

AFFINITY (Activating Falls and Fracture Prevention in Ireland Together) is the national implementation project to implement the ‘National Strategy for the Prevention of Falls and Fractures in Ireland’s Ageing Population’ (2008), hereafter known as the National Strategy. AFFINITY is also a commitment within the **European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing (EIP-AHA)**.

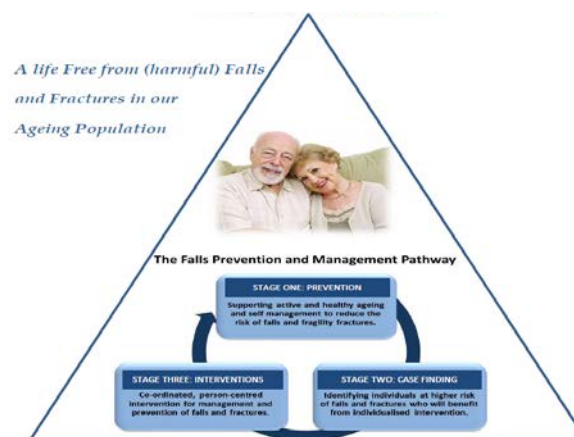
This scheme aims to increase the average healthy lifespan of Europeans by 2 years by 2020, by

- improving health and quality of life (with a focus on older people);
- ensuring health and social care systems are sustainable and efficient in the long term; and
- enhancing the competitiveness of EU industry through business and expansion in new markets.

AFFINITY aims **to prevent harmful falls amongst persons aged 65 years and older, enhance the management of falls and improve health and wellbeing through a focus on bone health (fracture prevention).**

Falls are the dominant cause of injuries among older persons, accounting for approximately **one-third of fatal injuries in persons aged 60 plus**. Falls can often lead to long-term physical disability (e.g. loss of mobility), severe dependency and reduction in quality of life. In addition, some **€520 million is the estimated annual spend** in dealing directly with the sequelae of falls and fractures in the absence of implementation of the National Strategy. If we fail to take decisive action now, this latter annual spend is expected to **quadruple to €2 billion by 2031, given our ageing demographics**.

The primary implementation pillars of AFFINITY include **robust governance, an integrated service delivery model** operating to a population health improvement approach and **change management supports**.



The National Strategy is being jointly implemented by the HSE and the State Claims Agency. The HSE Sponsor of the project is Mr Pat Healy, National Director, HSE Social Care Division. The project framework is being revised in 2015 to take cognisance of new HSE organisational structures –Community Health Organisations (CHO), HSE Divisions and Hospital Groups.

Currently the **Project Executive Team** comprises members from the HSE, State Claims Agency, Department of Health, Service Delivery Unit and the Clinical Care Programmes. The purpose of the project team is to support the project in meeting its goals to ensure older persons receive a continuum of preventative, diagnostic, care and support according to their needs and across different levels of the health and social care system. In 2015 it will focus on the HSE Services for Older People operation plan actions.

The **HSE Operational Service Plan 2015** has the following actions in respect to the falls prevention and bone health National Strategy

- In conjunction with the Primary Care division continue to implement the strategy to prevent falls and fractures in Ireland's ageing population.
- Proceed with the development of the four early adopter sites for falls prevention and bone health in establishing integrated care pathways.

The early adopter sites are:

Community Health Organisation	Early Adopter Sites
CHO 6	St Columcille's Hospital, St Colman's Hospital CNU, Newtownmountkennedy PCT
CHO 9	Mater Hospital St Marys Hospital Phoenix Park CNU Network 5 PCT
CHO 5	Waterford Regional Hospital St Patrick's Community Hospital, Waterford Network 4 - Waterford City
CHO 3	Ennis General Hospital St. Joseph's Community Hospital, Ennis Clare PCT

- Informed by the learning from the early adopters, identify further integrated care pathways for falls prevention and bone health in additional CHOs

Local implementation teams include key medical, nursing, other health and social care personnel from primary care, community, residential and hospital. Key deliverables include **access, quality and value to enable a reduction in harmful falls.**

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