

## Care & Repair returns to Waterford

**The Care & Repair Programme, a free small odd job service for older people, was recently re-launched in Waterford.**

WATERFORD Area Partnership is once again offering the Care & Repair Programme in Waterford in association with Age Action, Ireland's leading charity for older people. The free small odd job service for older people is operated by the team at Waterford Area Partnership, with funding from Waterford City & County Council. The service uses a pool of trustworthy people to carry out minor repairs and odd jobs for older people who may find it difficult to do these jobs themselves. Some of the jobs that can be completed include; installing security locks and chains, minor gardening, minor carpentry, installing smoke alarms, hanging curtains, changing light bulbs etc. The service is open to those aged over 60 who are living in the Waterford area and need such jobs carried out. The Care & Repair Programme recognises that for those older people who are in the unfortunate position of not having family members calling, these tasks can become a source of great frustration. Ultimately, for some older people, these problems can eventually make the difference between staying at home and moving to residential care.



Mayor of Waterford City & County Council, Cllr. Declan Doocey pictured with Elaine Dunne, Chairperson, Ian Lennon, Care & Repair, Project Manager, Carol Fitzgerald, Noel Kelly and Mary McGuinness, Age Action volunteers and Richie Grant, CEO, Waterford Area Partnership. Photos: Noel Browne.

The service is free, with the only costs incurred being for any specific materials which are used as part of the work. All who visit homes to carry out jobs as part of the Care & Repair Programme are Garda vetted and carry official Age Action

identification cards. The Care & Repair Programme was initially established in Waterford back in 2012 but was unfortunately suspended in 2017 due to a lack of funding. Mayor of Waterford City & County Cllr Declan Doocey (FG) officially re-launched the programme at a special event held at St Patrick's Gateway Centre on Thursday April 18th. He paid tribute to all involved with the service and outlined the very valuable benefits which are created. CEO of Waterford Area Partnership Richie Grant pointed out that the Care & Repair Programme had been sorely missed from Waterford since being suspended. He expressed his delight at seeing the programme being re-launched and said all those involved with the Care & Repair Programme in Waterford have the "full support and encouragement" of Waterford Area Partnership. He said Waterford Area Partnership would not be able to provide the service without the valued input of Tús participants and the network of volunteers.

"You have our unconditional support," he said. He appealed to all stakeholders to be open to the potential of building and developing the initiative.

"The strength and success of the programme will be down to us, as stakeholders, working together in collaboration," he said.

Quoting Mahatma Gandhi, he said: "the generosity of a nation can be judged on how it treats its most vulnerable citizens". Age Action Ireland National Development Manager John O'Mahony was also in attendance at the re-launch event. He said the Care & Repair Programme plays an important role in ensuring older people can remain living in their own home for as long as possible.

The vision of the programme is to enable older people to remain in their own homes, in their own communities, living as independently as possible, through the improvement of their housing conditions and their level of comfort, security and wellbeing. He pointed out that the Waterford Care & Repair Programme had been regarded as one of the best such services of its kind in Ireland prior to its suspension and expressed his great satisfaction at seeing the service back in operation once again in the Déise. Along with the Care & Repair Programme, he also spoke of the range of supports provided by Age Action Ireland such as its popular computer classes. Project Manager with the Waterford Care & Repair Programme Ian Lennon says one of the overall aims is to reach out to lonely and isolated people in the local community. Ian is encouraging any older person to contact the team if they require a job to be completed which is within the criteria. As those involved with the Care & Repair Programme do not want to displace any local tradespeople, all potential jobs are firstly subjected to a home survey visit. If a job is deemed too large or difficult for volunteers to carry out themselves, the Care & Repair Programme provides a list of reputable local tradespeople who are recommended.

Complementing this Trade Referral Service, Age Action Ireland also has extensive information on its website underneath the heading 'Guidelines for Dealing with Tradesmen'. The aim is to prevent older people from becoming victims of 'rogue traders' as has unfortunately been the case in many areas. There are currently two vans on the road as part of the Waterford Care & Repair Programme. In addition to Waterford City, the service incorporates a wide catchment area which includes surrounding communities such as Kilmeaden, Fenor and Slieverue. As the name of the service suggests, the emphasis is not solely on 'repairing' - there's much more to the Care & Repair service than simply fixing a few bits and pieces. The 'caring' aspect is viewed as being equally important and this was a point highlighted by speakers at the re-launch event. The Care & Repair team enjoy sitting down and having a cup of tea and a chat with the older people which they visit. This social contact, which takes place in a relaxed environment, also allows the Care & Repair team to assess general living conditions. They are trained to identify certain issues and, if it's determined that an older person may require another specific service, the Care & Repair team can (with the older person's permission) point them towards the relevant agency.

In the past, the Care & Repair Programme has linked in with many local agencies and groups, and, as part of the newly re-launched service, will continue to do so. Undoubtedly, the Care & Repair Programme provides a hugely important practical and social service in Waterford and its return to the local area will be warmly welcomed by many. If any older person would like to have a small job carried out, Ian is encouraging them to call the Care & Repair team and arrangements will be made for a member of the team to visit.

For more information on the Age Action Care & Repair Programme c/o Waterford Area Partnership Apt. 14 Cheshire Homes, John's Hill, Waterford, phone 051-844844 or visit [www.ageaction.ie](http://www.ageaction.ie)