

# **Community Support Needs of Older People Living in Queen of Peace Community in Limerick City**

**March 2018**

Report prepared for:

**Our Lady Queen of Peace Community Development Group  
(Limerick)**

**franklin**  
*informing good decisions*

## Contents

Section		Page
<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Background and Objectives	1
1.2	Research Methodology	2
<b>2</b>	<b>REVIEW OF SMALL AREA STATISTICS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>SURVEY FINDINGS</b>	<b>5</b>
3.1	Respondent Profile, Health Status and Access to Transport	5
3.2	How Older People Spend Their Days	11
3.3	Use of Queen of Peace CDG and Other Community Groups' Services	15
3.4	Older People's Main Interests, Participation in Local Clubs & Participation in Volunteering	18
3.5	Suggestions for New Services or Activities	20
3.6	Use of Computers & Mobile Phones and Best Methods of Publicising Services	22
<b>4</b>	<b>SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>25</b>

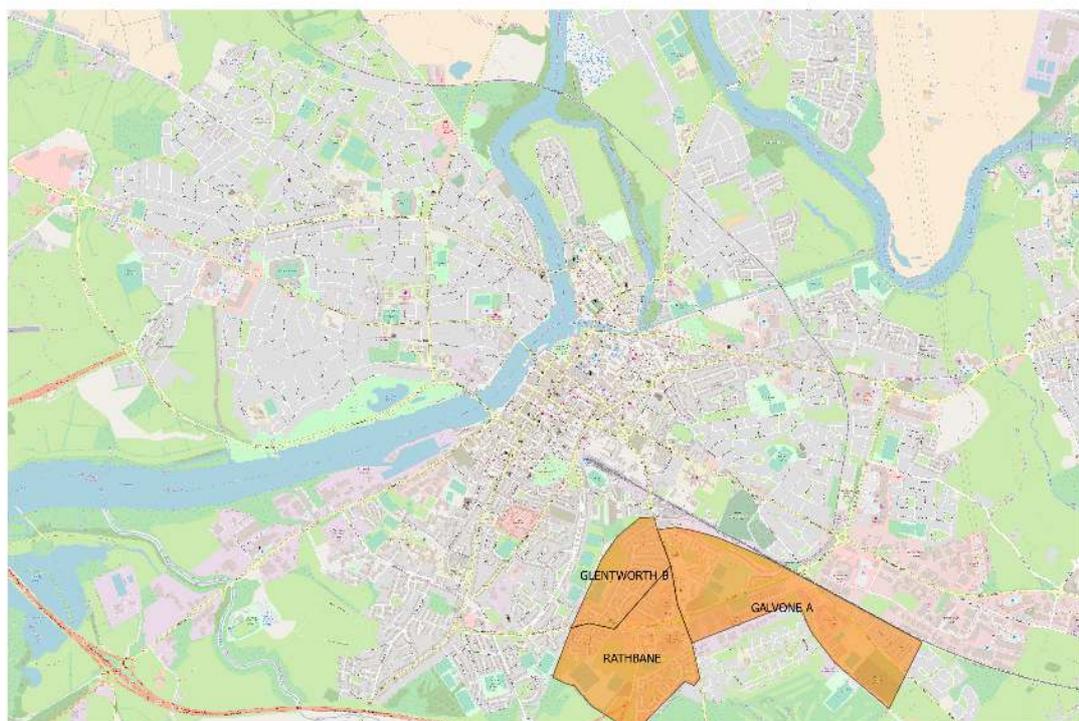
# 1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of a survey of people in three age categories (55-64, 65-79 and 80+ years). The focus of the survey was older people's need for services and supports that can be provided by community and voluntary groups, rather than supports that are provided by the State (such as housing and health).

## 1.1 Background and Objectives

The Our Lady Queen of Peace Community Development Group (Queen of Peace CDG) is a community and voluntary group serving the needs of the Janesboro, Kennedy Park, Glasgow Park and Rathbane housing estates in the south side of Limerick city. These areas correspond with three electoral district areas Glentworth B (all small areas), Galvone A (excluding small areas 128019003-4) and Rathbane (excluding small areas 128032003-5). The Queen of Peace CDG provides supports to these communities through services such as Meals-on-Wheels, adult education and an active retirement club.

**Map 1.1** Location of Our Lady Queen of Peace Community in Limerick City



The purpose of the research was to provide a profile and needs analysis of older people in the community, and to inform Queen of Peace CDG, local agencies and national bodies on the factors that may be preventing older people accessing services and supports that can alleviate social exclusion.

## **1.2 Research Methodology**

The research methodology had two strands, as follows:

- an analysis of small area census statistics to provide a demographic and socio-economic profile of the communities, with a particular focus on older people
- a door-to-door survey of 120 older people in the communities, in three age categories (55-64, 65-79, 80+). Fielding was conducted in November 2017 and 121 surveys were completed.

