	164,714	2.80	207,730	3.43

Source: Based on CSO Population and Labour Force Projections 2023-2057 (M2)

HEALTH, CARE AND AGEING

Ageing populations represent increased longevity, a success story that is to be welcomed. However, we develop additional health and care needs as we age, many of which can be provided for in the community, which allows older people to age well at home. Significant increases, particularly in the numbers of people who are amongst the oldest old, will result in increased numbers living with long-term illness or disability as well as other health challenges. Results from the 2022 Census demonstrate a strong link between disability and age, with a marked increase in the prevalence of disability from age 75 onwards (with disability defined as experiencing at least one long-lasting condition or difficulty). Data from the 2019 Irish Health Survey highlights significant functional limitations among older adults, with 10 per cent reporting difficulty preparing meals, 9 per cent struggling to get in and out of bed or a chair, and 8 per cent experiencing difficulty bathing or showering.²

Overall, while Ireland's population is ageing, the expected number of healthy life years at 65 has decreased from 13.6 years in 2019 to 11.6 years in 2022.³ The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA) has highlighted some of the key health issues facing older adults. These include cardiovascular diseases (e.g., hypertension, stroke), non-cardiovascular chronic conditions (e.g., diabetes, sensory impairment) and chronic respiratory diseases, which are common

² CSO (2020) *Irish Health Survey 2019 - Carers and Social Supports*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-ihsc/irishhealthsurvey2019-carersandsocialsupports/>

³ CSO. (2024) Older Persons Information Hub. Retrieved from: <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/hubs/p-opi/olderpersonsinformationhub/health/healthylifeyears/>

among older Irish adults. Additionally, issues such as obesity, polypharmacy (use of multiple medications), cancer and falls are significant health concerns.⁴

According to TILDA, 37 per cent of older adults experienced a fall over the course of 4 years, of which 18 per cent required hospital attendance. Overall, this equates to 60,000 people per year in Ireland, with mobility issues a significant risk factor for falls.⁵ According to the 2019 Irish Health Survey, 15 per cent of people aged 65+ reported difficulty walking or climbing stairs. Untreated sensory impairments can lead to greater risks of accidents and isolation, emphasising the need for expanded access to sensory health options, such as hearing aids and vision support. Furthermore, assistive technologies can be used to support individuals with these and other conditions.

Social integration plays a vital role in promoting the health of older adults who live at home. After the age of 67, older adults in Ireland generally become lonelier and more socially isolated with age, increasing the risk of mental health issues. More than three quarters (76.6 per cent) of the loneliest third of older adults had clinically significant depressive symptomology when assessed.⁶ In needs assessments of older people supported by ALONE, conducted with over 15,000 older adults living at home in 2024, loneliness and physical health were the most frequently reported concerns.⁷ Substantial research has demonstrated that social isolation and loneliness increase the risk for a host of physical health issues as well, such as increased blood pressure, mortality, cancer, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, weakened immune function, and frailty.⁸

Another health-related issue that challenges independent living among older people is nutrition. According to the Irish Society for Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism (IrSPEN), there has been a 59 per cent increase in the numbers of patients of all ages with or at significant risk of malnutrition (up from 140,000). The increases have been driven by demographic changes, with older people five times more likely to develop malnutrition than younger adults.⁹ Older people living alone, particularly those in poor social circumstances, are identified as being at higher risk of malnutrition due to factors such as reduced appetite,

⁴ Barrett, et al. (2011). *Fifty Plus in Ireland 2011 First results from the Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing (TILDA) Contributors*. Retrieved from:

https://tilda.tcd.ie/publications/reports/pdf/w1-key-findings-report/Tilda_Master_First_Findings_Report.pdf

⁵ McGarrigle, et al. (2017). *Health and Wellbeing: Active Ageing for Older Adults in Ireland Evidence from The Irish Longitudinal Study on Ageing*. <https://tilda.tcd.ie/publications/reports/pdf/w3-key-findings-report/TILDA%20Wave%203%20Key%20Findings%20report.pdf>

