

C|A|R|D|I

Centre for Ageing Research
and Development in Ireland

**Strategic Plan
2008-2011**

C|A|R|D|I

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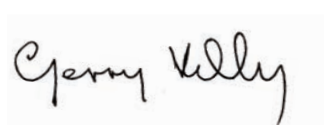
Centre
for Ageing
Research and
Development
in Ireland

MINISTERIAL WELCOME

The Office of the First and deputy First Minister recognise that research is important to society and welcome the establishment of CARDI as a mechanism for greater collaboration among researchers on ageing and wider dissemination of ageing research. This strategy provides a foundation which can benefit all disciplines and sectors and help assist in planning for an ageing population. We wish CARDI well with its future work in advancing the ageing research agenda.



**Junior Minister
Donaldson MP MLA**



**Junior Minister
Kelly MLA**

Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister

One of the great achievements of our times is that we are living longer and over the next 30 years our proportion of older people will continue to grow. As our population ages so increases the need for up-to-date research information. I welcome the launch of CARDI and the framework set out within the strategy to help advance the ageing research agenda by promoting collaboration across disciplines, sectors and the island of Ireland. I encourage you to embrace the opportunities provided by CARDI's establishment and wish it well in moving forward.



**Maire Hctor TD
Minister for Older People
Department of Health & Children**

FOREWORD

We are delighted to introduce the first strategic plan for the Centre for Ageing Research and Development in Ireland (CARDI). There is a growing recognition of the value of a co-ordinated and facilitated approach to ageing research and of the opportunities of working across the island of Ireland. CARDI sets out a framework for moving forward.

A considerable amount of discussion preceded the development of CARDI. Its foundations were initiated by a Steering Group composed of representatives from academic, government, non government, voluntary and community sectors,

with support from The Atlantic Philanthropies. This group recognised that while there is a wide variety of research in ageing and older people taking place in the island of Ireland, there is little or no coordination of this research. Unfortunately, the results of the research do not always reach those who are involved in making policy decisions. Addressing this deficit and putting together a strategy to advance ageing research is a major task – one CARDI has embraced.

Ageing is a comprehensive and diverse subject and ageing research takes place in a wide variety of disciplines and settings. CARDI's first strategy focuses on advancing

research on ageing and older people in Ireland. The underlying theme is to improve the quality of life of the ever increasing number of older people in Ireland. Rather than CARDI undertaking research it will facilitate key stakeholders working together to bring forward the required research activity. Disseminating the information arising from research will play an invaluable role in raising the profile and value of ageing research to policy and practice.

Creating a new organisation and producing its first strategic plan is a challenging task. We were very fortunate in being able to appoint Dr Roger O'Sullivan as

the Director. Since taking up post he has worked very hard and effectively to establish CARDI. We wish him and the staff at CARDI every success.

Finally we are grateful for the financial support from The Atlantic Philanthropies, the Research and Development Office for Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland and the Department of Health and Children in Dublin as well as to the Institute for Public Health in Ireland for hosting CARDI.



Professor Davis Coakley
Co-Chair, CARDI

A handwritten signature in black ink on a white, torn-edge paper background.



Professor Robert Stout
Co-Chair, CARDI

A handwritten signature in black ink on a white, torn-edge paper background.

INTRODUCTION

This first strategic plan of the Centre for Ageing Research and Development in Ireland (CARDI) sets out the direction for the organisation during the period 2008-2011. It is the result of a strategic development and analysis process involving CARDI's Steering Group, key stakeholders and individuals with an interest in ageing and older people. These included academic,

government, non government, voluntary and community sector representatives. Developed within the context of the wider economic, political, social, environmental and technological factors, this strategic plan is informed by both current thinking in the field of ageing research and wider policy initiatives that impact upon the lives of older people.

BACKGROUND

CARDI is a not for profit organisation developed by leaders from the ageing field across Ireland (North and South) including age focused researchers, academics, statutory, voluntary and community sector representatives with support from The Atlantic Philanthropies. It is overseen by a Steering Group and hosted by the Institute of Public Health in Ireland.

CARDI'S MISSION

To advocate for and advance the ageing research agenda by identifying, coordinating, stimulating, and communicating strategic research on ageing and older people as a means to improve the lives of older people in Ireland (North and South) especially those who are disadvantaged.