Implementation of the survey was overseen by the Our Lady Queen of Peace CDG Research Steering Group, comprising representatives of the Community Development Group and PAUL Partnership Limerick. Survey fielding and reporting was conducted by Franklin Research Ltd (Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin).

## 2. REVIEW OF SMALL AREA STATISTICS

This section looks at Central Statistics Office and Pobal small area data for the areas in which the survey was conducted.

**Table 2.1 Population by Census Year**

	2006	2011	2016	% change since 2006
Galvone A	1,033	951	950	-8%
Glenworth B	1,241	1,169	1,198	-3%
Rathbane	588	585	652	11%
Total	2,862	2,705	2,800	-2%

Note: Galvone A excludes small areas 128019003-4, Rathbane excludes SAs 128032002-4.

The total population for the area in 2016 is 2,800. Glenworth B has the highest population, accounting for 43% of the total. The total population in the area shows a small (2%) decrease since the 2006 census.

**Table 2.2 Population by Age**

	Galvone A	Glenworth B	Rathbane	Total	%	National Population
Under 15	167	189	71	427	15%	21%
15-24	135	128	96	359	13%	12%
25-44	213	272	128	613	22%	30%
45-54	151	177	89	417	15%	13%
55-64	118	191	129	438	16%	11%
65-79	132	190	115	437	16%	10%
80+	34	51	24	109	4%	3%
Total	950	1,198	652	2,800	100%	100%

Note: Galvone A excludes small areas 128019003-4, Rathbane excludes SAs 128032002-4.

The age profile of the survey area is somewhat older than that of the national population. Only 15% of the area population is under 15 years, compared to 21% of the national population. In contrast, 35% of the area population are aged over 55 years, compared to 24% of the national population. Rathbane has the oldest age profile, with 41% being aged 55 years or more.

**Table 2.3 Number of Households & Socio-Economic Measures**

	<b>Galvone A</b>	<b>Glenworth B</b>	<b>Rathbane</b>	<b>National Population</b>
Number of households	361	514	247	n/a
<b>Pobal Deprivation Index</b>				
Score	-18	-14	-14	n/a
Classification	Disadvantaged	Disadvantaged	Disadvantaged	
% Local Authority rented accommodation	26%	12%	25%	9%
% with 3rd level qualification	11%	12%	12%	42%
Note: Galvone A excludes small areas 128019003-4, Rathbane excludes SAs 128032002-4.				

The total number of households in the survey area is 1,122. Pobal Deprivation Index<sup>1</sup> scores for the three sub-areas range between -14 to -18, meaning that all have a Pobal classification of ‘disadvantaged’. The areas have a higher proportion than average of people living in Local Authority rented accommodation, with the proportions ranging from 12% to 26%, compared to a national average of 9%. The areas have a lower proportion than average of people with a third-level qualification, with proportions at 11% to 12%, compared to 42% nationally (to a small extent this would be explained by their older age profile).

<sup>1</sup> The Pobal Deprivation Index is a method of measuring the relative affluence or disadvantage of a particular geographical area using Census data.

### 3. SURVEY FINDINGS

The primary research was conducted in November 2017, with a total of 121 completed interviews. The methodology was door-to-door surveys. The questionnaire included open-ended questions which asked respondents about their main interests, how they spend a typical day, and their suggestions for new community services and supports.

#### 3.1 Respondent Profile, Health Status and Access to Transport

This section presents results for demographic issues covered in the questionnaire, plus results for questions on issues that may impact an elderly person’s level of day-to-day human contact and ability to engage in the community (e.g. number of people in household, health and access to transport).

**Table 3.1.1 Number of Surveys by Age Group**

	% of population aged 55+		Number of surveys	
	Population			% of surveys
55-64	438	45%	41	34%
65-79	437	44%	57	47%
80+	109	11%	23	19%
Total	984	100%	121	100%

Due to the small number of people aged 80+ in the population (109 people, i.e. 11% of the population aged 55+), the survey methodology aimed to maximise the number of surveys in that age group in order to provide a sufficient sample size. A total of 23 surveys were completed in the 80+ age category, representing 19% of the sample.

**Table 3.1.2 Respondent Gender by Age Group**

	Total	Age		
		55-64	65-79	80+
Base	121	41	57	23
Male	50%	54%	51%	44%
Female	50%	46%	49%	56%

The survey achieved a 50/50 split between male and female respondents (61 male, 60 female). The gender split was also close to even for each of the three age groups.

**Table 3.1.3 Length of Time Living in That Area of Limerick**

	Total	Age		
		55-64	65-79	80+
Base	119	41	56	22
0-4 years	4%	10%	2%	0%
5-9 years	3%	5%	4%	0%
10-19 years	8%	5%	12%	0%
20-39 years	22%	41%	14%	5%
40 years or more	63%	39%	68%	95%

Most respondents had been living in that area of Limerick for a long time, with 63% having lived there for 40 years or more. Among the 80+ age group, 95% had been living there for 40+ years and none had been living there for less than 20 years.