⁶ Ward, M., McGarrigle, C.A. & Kenny, R.A. *More than health: quality of life trajectories among older adults—findings from The Irish Longitudinal Study of Ageing (TILDA)*. *Qual Life Res* 28, 429–439 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11136-018-1997-y>

⁷ ALONE. (2025). *ALONE ECC Report 2024*. Retrieved from: <https://alone.ie/alone-ecc-report-2024/>

⁸ Holt-Lundstad, J., et al. (2015) Loneliness and social isolation as risk factors for mortality: a meta-analytic review; Kraav, S., et al. (2020) The effects of loneliness and social isolation on all-cause, injury, cancer, and CVD mortality in a cohort of middle-aged Finnish men. A prospective study

⁹ IrSPEN. (2025). *Dramatic increase in malnutrition in Ireland due to aging population*. Retrieved from: <https://irspen.ie/dramatic-increase-in-malnutrition-in-ireland-due-to-aging-population/>

difficulty accessing or preparing food, and social isolation. In line with this, ALONE's 2024 need assessments showed nutrition issues increased by 35 per cent compared with the previous year.¹⁰

Although home support is an efficient and cost-effective alternative to overused hospital facilities, managing the increase in disability and chronic conditions at home requires significant supports across the community. It is against this backdrop of increasing demand for care, that waiting lists for Home Support pose a great challenge, now primarily associated with an increasing capacity issue related to the availability of care staff. In February 2025, 4,761 people were on the national waiting list for carers. Of these, 133 were waiting on funding, while 4,628 were waiting on a carer.¹¹ Day care centres also play an important role in offering programmes and services for older people with a variety of needs, including socialisation and activities as well as health services and rehabilitation. However, a 2020 study on geographic accessibility of day care services in Ireland found that there are large parts of the country where day care services are difficult to access.¹²

Meanwhile, key issues for carers include: the continued under-resourcing of appropriate respite care, failure to publish a refreshed National Carers' Strategy and the impact of the continuing chronic shortage of Home Support Workers on family carers who are being forced to care alone and unsupported. An additional issue has been the failure to deliver the long-awaited statutory home support entitlement.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE: BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

To improve access to care, progress a shift to a model that prioritises primary and social care, and to address the inequalities in our system, *Social Justice Ireland* and ALONE make the following recommendations for Budget 2026.

Invest €100m in GP Primary Care Services

Increasing the number of GP practice teams across the state will strengthen Primary Care services, ensuring timely access to care and reducing over-reliance on hospital care services. Of a total of 3,045 older people assessed by ALONE in 2024 who reported issues with personal care, 28 per cent had an issue with GP and primary care engagement or similar. 1,660 additional GPs are needed by 2028 per analysis from national doctors training and planning. To increase GP practice team care, Government should invest an additional €100m annually from 2026 for the next three years.

¹⁰ ALONE. (2025). *ALONE ECC Report 2024*. Retrieved from: <https://alone.ie/alone-ecc-report-2024/>

¹¹ PQ: 10937/25 and PQ: 10938/25: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/personalpq/pq/2025-pq-responses/march-2025/pq-10937-25-david-cullinane.pdf>

¹² Pierse, T; Keogh, F; O'Shea, E; Cullinan, J (2020) Geographic availability and accessibility of day care services for people with dementia in Ireland. BMC Health Services Research

Invest €50m to expand community-based rehabilitation care beds

To reduce pressure on acute hospital services and support more cost-effective healthcare delivery, the Government should invest €50m in expanding rehabilitation and respite care within Community Nursing Facilities. This investment aligns with national healthcare priorities and will help shift care into the community. With population growth projected to drive increased demand, a minimum of 3,000 additional post-acute rehabilitation beds will be required by 2031. An initial €50m investment in 2026 is a critical first step toward meeting that need over the next five years.

Invest €25.6m to expand acute mental healthcare capacity for older adults

The 2025 Programme for Government commits to fund mental health supports across all Integrated Care Programme for Older People (ICPOP) teams. While investment in primary and community-based mental health supports will reduce demand for acute services, current need exceeds capacity, requiring parallel investment in acute mental health beds. The 2024 specialist group report on acute mental health bed capacity found there were 1,134 public acute beds in Ireland, 832 fewer than required based on the 50 per 100,000 recommended by the Oireachtas Joint Committee on the Future of Mental Health.