CARDI'S VISION

A network of cross-sectoral, interdisciplinary age focused researchers of international standing, working on agreed priorities, helping to support policy and practice to provide the highest standard of life for older people in Ireland (North and South).

PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

The following are CARDI's principles and values which will inform decision making as well as strategic operational activities:

- The importance of research to address key issues facing older people, particularly those most disadvantaged and an ageing population with relevance to policy-makers and practitioners;
- Support for multi-disciplinary and cross-sectoral strategic research on ageing and older people;
- A commitment to working in partnership to address the strategic research needs of older people and an ageing population;
- Encouragement to share learning, ask questions and listen to develop Ireland's ageing research agenda;
- A commitment to communicating the results of our work in a clear and accessible manner;
- Ensuring the voice of older people is recognised as an integral part of advancing the ageing research agenda in Ireland;
- Promotion of the dignity, value and contribution of older people and an ageing population.

CONTEXT

The island of Ireland is an ageing society. For the first time, nearly one million people aged 60 and above now live in Ireland. By 2031, it is expected that Northern Ireland's percentage of older people will increase to 29%, though it will take to 2050 to reach a similar level in the Republic of Ireland. While the speed at which this is happening differs

in both regions, it is unquestionable that we are living in a time of demographic change.

An ageing population is one of the success stories of modern society. Yet, changing population demographics highlight the urgent need for research to support such change.

AGEING RESEARCH

Ageing, as a research subject in Ireland (North and South), is quite a new phenomenon and, apart from branches of science and medicine, is still in its infancy. While the term ageing is often used in different ways by different disciplines, it is increasingly being recognised that ageing is a complex process, both medically and societally with no single discipline answering all the questions on ageing.

Within government, non government organisations and

academia significant levels of ageing research activity exist - albeit quite dispersed and fragmented. Individual researchers and centres may have well established reputations in particular areas of age related research but with little integration or coordination. Few examples of Ireland-wide, cross-sectoral or interdisciplinary research are being brought forward and limited resources are allocated to ageing research. In addition, a considerable amount

of research is being undertaken which may be relevant to ageing but is not necessarily labelled or analysed as such. Furthermore, a range of information relevant to planning for an ageing population exists in a variety of different sources both public and private which need to be accessed.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE WITH AGEING RESEARCH

There is an increasing recognition of the role of coordination in bringing forward strategic research and helping make use of available resources. Quality research and its application has been shown to be significantly enhanced when an interdisciplinary approach is adopted. Internationally, ageing as an area can be best addressed by bringing together research groups focusing on common themes and addressing them from different disciplinary perspectives. Issues of ageing transcend traditional academic boundaries and increasing funding opportunities are formulated within a multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary framework. Similarly, policy formulation and practice implementation is most effectively implemented when viewed at an

interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral level. Architects and Occupational Therapists, for example, working together on an ageing research project have the potential to create new knowledge relevant to both policy and practice for housing providers, health and social services organisations and government departments.

Ageing research is vital as decisions in relation to policy, practice and resource allocation will be made on the best available information. Up-to-date ageing research can help make a difference to quality of life by providing an evidence base for developing policy and delivering services for today's older people and for our future ageing population. It is key to ensure CARDI helps bring forward the required evidence.

POLICY ENVIRONMENT

In Ireland (North and South) the policy landscape relating to ageing and older people has been populated by a number of key documents and developments. Among the more significant are the following:

Republic of Ireland

- The Years Ahead - A Policy for the Elderly (Department of Health & Children, 1988).
- Adding Years to Life and Life to Years - a Health Promotion Strategy for Older People (Department of Health & Children, 1998).
- The National Development Plan 2007 - 2013 (includes an Older People Programme).
- The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007 - 2016 (Office for Social Inclusion, 2007).
- Towards 2016 (Ten year Framework Social Partnership Agreement 2006 - 2015) sets out a life cycle approach to ageing and a vision for older people with priorities relating to Income, Care and Housing.
- Green Paper on Pensions (2007) by The Department of Social and Family Affairs.
- An Office for Older People has recently been established.