**Table 3.1.4 Marital Status**

	Total	Age		
		55-64	65-79	80+
Base	121	41	57	23
Single	13%	15%	12%	13%
Married	40%	39%	42%	35%
Widowed	31%	20%	30%	52%
Separated or divorced	12%	20%	12%	0%
In long-term relationship	4%	7%	4%	0%

Forty percent (40%) of respondents are married and 31% are widowed. Among the 80+ age group, half (52%) are widowed.

**Table 3.1.5 Number of People in Household & Relationship with Them**

	Total	Age		
		55-64	65-79	80+
Base	120	40	57	23
<b>Number of other people in household</b>				
Live alone	33%	27%	35%	35%
Live with 1 other person	48%	42%	47%	57%
Live with 2 or more other people	20%	28%	18%	9%
<b>Relationship with othe people in household</b>				
Spouse/partner	47%	48%	51%	35%
Sons(s)/daughter(s)	26%	35%	19%	26%
Grandchildren	5%	5%	7%	0%
Other relative	3%	8%	2%	0%
Other	3%	5%	0%	4%

One-third of respondents (33%) live alone, 48% live with one other person and 20% live with two or more other people. Forty-seven percent (47%) live with a spouse/partner and 26% have a child/children living in the household. Respondents in the 55-64 age group are somewhat less likely to live alone (at 27%) and more likely to have a child/children living with them (at 35%).

**Table 3.1.6 Employment Status**

	Total	Gender		Age		
		Male	Female	55-64	65-79	80+
Base	120	61	59	40	57	23
Retired	74%	74%	75%	42%	88%	96%
Employed full-time	5%	10%	0%	15%	0%	0%
Employed part-time	5%	5%	5%	5%	7%	0%
Unemployed	3%	2%	5%	8%	2%	0%
Looking after family home	5%	0%	10%	8%	4%	4%
Permanently sick or disabled	7%	10%	3%	20%	0%	0%
In education or training	1%	0%	2%	3%	0%	0%

Almost three-quarters (74%) of respondents are retired. Male respondents are more likely to be in full-time employment (10% vs. 0% of women). Among those aged 55-64, 42% are retired, 20% are employed while 20% have a permanent illness or disability.

**Table 3.1.7 Socio-economic Group** (based on current/previous occupation or that of primary earner in household)

	Total	Gender		Age		
		Male	Female	55-64	65-79	80+
Base	109	60	49	36	53	20
Managerial or technical	4%	7%	0%	6%	0%	10%
Non manual	8%	8%	8%	6%	9%	10%
Skilled manual	41%	52%	29%	47%	38%	40%
Semi skilled manual	45%	33%	59%	42%	49%	40%
Unskilled	2%	0%	4%	0%	4%	0%

Most respondents (86%) are in skilled or semi-skilled manual occupational groups. Male respondents are more likely to be in skilled manual occupations (52%) and female respondents in semi-skilled occupations (59%). There are no significant differences in occupation groups by age.

**Table 3.1.8 Long-term Health Issues**

	Total	Age		
		55-64	65-79	80+
Base	117	41	53	23
<b>Yes, have long-term health issue</b>	64%	61%	66%	65%
Arthritis, osteoporosis, back problems	19%	20%	17%	22%
Heart condition, blood pressure, cholesterol	12%	7%	11%	22%
Diabetes	9%	7%	11%	4%
Emphysema, asthma, lung disease/cancer	7%	7%	9%	0%
Sight, hearing	5%	5%	6%	4%
Bowel, kidney, liver disease/cancer	4%	5%	4%	4%
Stroke, brain damage, dementia	2%	2%	2%	0%
Other	7%	7%	6%	9%
<b>No long-term health issue</b>	36%	39%	34%	35%

Almost two-thirds (64%) of respondents say they have a long-term health issue. The most common health issues are *arthritis, osteoporosis, back problems* (19%), *heart condition, blood pressure, cholesterol* (12%) and *diabetes* (9%). There are no major differences between the age groups.

**Table 3.1.9 Transport**

	Total	Gender		Age		
		Male	Female	55-64	65-79	80+
Base	120	60	60	41	56	23
<b>Transport normally used for getting around</b>						
Car (including lifts)	63%	58%	68%	56%	68%	65%
Public transport	36%	38%	33%	42%	30%	39%
Walking	18%	13%	23%	24%	18%	9%
Bicycle, motorbike, mobility scooter	4%	7%	2%	2%	7%	0%
Taxi	4%	2%	7%	2%	5%	4%
<b>Is transport an obstacle to getting around and doing the things you want to do?</b>						
Yes	14%	8%	20%	7%	13%	30%
No	86%	92%	80%	93%	87%	70%

The most common methods of transport are cars (including lifts, 63%), public transport (36%) and walking (18%). Among those aged 80+, 65% drive or get lifts, 39% use public transport and 9% say they walk. Nevertheless, 30% of this age group say transport is an obstacle to getting around and doing the things they want to do (vs. 7% of those aged 55-64 and 13% of those aged 65-79).

