

Age Action is responding to the COVID-19 emergency by reallocating and scaling up resources to ensure that older people are informed, connected and supported during this difficult period in Ireland.

Getting Started KIT:

What is it?

The Age Action Getting Started Keep In Touch (KIT) is a national learning initiative to help older people improve their digital literacy skills, so they are more connected, informed and supported particularly during periods of social distancing. The Getting Started KIT will also help people who have digital literacy skills to become Digital Champions – they can use the KIT to tutor someone who needs help.

What is the Problem?

Older people are medically vulnerable during the Covid-19 pandemic and with the HSE guidelines on social distancing and ‘cocooning’, more people are relying on social media as a way to keep in touch with family and friends. The digital divide has been laid bare during Covid-19 for all age groups; many children and adults, particularly older adults cannot participate in digital learning or the digital economy either for the lack of skills or access. Over half of Irish people aged between 65 and 74 have never used the internet, locking older people out of a huge range of benefits. It is not for lack of interest either: 30% of Irish households without internet access say the reason is a lack of skills to use it. It is estimated that only 3% of people over the age of 70 have the skills and access to the internet.

How does it Work?

During Covid-19 it is more important than ever to be able to keep in touch with loved ones so Age Action has created easy How To guides and a video tutorial in order to support older people to learn, use, and be confident about smartphones, other devices and applications.

In the Age Action Getting Started KIT you will find

- How to... Set up an email account
- How to... Download applications
- How to... Make WhatsApp video calls
- How to... Navigate the internet
- How to... Use FaceTime
- How to... Use Zoom
- How to... Recognise mis-information

There are over 400,000 people over the age of 70 in Ireland who have been asked to ‘cocoon’ since 28 March and many were already selfisolating from the beginning of March; their connection to the outside world is through telephone, radio and TV.

Call Safe and Information Support: Keeping Older People Informed

Call Safe has a team proactively making 11,000 ‘check-in’ calls to Age Action’s older people (members, U3A focal points, people previously or currently linked in through the Care & Repair/Getting Started programmes).

In addition, Age Action has extended the Information Service online support through info@ageaction.ie to 8am-8pm 7 days a week.

Practical Support in the Community: Keeping Older People Connected

Age Action is working with volunteers and partner groups to provide practical support to older people who need assistance with their shopping, collecting prescriptions and any other practical needs that arise. Age Action is also linking older people with volunteers who will do regular check in calls if they wish to have ongoing contact and support.

Home Safe: Keeping Older People Safe

Age Action is providing additional supports to older people, enabling them to transition quickly out of hospital into their own homes, by ensuring that their home is safe for them while also supporting our hospitals to respond to the Covid-19 health crisis. Age Action is also providing an emergency response for urgent repairs and other supports for older people in the community in order to ensure people can remain safely in their own homes.

If you can support us with a donation of any kind we would be extremely grateful as these services are so important to older people at this crucial time. If you would like to get in touch to discuss this in more detail I would be delighted to hear from you. You can also visit our website www.ageaction.ie for more information.

With kind regards
Daragh

Daragh Matthews

Senior Fundraising Manager

Age Action Ireland CLG | 10 Grattan Crescent | Inchicore | Dublin 8 | D08 R240

Tel: 01 4756989 | Fax: 01 4756011 | Mob: 087 6344099
Email: businessdevelopment@ageaction.ie | Website: www.ageaction.ie

Facebook: www.facebook.com/AgeActionIreland | Twitter: www.twitter.com/AgeAction

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