Northern Ireland

- Ageing in an Inclusive Society – A Strategy for Promoting the Social Inclusion of Older People (Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, 2005). This strategy emphasises an integrated approach towards older people in relation to income, health, housing, safety and transport.
- The Anti-Poverty and Social Inclusion Strategy for Northern Ireland - Lifetime Opportunities (also by the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister, 2006) takes on a life-course approach with older citizens as a key target group.
- The Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister recently announced their intention to create a Northern Ireland Commissioner for Older People. The role, remit and powers of a Commissioner are to be agreed.

Wider Policy

At an international level, The World Health Organisation emphasises the importance of a wider societal approach to ageing and older people to ensure our children and our grandchildren experience a high quality of life in older years.

The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (2002) calls for changes in attitudes, policies and practices at all levels, in all sectors so that the enormous potential of ageing in the twenty first century may be fulfilled. This was adopted by the Second World Assembly on Ageing and will be implemented by the United Nations

Economic Commission for Europe. In 2007 the Declaration from the Commission's Ministerial Conference on Ageing described research as vital in developing policies and programmes to fulfil the Madrid Plan of Action and it was recognised that this will require the strengthening and developing of sustainable research structures and cross-sectoral cooperation.

STRATEGIC POSITIONING 2008 – 2011

In order to advance the ageing research agenda in Ireland, CARDI's first strategy will focus on four themes:

- Identifying and establishing ageing research priorities relevant to policy and practice in Ireland (North and South);
- Promoting greater collaboration and cooperation on ageing research in order to build an ageing research community in Ireland (North and South);
- Stimulating research in priority areas that can inform policy and practice relating to ageing and older people in Ireland (North and South);
- Communicating strategic research issues on ageing to raise the profile of ageing research in Ireland (North and South) and its role in informing policy and practice.

ADVANCING AGEING RESEARCH

CARDI has been established to ensure research plays its role in planning for an ageing population in Ireland (North and South). CARDI aims to provide a mechanism for greater collaboration among researchers on ageing, wider dissemination of ageing research information and to advance a research agenda relevant to policy and practice through the combined strength of an Ireland wide research community.

To be effective in supporting and strengthening the research agenda in Ireland, CARDI must be independent, working at a strategic level and in an advisory capacity. A key focus will be to work in partnership across sectors and disciplines, focusing on influencing the strategic direction of research relating to older people and ageing in Ireland to help address disadvantage. CARDI will not undertake research itself. However it may commission where appropriate.

LEARNING FROM INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

In planning for the future many industrialised countries are developing national research strategies on ageing – most evident by the work in Canada, Australia and New Zealand. A number of international agencies have also developed research agendas on the topic of ageing and older people.

In 2002, the United Nations Programme on Ageing together with the International Association of Gerontology developed a Research Agenda on Ageing in the 21st Century. This was updated and its significance underscored in 2007.

DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK

The ageing research agenda developed by the United Nations Programme on Ageing and the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics (2007) sets out priority and critical areas for research. It underscores the importance of research to inform policy and practice, emphasising the necessity of placing research within the context of where it is required. The development of a framework for ageing research in Ireland must be assessed against this agenda and CARDI's vision for ageing research in Ireland.

RESEARCH AGENDA ON AGEING FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Priority Areas