### 3.2 How Older People Spend Their Days

Respondents were asked to describe how they spend a typical day, in order to get a sense of their day-to-day lives and also to have a measurement of the proportion of the community that could be described as inactive and potentially isolated. Respondents were first asked about typical weekdays and then weekends. There was a very high response rate to the questions with only two respondents not answering. Responses were coded by type of activity and the questions were treated as multi-response as many people mentioned several activities. Based on the descriptions of their days, each respondent was then coded as being either 'busy/active' or 'not busy/active'. Those coded in the latter category were people whose answers indicated that they were generally not occupied with things to do and had only limited interaction with others (e.g. "some TV, radio is big, I cook 2-3 times a week"; "walking, watch TV, sometimes I go over to daughters").

**Table 3.2.1 Can you tell me how you spend a typical weekday? (by gender and age)**

	Total	Gender		Age		
		Male	Female	55-64	65-79	80+
Base	119	59	60	41	55	23
<b>BUSY, ACTIVE, OCCUPIED</b>	91%	90%	92%	90%	91%	91%
Home duties, housework	44%	39%	48%	46%	47%	30%
Family visits, minding grandchildren	38%	31%	45%	29%	46%	35%
Seeing friends, social groups, getting out and about	30%	24%	37%	29%	31%	30%
Working	7%	10%	3%	17%	2%	0%
Walking, light exercises/activities	29%	29%	28%	24%	40%	9%
Going to church, prayer meetings	7%	3%	10%	0%	6%	22%
Caring for spouse/family member	8%	10%	5%	7%	7%	9%
Other	9%	10%	8%	5%	6%	26%
<b>NOT BUSY OR OCCUPIED (restricted by health)</b>	9%	10%	8%	10%	9%	9%
Note: multiple response question.						

As shown in Table 3.2.1, most people (91%) are busy/active and have things to do (or occupy themselves with) during typical weekdays. Sample responses include the following:

- (male, 65-79) “rise at 7.30; do odd jobs around house; work in my shed; walk the two dogs; active with family around”
- (female, 65-79) “10am rise; go for coffee with sisters; Thursday is shopping morning; coming and going with family a lot, childcare two days a week”
- (male, 80+) “rise early, read a lot, cooks own meals, family drop in regularly, able to fill days no problem”
- (female, 80+) “get up at 6.30am, shopping at Tesco at 8am, crosswords in morning, grandchildren call in afternoon, neighbours also call in afternoon, TV and looking out window to see who is passing by!”

Within the busy/active category, the four most mentioned activities are *home duties*, *housework* (mentioned by 44%), *family visits*, *mindng grandchildren* (38%), *seeing friends*, *social groups*, *getting out and about* (e.g. going to town, library, etc.) (30%) and *walking*, *light exercises and activities* (29%). Other activities include *working* (7%), *caring for a spouse or family member* (8%) and *going to church*, *prayer meetings* (7%).

There are virtually no differences by gender or age in the proportion of people that are busy/active (all being close to 90%) but there are differences in the types of activity. Women are more likely to mention *home duties*, *housework* (48% vs. 39% of men), *family visits*, *mindng grandchildren* (45% vs. 31%), *seeing friends*, *social groups*, *getting out and about* (37% vs. 24%) and *going to church*, *prayer meetings* (10% vs. 3%). Men are more likely to mention *working* (10% vs. 3% of women) and *caring for a spouse or family member* (10% vs. 5%).

Within age groups, those aged 80+ are somewhat less likely (at 30%) to do *home duties*, *housework* and considerably less likely (at 9%) to do *walking*, *light exercises and activities*. They are more likely to mention *going to church*, *prayer meetings* (22%), while 26% mention doing *other activities* (e.g. taking medication, doctor visits). As we might expect, the 55-64 age category are far more likely (at 17%) to mention *working*.

**Table 3.2.2 Can you tell me how you spend a typical weekday? (by number of people living with and health)**

	Total	# People Living With		Long-term health issues?	
		Lives alone	Lives with others	Yes	No
Base	119	36	71	65	40
<b>BUSY, ACTIVE, OCCUPIED</b>	91%	92%	90%	87%	98%
Home duties, housework	44%	49%	42%	45%	44%
Family visits, minding grandchildren	38%	41%	37%	40%	37%
Seeing friends, social groups, getting out and about	30%	49%	22%	36%	20%
Working	7%	8%	6%	3%	15%
Walking, light exercises/activities	29%	26%	30%	32%	22%
Going to church, prayer meetings	7%	10%	5%	9%	2%
Caring for spouse/family member	8%	0%	10%	3%	15%
Other	9%	10%	9%	8%	12%
<b>NOT BUSY OR OCCUPIED (restricted by health)</b>	9%	8%	10%	13%	2%
Note: multiple response question.					