By 2030, 454 acute mental health beds for older adults will be required, aligning with the recommendation of *A Vision for Change*, which outlines a need for at least 8 beds for older adults for every 50 acute mental health beds. At present only 63 acute mental health beds have been allocated for people aged over 65.¹³ Therefore, Government will have to make a minimum annual investment of €25.6m each year for the next 5 years to reach the minimum adequate level, with international best practice indicating a potentially higher requirement. We therefore recommend a minimum investment of €25.6m in 2026.

Allocate €1.7m to Falls Prevention through Community Exercise Programmes

Exercise programmes reduce the rate of falls and the number of falls among older people living in the community. These primarily involve balance and functional exercises plus resistance exercises. Indeed, the AFFINITY falls and bone health programme funded the training of 120 HSE physiotherapists and exercise professionals to deliver the Falls Management Exercise Programme (FaME). Research on three early adopter sites of FaME (Dublin, Kerry and Leitrim) is due to be completed with a toolkit to inform the expansion in Ireland. To begin the roll out of this service, we recommend that Government provide funding of €1.7m to reach over 14,000 older people in 2026.

¹³ Finnerty, S., (2020) Mental Health Services for Older People. Mental Health Commission
<https://www.mhcirl.ie/sites/default/files/2021-01/Mental-Health-Services-for-Older-People-Report-2020.pdf>

Invest €10m in the Meals on Wheels Network

In support of the 2025 Programme for Government commitment to increase funding for the national Meals on Wheels network, ALONE and *Social Justice Ireland* recommend that €10m be invested in 2026 to expand the Meals on Wheels network; to ensure that Meals on Wheels providers are adequately resourced to deliver high-quality nutritional meals; to develop the organisation through collaboration between all Meals on Wheels groups; and to develop robust national standards and protocols to support all local Meals on Wheels services. We additionally recommend that Government develop and implement a multi-annual sustainable streamlined funding model for Meals on Wheels services so that these vital services can be consistently delivered to older adults in need across the country.

Deliver a Healthy Ireland Public Awareness Campaign on Nutrition for Older Adults at a cost of €250k

We recommend Government develop a Healthy Ireland public awareness campaign on nutritional information, building on the recent Healthy Eating Resources, aimed at older adults to combat malnutrition among this group, at a cost of €250,000.

Develop an Action Plan to tackle loneliness and isolation, with €4m funding for community-based mental health initiatives

Given the links between loneliness and poor physical and mental health outcomes, Government must deliver, resource and implement a national action plan aimed at tackling loneliness and isolation, as contained in the Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025 and echoed in the 2020 Programme for Government. Within this, the Government should invest €4m to revive the community loneliness project which had previously been provided through the community mental health initiatives fund announced in 2019.

Allocate €5.7m to Fund Assistive Technology and Training to Support Ageing at Home

To fulfil the 2025 Programme for Government commitment to provide a dedicated funding stream for assistive and digital technology, to maximise independence and harness efficiencies, the HSE Community Funded Aids and Appliances scheme should be expanded to cover assistive digital technologies. To implement this expansion, funding to the schemes providing aids and appliances should be increased accordingly and continue to be increased on an annual basis in line with demographic changes. To do so, we recommend that the Community Funded Schemes budget be increased by €5m to pilot the delivery of digital assistive technology to some 12,500 people.

As the HSE moves towards increased use of virtual health appointments, it will be necessary to provide older people with basic training so that they can effectively and confidently avail of this option. Older persons' organisations, like as ALONE, should be funded to provide

such digital enablement training to support older people to access virtual health appointments. €720,000 should be provided in Budget 2026 to pilot this initiative.

Increase Funding for Home Support Services by €328.4m

In line with the 2025 Programme for Government commitment, Government should increase funding for home support services to deliver additional hours of care in line with the growing health and social care needs of older adults, and to address current waiting lists. This requires a funding allocation of €1.05bn to address current inadequacies in service provision and enable older people to live independently at home with the necessary support. We therefore recommend an additional investment of €328.4m in 2026.