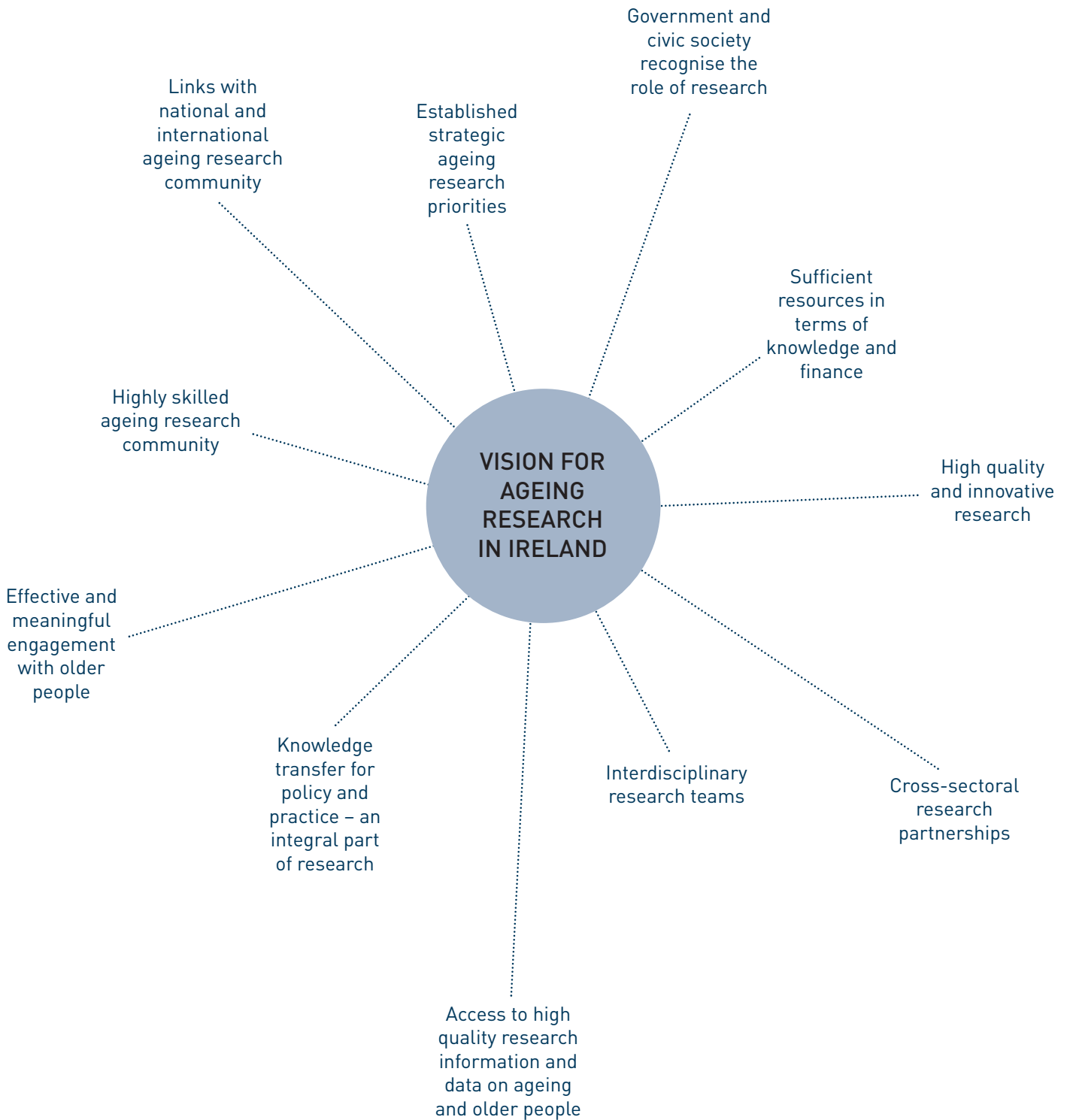
1. Relationships of population ageing and socio-economic development
2. Current practices and options for maintaining material security into older age
3. Changing family structures, intergenerational transfer systems and emergent patterns of family and institutional dynamics
4. Determinants of healthy ageing
5. Basic biological mechanisms and age associated diseases
6. Quality of life and ageing in diverse cultural, socio-economic and environmental situations

Critical Areas

1. Social Participation and Integration
2. Economic Security
3. Macro-Societal Change and Development
4. Poverty
5. Social Security
6. Healthy Ageing
7. Biomedical
8. Physical and Mental Functioning
9. Quality of Life
10. Care Systems
11. Changing Structures and Functions of Families
12. Policy Design, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

Source: The United Nations Programme on Ageing and the International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics (2007)

CARDI'S VISION FOR AGEING RESEARCH IN IRELAND



DELIVERY

IDENTIFYING AND ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES

In moving Ireland's ageing research agenda forward, CARDI has identified a need to prioritise applied research which will impact upon policy and practice. This will compliment the internationally recognised Research Agenda on Ageing for the 21st Century and the existing policy framework. Sound, high quality research linked to major

priorities, as identified by cross-sectoral key stakeholders, can be of great assistance in directing limited resources. An Ireland-wide research agenda must be developed, endorsed and, of course, used by various stakeholders with an interest in ageing and older people – whether to lobby for change or inform policy or practice development. Further discussion is required on

the data, skills and knowledge needed to support the priorities for research and to undertake such research. An important part of this process is to identify sources of information on ageing and promote making greater use of this resource.