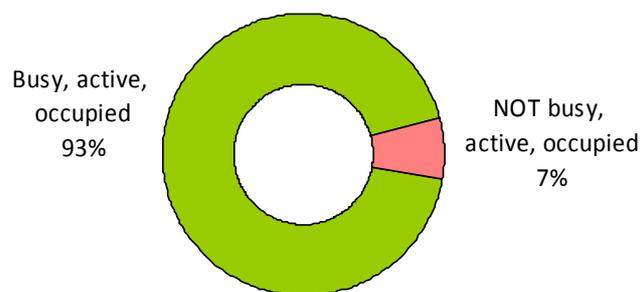
There very little difference in being busy/active between those who live alone and those who are not living alone. In fact, those who live alone are marginally more likely to be busy/active (92% vs. 90% for those who live with others). Among people coded as not busy/active, health reasons were a common reason. Table 3.2.2 shows that people with health problems are more likely to be not busy/active (13% vs. 2% for those with no health problems).

**Table 3.2.3 Can you tell me how you spend weekends?**

	Total	Gender		Age		
		Male	Female	55-64	65-79	80+
Base	75	37	38	25	33	17
Family visits, go for a drive	49%	35%	63%	48%	46%	59%
Pub, social events, seeing friends, sports events	51%	70%	32%	48%	61%	35%
Other (work, active, church, out and about)	15%	11%	18%	16%	12%	18%
Note: multiple response question.						

People were also asked about how they spend their weekends. While many indicated that their weekends were the same as their weekdays, most people (63%) mentioned activities that were different to those they did during the week. The most commonly mentioned activities were *pub, social events, seeing friends, going to sports events* (mentioned by 51%) and *family visits, going for a drive* (49%). Men were far more likely than women to mention *pub, social events, seeing friends, going to sports events* (70% vs. 32%), while women were more likely to mention *family visits, going for a drive* (63% vs. 35%).

**Chart 3.2.1 How spends days (weekdays and/or weekends)**



Among the 9% of people coded as not busy/active during weekdays, some indicated that their weekends were different. The responses for weekdays and weekends were, therefore, combined in order to see the proportion of people who can be considered busy/active at some point during the week (weekdays and/or weekends). Chart 3.1 shows that 93% of people can be considered busy/active (i.e. showing evidence in their answers of being active/occupied, and/or seeing family/ friends). Among those not busy/active, the main reason was health issues.

### 3.3 Use of Queen of Peace CDG and Other Community Groups' Services

Respondents were asked about their awareness of Queen of Peace CDG and awareness and use of its services (i.e. Meals-on-Wheels, adult education classes and the active retirement club). Respondents were also asked about their use of services and supports provided by other community or voluntary groups in Limerick.

**Table 3.3.1 Awareness of Queen of Peace CDG**

	Total	Gender		Age			# People Living With	
		Male	Female	55-64	65-79	80+	Lives alone	Lives with others
Base	121	61	60	41	57	23	39	81
Yes, have heard of Queen of Peace CDG	68%	59%	77%	76%	61%	70%	62%	72%

Over two-thirds (68%) of people have heard of the Queen of Peace CDG and awareness is high across all sub-groups of gender, age and number of people in the household.

**Table 3.3.2 Awareness and Interest in Meals on Wheels**

	Total	Gender		Age			# People Living With	
		Male	Female	55-64	65-79	80+	Lives alone	Lives with others
Base	121	61	60	41	57	23	39	81
Have heard of before	84%	80%	88%	85%	81%	91%	80%	86%
Have used before	12%	10%	13%	7%	7%	30%	18%	9%
Would be interested	7%	2%	13%	12%	7%	0%	18%	2%
Total: have used before or would be interested	19%	11%	27%	20%	14%	30%	36%	11%

Awareness of the Meals-on-Wheels is very high at 84%, and given that it is higher than that of Queen of Peace CDG, suggests that some people are aware of the Meals-on-Wheels service but are not aware that it is provided by Queen of Peace CDG. Twelve percent (12%) have used the service, and 30% of those aged 80+ have used the service. Usage is higher

among those living alone compared to those living with others (18% vs. 9%). A further 7% of all respondents say they would be interested in using the service in the future, giving a total of 19% of respondents who either had used the service or would be interested in using it. The main reasons given for not having used or being interested in using the service was that there was no need, either because the person had someone who cooked for them or that they liked/were able to cook for themselves.