Provide €3m to Establish Statutory Home Support Scheme

The 2025 Programme for Government commits to design a Statutory Homecare Scheme to allow people to stay in their own home for as long as possible. Building on work done to date, we recommend that €3m should be allocated to complete the development of a full statutory home support scheme, including system design, funding model, and regulation, and to include the development of capacity-building supports for the community and voluntary sector to meet revised standards in the delivery of the scheme. This will ensure that home care services are accessible and aligned with the evolving needs of the ageing population, guaranteeing consistent care for older individuals across the country.

Improve Day Care Provision and Access by Expanding Transport Services at a cost of €20m

In line with the 2025 Programme for Government commitment to enhance our network of day centres, Government should develop and implement a sustainable model for day care services for older adults in Ireland. This model should ensure access to high-quality care, meaningful social engagement, and support with daily living activities.

As part of this, Government should provide integrated funding for transport as a key component of day care services. Transportation is a significant barrier for many older adults, particularly those living in rural or under-serviced areas, preventing them from accessing day care and other essential services. To improve access to day care for older people across Ireland, we recommend an annual investment of €20m in transport funding to day care centres.

Invest €1.3m for Provision of Care in for Housing with Supports

While the construction of Housing with Supports units is a one-off capital expense, their effectiveness depends on the ongoing provision of supports. These supports cost approximately €2.5m per 100 units annually. In 2026, the 52 Housing with Supports units delivered under the Pathfinder project in Inchicore will be fully operational. We therefore

recommend that €1.3m be allocated in Budget 2026 to fund the delivery of essential on-site supports for these tenants.

Invest €20m to expand carers' respite services

Respite services and training opportunities for carers should be expanded, focusing on critical areas like dementia care and chronic condition management. This will help alleviate the financial and emotional strain on carers, ensuring they can continue to provide essential care to older adults while maintaining their own wellbeing. To do so, additional investment of €20m should be delivered annually, beginning in Budget 2026.

Invest €22m to increase the Carers' Support Grant

We recommend that Government increase support for unpaid carers in Ireland by raising the Carers' Support Grant from €2,000 to €2,150 annually, at a cost of €22m.

Introduce a Carers' Basic Income and Basic Services Pilot at a cost of €10m

The 2025 Programme for Government commits both to increase support for carers – providing training, establishing clearer pathways to services, and improving access to respite – and to fully fund the Carer's Guarantee. As a step towards realising the Carer's Guarantee, we recommend that Government pilot a universal basic services and universal basic income scheme for carers at a cost of €10m in 2026 to establish the pilot.

HOUSING AND AGEING

According to Census 2022, 83.4 per cent of people aged 65+ own the home where they live. 7.7 per cent of people aged 65+ rent from a local authority or voluntary body, while 3.5 per cent rent from the private sector. The number of households in this age-group renting in the private sector has increased by 83 per cent since Census 2016. The consequences include rising costs, unpredictability, and a lack of agency in one's rented home. These factors create major obstacles to ageing well at home, such as challenges in modifying living spaces and growing financial pressures, particularly for those depending on the state pension or housing subsidies. In 2021, the CSO reported that nearly half of renters over 65 were spending more than 35 per cent of their disposable income on rent.¹⁴

To fully grasp the scale of this emerging issue, the pattern of housing tenure of those currently aged 50 to 74 provides a critical insight, as they will form the 65 to 89 age cohort by 2040. Census 2022 data (Table 2) highlight a concerning shift: while ownership remains high among older adults today, there is a clear trend of rental or insecure tenure situations among

¹⁴ CSO, [The Rental Sector in Ireland 2021](#) (2021)

younger age groups. This reflects broader affordability challenges, which will likely intensify as more people age without having purchased a home. Yet, our pension model implicitly relies on homeownership and assumes householders will no longer be paying a mortgage or private rent in retirement. If this assumption no longer holds, the adequacy of pension income will be severely compromised.