PROMOTING GREATER COLLABORATION AND COOPERATION

Creating the conditions for greater collaboration and cooperation will be a key focus of CARDI's work. CARDI will provide opportunities to bring together the research community and relevant players so that those with skills and knowledge on ageing can focus on top priorities. CARDI will support cross-sectoral partnership methods of working which focus on the end uses of data, maximising skills and

knowledge. Space will be created to allow for a cross fertilisation of ideas, understanding of institutional and disciplinary boundaries and getting to know the people involved. Research must be guided by collective action, knowledge, recognition of the diversity of skills across sectors and the interdependence of each to achieve successful outcomes.

STIMULATING AND DEVELOPING AREAS OF STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

At present some research areas are more developed than others. To enhance applied areas of strategic importance, CARDI will support the development of multi-disciplinary research networks with a policy and practice focus. Such work can help build and support a community of researchers on ageing in Ireland. CARDI will stimulate the ageing research agenda through a specific

research fund and will facilitate networking opportunities at an international level. Rather than taking on areas of study covered elsewhere, CARDI will support mechanisms which link into existing international projects and extract particular aspects of importance in relation to Ireland (North and South). CARDI will also support researchers in their pursuit of funding from external sources. To address

funding challenges, CARDI will continue to forge strategic links with key grant making bodies, organisations and departments. Given the present size of Ireland's ageing research community and limited resources, CARDI will facilitate discussion about the most effective strategy to attract future investment to the field of ageing research.

COMMUNICATING STRATEGIC RESEARCH ISSUES ON AGEING

CARDI recognises the importance of enhanced communication mechanisms between researchers in ageing from academia, government, non government and wider key stakeholders to help advance the implementation of knowledge. Developing a communication strategy in Ireland will be an important and ever-changing area of work. Raising the profile of ageing research in

Ireland (North and South) and highlighting its value to policy and practice is an important first step. At a strategic level, there is the need to support strengthened communication linkages between sectors. In partnership with key stakeholders, CARDI will make use of a range of media to share strategic information on ageing and build the case for an all-Ireland ageing research agenda.

GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

CARDI is funded by The Atlantic Philanthropies, augmented by grants from the Research and Development Office for Health and Social Care, Northern Ireland and the Department of Health and Children in Dublin. CARDI is hosted by the Institute of Public Health in Ireland and derives its legal and financial status from the Institute.

The CARDI Steering Group is made up of key individuals from the ageing field across Ireland (North and South): ageing research, academia, voluntary and community sector. It will also have one representative from the Institute of Public Health.

The group approve CARDI's vision, mission, annual objectives, and contribute expertise and specialist knowledge as appropriate. The Director Dr Roger O'Sullivan will lead the organisation and has overall responsibility for the activities of CARDI.

STEERING GROUP

Professor Davis Coakley	Co-Chair of CARDI
Professor Robert Stout	Co-Chair of CARDI
Gabrielle Jacob	National Council on Ageing and Older People
Owen Metcalfe	Institute of Public Health
Dr Denis O'Mahony	Cork University Hospital
Anne O'Reilly	Age Concern Northern Ireland
Professor Eamon O'Shea	Irish Centre for Social Gerontology
Robin Webster	Age Action Ireland
Dr Roger O'Sullivan	Director of CARDI

EVALUATION AND LEARNING

Evaluation and sharing of good practice will be undertaken internally and supported by an external evaluator. It will be an ongoing process that informs development throughout the strategy. It will be based on guiding principles and strategic

positioning set out within this strategy. After each key stage of the strategy, an internal evaluation will take place in order to ensure that it is in line with the next stage by making use of self evaluation methods.

A WAY FORWARD

This strategy sets out a framework for the Centre for Ageing Research and Development in Ireland to action over the period 2008 – 2011, in advancing the ageing research agenda, using research to address issues affecting older people and planning for an ageing population.

To bring forward this strategic plan, CARDI seeks the cooperation of the research community and partners – government, non government

organisations, voluntary and community sector, universities and grant making bodies.

If you would like to explore how to be involved in progressing this strategy or want to find out more about our work please get in contact:

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