**Table 3.3.3 Awareness and Interest in Adult Education Classes**

	Total	Gender		Age			# People Living With	
		Male	Female	55-64	65-79	80+	Lives alone	Lives with others
Base	121	61	60	41	57	23	39	81
Have heard of before	39%	30%	48%	44%	35%	39%	28%	43%
Have used before	6%	0%	12%	7%	5%	4%	8%	5%
Would be interested	23%	23%	23%	32%	23%	9%	28%	21%
Total: have used before or would be interested	29%	23%	35%	39%	28%	13%	36%	26%

Thirty-nine percent (39%) of people had heard of the adult education classes. Six percent (6%) had gone to classes with a further 23% saying they would be interested in going in the future, giving a total of 29% who had either gone or would be interested in going. Interest appears to be higher among women than men (35% vs. 23%) and among those in the 55-64 and 65-79 age groups (39% and 28% vs. 13% for those aged 80+). The most common reason given by those saying they were not interested in the service was that they were busy or occupied with other things.

**Table 3.3.4 Awareness and Interest in Active Retirement Club**

	Total	Gender		Age			# People Living With	
		Male	Female	55-64	65-79	80+	Lives alone	Lives with others
Base	121	61	60	41	57	23	39	81
Have heard of before	49%	35%	63%	45%	46%	62%	37%	54%
Have used before	7%	2%	13%	0%	5%	26%	8%	7%
Would be interested	14%	8%	20%	20%	14%	4%	33%	5%
Total: have used before or would be interested	21%	10%	33%	20%	19%	30%	41%	12%

Almost half (49%) of people have heard of the active retirement club. Seven percent (7%) have attended the club in the past while 14% would be interested in going in the future, giving a total of 21% who have either gone in the past or would be interested in going in the future. Interest is highest among women (33% vs. 10% of men) and among those living alone (41% vs. 12% of those with others in the household). Among those who were not interested, the main reasons given were that they were too young or that they felt a discomfort with meeting strangers in such a setting.

**Table 3.3.5 Use of Services/Supports from other Community/Voluntary Groups in Limerick**

	Total	Gender		Age			# People Living With	
		Male	Female	55-64	65-79	80+	Lives alone	Lives with others
Base	121	61	60	41	57	23	39	81
Yes, have used supports/services from other community groups	8%	7%	10%	7%	9%	10%	13%	6%

Only 8% of people had used services or supports from other community groups in Limerick, and usage is low across all sub-groups (i.e. gender, age, number of people in household).

### 3.4 Older People’s Main Interests, Participation in Local Clubs & Participation in Volunteering

Respondents were asked about their main interests in an open-ended question. Almost all respondents (95%) answered the question, and responses were coded as multiple-response answers. Respondents were also asked about their involvement with clubs and other activity groups, and their involvement in volunteering.

**Table 3.4.1 Main Interests**

	Total	Gender		Age		
		Male	Female	55-64	65-79	80+
Base	115	59	56	39	53	23
Following sports	33%	54%	11%	31%	32%	39%
Reading, history, politics, crosswords	24%	24%	25%	23%	19%	39%
Watching TV, listening to radio	15%	10%	20%	5%	21%	17%
Craft, knitting, sewing	14%	2%	27%	15%	15%	9%
Walking, gardening, pets	14%	8%	20%	13%	17%	9%
Doing sports: golf, running, fishing, snooker, darts, Pilates	14%	22%	5%	21%	15%	0%
Cooking, shopping, looking after family/home	11%	8%	14%	15%	8%	13%
Singing, dancing, live music, drama groups	10%	7%	14%	10%	6%	22%
Mens/ladies clubs, cards, socialising	6%	10%	2%	8%	6%	4%
Religion, church groups	4%	0%	9%	0%	4%	13%
Other	7%	7%	7%	8%	4%	13%

*Following sports* was the most popular interest, mentioned by 33% of all respondents and over-half (54%) of male respondents (vs. 11% of women). *Reading, history, politics and crosswords* was mentioned by 24% of respondents, and is especially popular (at 39%) among the 80+ age group. Other popular interests include *watching TV, listening to radio* (15%), *craft, knitting, sewing* (14%), *walking, gardening, minding pets* (14%) and *doing sports: golf, running, fishing, snooker, darts, Pilates* (14%). Only 6% mentioned *men’s/ladies’ clubs*,

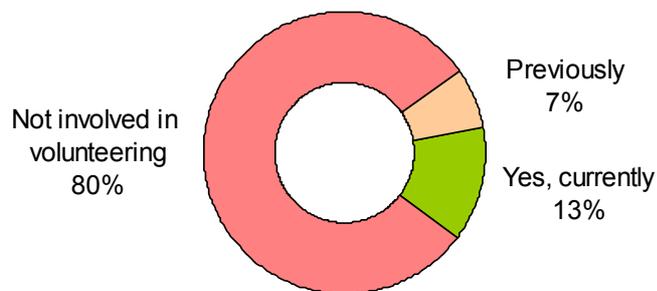
*cards, socialising* but that may be because socialising might not be seen as an ‘interest’. The same may be true as to why only 4% mentioned *religion, church groups*.

