

Telling It Like It Is: Experiences of Older People at End of Life 2025



The [National End of Life Survey 2024](#), was Ireland's first nationwide survey that asked bereaved relatives and friends about the care provided to their loved one in their last months and days of life.

This Telling It Like It Is 2025 report, produced by The Alliance of Age Sector NGOs, draws on findings from this survey, to describe critical areas of importance to older people, and their families, facing death and bereavement.

People aged 65 and over accounted for 83% of all deaths in Ireland in 2024. As our older population rapidly expands over the coming years, the findings in this report have important implications for future planning, practice and policy.

Key Themes in the Results

Communication at End of Life



The majority of older people were not told that they were likely to die. Older people and their loved ones have a right to be kept fully informed at end of life. Knowing what to expect when their loved one is dying is important to people. 72% of relative and friends who were not told what to expect, said that a conversation would have been helpful.



Access to Key People and Timely Help

Receiving help from healthcare staff as soon as it was needed was one of the most influential factors that impacted on the rating of perceptions of overall quality of care. One significant area that was identified was the availability of GPs to visit older people out of hours which varied according to the person's county of residence.



Care in the Community

Essential supports and services must be available to older people in the community at end of life. It was found that age and geographic location had an impact on access to key healthcare professionals for care at home with those aged over 80 years less supported.

Bereavement Support

Bereaved relatives that did not receive practical information about what to do following their loved one's death, rated their care experience significantly lower. Also healthcare staff engaging with them in a sensitive manner, following their loved ones death, had a significant influence on their perceptions of the overall quality of care they received.



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Establish an Independent Commissioner for Ageing and Older People

Underpinning these recommendations from the Telling It Like It Is report is the call for the establishment of an Independent Commissioner for Ageing and Older People, who would account directly to the Oireachtas, with a mandate to promote and protect the interests and wellbeing of all older people.

Recommendations



Training

Ensure all those interacting with older people are provided with training and resources to support them to engage in honest conversations that enable older people to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing.



Support

Guarantee older people access to key supports which are accessible regardless of their location, finances, care setting or diagnosis.



Awareness

Promote greater awareness and access to information, resources and supports that empowers older people as they approach end of life.



Research

Repeat the National End of Life Survey to identify and understand important trends in older people's end-of-life experiences over time.

This report outlines what older people, and their families, **need and want** at this most critical time:

- People need support from healthcare professionals to **navigate the important conversations** that happen when an older person is nearing end of life.
- Older people must be **kept informed and involved in their care** and families want to know what to expect as end of life approaches.
- For every death, up to 10 people are impacted, adults and children. End-of-life care must also consider and include **the impact on those who are left to grieve**.

The Alliance will use these findings to **advocate for improvements** in the delivery of end-of-life and bereavement care informed by these experiences.



The Alliance of Age Sector NGO's represents the collective thinking of eight significant NGOs working in the age sector.

Together, we collaborate to seek action on specific issues that make older people's lives unnecessarily difficult.

We work together to ensure Ireland becomes a better place in which to grow older.



Scan for more information and to download the report

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