Table 2: Housing tenure by persons aged 50-74 per Census 2022

	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	50-74
Owner occupied with loan or mortgage	82,336	55,995	30,998	13,591	5,919	188,839
Owner occupied without loan or mortgage	51,831	74,928	91,980	100,245	96,007	414,991
Rented from private landlord	23,154	16,108	11,123	6,948	4,426	61,759
Rented from a local authority	17,357	15,573	13,852	11,698	9,201	67,681
Rented from a voluntary body	3,135	2,475	2,163	1,852	1,495	11,120
Occupied free of rent	2,247	2,105	2,043	1,976	1,908	10,279
Not stated	7,088	6,017	5,604	4,853	4,288	27,850
All types of occupancy by persons 50-74	187,148	173,201	157,763	141,163	123,244	782,519
Non-Homeowner occupancies by persons 50-74	45,893	36,261	29,181	22,474	17,030	150,839
Non-Homeowner occupancies as % of All types of occupancy	25%	21%	18%	16%	14%	19%

Source: CSO, Census of Population 2022 Profile 2 - Housing in Ireland

HOUSING: BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

The 2019 *Housing Options for Our Ageing Population* policy statement from the Department of Housing and Department of Health underscored the importance of aligning appropriate housing solutions with the varying care and social support needs of older individuals. This policy statement outlines critical principles, including ageing in place, supporting urban renewal, sustainable lifetime housing based on Universal Design, recognising the transformative potential of assistive technologies and the importance of social interventions and support services. ALONE's 2019 *Housing Choices for Older People in Ireland - Time for Action* outlined a mix of Dedicated Older Person's Housing options built specifically to meet needs of people as they age. It includes multiple options with varying levels of support:

- The first level of Dedicated Older Person's Housing is **Housing with Supports**, which includes access to 24/7 on-site support and care. This may be an appropriate alternative to nursing homes for some people, offering a better quality of life. This option requires substantial investment and promotion from the government.
- The second level of Dedicated Older Person's Housing is **Supportive Housing**, which facilitates right-sizing and semi-independent living. This option requires targeted development of clusters of supportive housing across all tenures, with strong collaboration between housing and health authorities.
- The third level of Dedicated Older Person's Housing is **retirement villages and co-housing communities**, which offer older people community, mutual support, and

enables right-sizing. Retirement villages and co-housing must be planned for at a local level, and co-housing communities must be supported to grow by the central government.

The Budget 2026 recommendations to support housing for older people outlined below provide a pathway towards ensuring a greater quality of life for older people in Ireland.

Invest €426m to build 1,474 social housing units to support right-sizing for older renters

Considering demographic change, we recommend Government invest an additional €426m, funded from surplus windfall revenues, to build 1,474 social housing units in 2026 according to Universal Design principles.¹⁵ This would facilitate people aged 65+ who live in private rented, local authority and voluntary body rented accommodation to move to homes more appropriate to their needs as they age (“right-sizing”).

This is a step towards a goal of providing 22,115 right-sized social housing units by 2040, at a projected cost of €6.4bn.

Invest €426m to build 1,474 dedicated older person’s housing units

We recommend Government fund state-provided Dedicated Older Persons’ Housing options, with investment of €426m, funded from surplus windfall revenues, to build 1,474 Dedicated Older Person’s housing units in 2026. The mix of options built in 2026 should be 103 housing with support units, 1,032 supportive housing units, and 339 co-housing and retirement village units.

This is a step towards a goal of providing a total of 22,115 dedicated older person housing units by 2040, at a projected cost of €6.4bn. This includes targets of 1,548 housing with support units, 15,481 supportive housing units, and 5,086 co-housing and retirement village units by 2040.