**Table 3.4.2 Are you involved with any clubs or associations or informal groups that you do activities with?**

	Total	Gender		Age		
		Male	Female	55-64	65-79	80+
Base	121	61	60	41	57	23
Yes, involved with clubs/groups	31%	44%	18%	29%	32%	35%
No	69%	56%	82%	71%	68%	65%
Note: multiple response question.						

Thirty-one percent (31%) are involved with clubs, associations or informal groups that they do activities with. Men are especially likely to have involvement with such groups (44% vs. 18% of women), with sports clubs being commonly mentioned. Other types of groups people are involved with include sewing/crafts groups, prayer groups and music/drama groups.

**Chart 3.4.1 Involvement in Volunteering**



One-fifth (20%) of respondents are either currently involved in volunteering or had been in the past. There were no differences in involvement by gender or age group. All respondents were asked if they would be interested in doing volunteer work in their area. Eight percent (8%) said they would be interested and 17% said they might be interested. In total, 16 people (i.e. 11%) said they were definitely interested and gave permission for their name and contact details to be forwarded to Queen of Peace CDG.

### 3.5 Suggestions for New Services or Activities

Respondents were asked for their suggestions for new services or supports for older people that could be provided in the area by community or voluntary groups. Sixty percent (60%) of respondents answered and responses were coded as multiple-response answers.

**Table 3.5.1 Suggestions for New Services or Activities**

	Total	Gender		Age		
		Male	Female	55-64	65-79	80+
Base	72	35	37	28	28	15
Visits to elderly for companionship or to fix things	40%	40%	41%	43%	43%	33%
Light activities, walking groups, day trips, Tidy Towns	39%	31%	46%	43%	29%	53%
Tea, chat, cards, craft groups (not classes)	25%	17%	32%	25%	36%	7%
Men's shed	15%	23%	8%	18%	18%	7%
Computer classes	11%	9%	14%	11%	14%	7%
Irish classes	7%	11%	3%	7%	7%	7%
Other	15%	20%	11%	14%	11%	27%

The two most often mentioned suggestions were *visits to elderly for companionship or to fix things* (suggested by 40%) and *light activities, walking groups, day trips, Tidy Towns* (39%). Other suggestions were *tea, chat, card, craft groups* (25%), *men's shed* (15%), *computer classes* (11%) and *Irish classes* (7%). The reason for a men's shed rather than a women's group being suggested may be due to the fact that the existing active retirement group is perceived by many as a women's group. Among those aged 80+, the only two commonly mentioned suggestions were *light activities, walking groups, day trips, Tidy Towns* (at 53%) and *visits to elderly for companionship or to fix things* (at 33%).

Sample suggestions included the following:

- (male, 65-79) "*organise talks for seniors about health and security entitlements - get a doctor or nurse to come and give talks; would be interested in a walking group*"

- (female, 55-64) *“volunteer groups for street cleaning; befriending/buddy system for older people”*
- (male, 55-64) *“no men-oriented groups (e.g. men's shed); big gap in maintenance services for elderly”*
- (female, 65-79) *“knitting and sewing; computer classes; men’s shed would be a good idea; volunteers who would do jobs in the house or garden”*
- (male, 65-79) *“instead of Meals-on-Wheels have a place people come to and eat together”*
- (female, 65-79) *“tea and biscuits, but keep it short, midday timing would be good, initial bonding is important; possibly would do a day trip”*
- (female, 80+) *“community cafe - meeting point for everyone; excursions/day trips”*
- (male, 80+) *“walking club or gym for seniors one or two days a week”*
- (male, 55-64) *“groups for men, like a men’s shed; project to clean up area like the shrine and keep neighbourhood clean”*
- (female, 65-79) *“visiting for lonely elderly, even for 20 minutes (but someone she could get on with); someone trustworthy who would do small jobs (house and garden)”*
- (female, 80+) *“transport to services and activities; assistance for garden and maintenance”*

### 3.6 Use of Computers & Mobile Phones and Best Methods of Publicising Services

This section looks at computer and mobile phone usage among older people, and best methods of publicising services and events.

**Table 3.6.1 Computer Usage**

	Total	Gender		Age		
		Male	Female	55-64	65-79	80+
Base	120	60	60	41	56	23
<b>How often use a computer?</b>						
Never	61%	62%	60%	44%	66%	78%
Occasionally	12%	13%	10%	15%	11%	9%
Often	28%	25%	30%	41%	23%	13%
<b>What do you use a computer for?</b>						
Email	25%	22%	28%	34%	23%	13%
Social media (Facebook, WhatsApp)	14%	5%	23%	24%	11%	4%
Google, news, general reading	21%	25%	17%	32%	16%	13%
Online shopping, banking, paying bills	6%	5%	7%	10%	5%	0%
Work and study	2%	2%	2%	5%	0%	0%
Online games	3%	0%	5%	2%	4%	0%

Use of computers is low, with 61% saying they never use a computer and only 28% saying they often use a computer. Computer usage is especially low among the 80+ age group, with 78% saying they never use a computer and only 13% saying they often use one. *Email* and *Google, news, general reading* are the two most common uses of a computer (25% and 21% respectively). Fourteen percent (14%) use a computer for *social media* while only 6% use a computer for *online shopping, banking, paying bills*. Among those aged 80+, only 4% use a computer for *social media* and none (0%) use computers for *online shopping, banking, paying bills*.

**Table 3.6.2 Mobile Phone Usage**

	Total	Gender		Age		
		Male	Female	55-64	65-79	80+
Base	120	60	60	41	56	23
<b>Do you have a ....?</b>						
Landline	63%	62%	65%	59%	57%	87%
Mobile phone	94%	92%	97%	95%	93%	96%
<b>What do you use your mobile phone for?</b>						
Phone calls	89%	87%	92%	85%	89%	96%
Text messages	52%	43%	60%	68%	46%	35%
Social media (Facebook, WhatsApp)	11%	7%	15%	22%	7%	0%
Email	19%	18%	20%	39%	11%	4%
Google, news, general reading	13%	15%	10%	20%	13%	0%
Work and study	1%	2%	0%	2%	0%	0%
Listen to radio, music	1%	2%	0%	0%	2%	0%

Sixty-three percent (63%) of people have a landline, with those aged 80+ being most likely to have a landline (87%). Most people (94%) have a mobile phone, and possession is over 90% for all gender and age sub-groups. The primary uses of mobile phones are for phone calls (89%), followed by text messages (52%). Use of mobile phone for more advanced applications such as email, social media and the internet is strong among the 55-64 age group but very low among those aged 80+.

**Table 3.6.3 Best Way to Publicise Services & Events in Community**

	Total	Gender		Age		
		Male	Female	55-64	65-79	80+
Base	88	44	44	37	33	18
Flyers and leaflets	43%	34%	52%	41%	33%	67%
Church notices and newsletters	24%	14%	34%	19%	18%	44%
Local newspapers	16%	27%	5%	24%	15%	0%
Local radio	15%	23%	7%	8%	27%	6%
Online, email, Facebook	7%	7%	7%	14%	3%	0%
Other	14%	9%	18%	11%	21%	6%

The two most popular methods of publicising services and events were *flyers/ leaflets* (mentioned by 43%) and *church notices/newsletters* (24%). Only 7% of all respondents (and 0% of those aged 80+) favoured *online, email, Facebook*.

## **4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **4.1 Summary**

The purpose of the research was to understand the needs of older people with regard to community supports that can be provided by the community/voluntary sector. The research was conducted in south Limerick city, in four housing estates served by the Our Lady Queen of Peace Community Development Group. A total of 121 surveys were conducted among people aged 55 or over.

Analysis of small area census data showed that all of the housing estates are in areas classified as 'disadvantaged' (though not 'very' or 'extremely' disadvantaged) on the Pobal Deprivation Index. The combined population of the areas shows a small (2%) decline since 2006 and a slightly older age profile.

Survey responses indicate that 63% of respondents had been living in that area of Limerick for at least 40 years. Among those aged 80 or over, 95% had been living there for at least 40 years. Forty-seven percent (47%) of respondents live with a spouse or partner, but one-third (33%) are living alone. Almost two-thirds (64%) have a long-term health issue, with arthritis, heart problems, blood pressure and diabetes being most often mentioned. A majority of all age categories (55-64, 65-79 and 80+) either drive or get lifts for getting around. However, 14% of all respondents (and 30% of those aged 80+) say that transport is an obstacle to getting around and doing the things they want to do.

When asked to describe a typical day, respondents showed a high level of staying active and having social interactions. Older people stay occupied with home duties and other tasks, with seeing children and grandchildren, and through participation in formal or informal groups (sewing groups, choir, prayer groups, men's sheds). Overall, 91% of people showed evidence of being busy and active, and/or showed evidence of social interactions with family, friends or social groups during typical weekdays. Among those not occupied with things to do or showing only limited interaction with others, health reasons were a common factor.

The two most common suggestions for services or supports that could be provided by community/voluntary groups were home visits to the elderly (for companionship or to fix things) and light group activities (e.g. walking groups, organised day trips, neighbourhood cleaning groups). The best methods of publicising services remain the traditional ones, such as flyers/leaflets to the home, announcements/notices in churches and notices in libraries, Post Offices, etc.

## **4.2 Conclusions**

A very positive aspect of the findings is that 91% of respondents are busy with things to do and/or show a high level of social interaction (with children, grandchildren, friends or activity groups) during typical weekdays. Part of the reason is surely to be that many have been settled in the area for a very long time and have children/grandchildren living nearby, and/or have established friendships and social connections. The implication for public policy is to help people to remain in the same area so that their family/social networks can support them as they grow older.

The other main finding is that home visits to the elderly (for companionship or to fix things) and organising light group activities are useful supports that can be provided by community and volunteer groups.