Increase the housing adaptation grant funding by €12.5m

We recommend that Government allocate an additional €12.5m to housing adaptation grants in Budget 2026. This includes funding for grants and additional resources to improve access to and the drawdown of these grants, particularly for those facing financial or administrative barriers. This recommendation is part of a wider target of €302m investment

¹⁵ These costings are based on the [Total Development Cost Study 2024](#) by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. However, we have excluded several cost components that would not apply in a state-led, non-market housing development. These include:

- Land costs (assuming development occurs on publicly owned land)
- Sales, marketing, and legal fees (as no sale is involved)
- Finance costs (state-funded, no borrowing required)
- Developer risk / margin (not applicable in a non-profit public development)
- VAT (which may be exempt under EU rules for publicly delivered social housing)

in housing adaptation grants by 2040, an increase of €185m on top of the existing allocation of €117m. This target can be achieved through modest annual increases of €12.5m until 2040, allowing Government to meet this goal gradually while addressing the growing needs of an ageing population.

COMMUNITY SUPPORTS AND AGEING

As this paper demonstrates, there is significant overlap between housing, social care and health care needs of older people with each impacting on the effectiveness of the others. It also underscores the importance of community-based supports as a cornerstone of care for older adults in Ireland.

COMMUNITY SUPPORTS: BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

Below we outline two key recommendations to support older people through the community and voluntary sector while also safeguarding older persons in all aspects of policy and service delivery.

Increase Community and Voluntary Sector funding by €60m

The Community and Voluntary sector provide a range of key supports for older people, from befriending and social inclusion supports, to home support, and assistive technologies. Government should increase funding in this area by €60m in Budget 2026.

Establish Commissioner for Ageing and Older People at a cost of €1.2m

A Commissioner for Ageing and Older People would provide an independent voice with the ability and capacity to engage with all Government departments. They would drive the implementation of strategies and actions relating to the needs and rights of older people, taking a role independent of party politics. In Budget 2026, we therefore recommend Government provide for the creation of a Commissioner for Ageing and Older People with funding of €1.2m in the initial year, followed by €3.9m per annum in subsequent years.

Table 3: Total Recommended Investment to Support Ageing Well at Home in Budget 2026

Policy Recommendations	Required Investment	Department	Current/Capital
<i>Health and Wellbeing</i>			
Invest in Primary GP Care services	€100,000,000	Health	Current
Expand community-based rehabilitation care beds	€50,000,000	Health	Current
Expand acute mental healthcare capacity for older adults	€25,600,000	Health	Current
Invest in Falls Prevention Community Exercise Programmes	€1,700,000	Health	Current
Invest in the Meals on Wheels Network	€10,000,000	Health	Current
Public Awareness Campaign on Nutrition for Older Adults	€250,000	Health	Capital
Revive community loneliness project	€4,000,000	Health	Current
Add Digital Assistive Technology to Aids & Appliances Scheme	€5,000,000	Health	Current
Establish Digital Enablement Training	€720,000	Health	Current
Increase Funding for Home Support Services	€328,400,000	Health	Current
Establish Statutory Home Support Scheme	€3,000,000	Health	Current
Expand Day Care Provision and Transport Services	€20,000,000	Health	Current
Provision of Care in for Housing with Supports	€1,300,000	Health	Current
Expand carers' respite services	€20,000,000	Health	Current
Increase the Carers' Support Grant	€22,000,000	Social Protection	Current
Introduce a Carers' Basic Income and Basic Services Pilot	€10,000,000	Social Protection	Current
<i>Housing</i>			
Build 1,474 social housing units to support right-sizing	€426,000,000	Housing, Local Government & Heritage	Capital
Build 1,474 dedicated older person's housing units	€426,000,000	Housing, Local Government & Heritage	Capital
Increase the housing adaptation grant funding	€12,500,000	Housing, Local Government & Heritage	Current
<i>Community Supports</i>			
Establish Commissioner for Ageing and Older People	€1,200,000	Health	Current
Increase Community and Voluntary Sector funding	€60,000,000	Rural & Community Development & the Gaeltacht	Current
Investment to Support Ageing Well at Home in Budget 2026	€1,527,670,000		
Current	€675,420,000		
Capital	€852,250,000		

Social Justice Ireland is an independent think-tank and justice advocacy organisation that advances the lives of people and communities by providing independent social analysis and effective policy development to create a sustainable future for every member of society and for society as a whole.



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