

Age Action: Invitation to Tender **(<https://www.activelink.ie/node/112580>)**



Tender request – Digital Literacy: older men in Ireland

Overview

Age Action

Age Action is Ireland's leading advocacy organisation for older people. Age Action works to ensure that older people's voices are heard at the highest level of Government and that the lived experience of older people informs policy responses to their needs. Age Action supports and advocates for equality for all older people, underpinned by Human Rights. Equality requires recognition of the diversity of identity and situation among older people and measures to address accumulated disadvantage. In addressing ageing, our work includes a concern to influence perspectives on and responses to ageing. This pursuit of equality and human rights is underpinned by our work to promote ageing in place, life long learning, and health and wellbeing for older people, empowering them to live as active citizens.

Our Values

Our work is driven by an organisation that lives out its values of dignity, participation, diversity, social justice, and professionalism. Please familiarise yourself with the attached **Values Statement**.

Background

Digital literacy levels for older people in Ireland are far below other European countries. The proportion of adults not using the internet includes one in five (17%) people aged 60-74 and more than half (51%) of people aged 75 or older. This implies that approximately 300,000, or three in ten older people are not using the internet.

Seven in ten (71%) of all older persons are using the internet, but nearly half (46.2%) of those older internet users have 'below basic' digital skills. That is, nearly half of older internet users do not have the skills to confidently and safely do so, especially for complex online processes or transactions.

Six in ten (62%) of adults aged 60 or older are 'digitally excluded' either because they are not using the internet or have 'below basic' digital skills.

In 2022 Age Action conducted a piece of research into the digital needs of older men living in rural Ireland. We reviewed available evidence and five common themes were found:

1. the use of technology for connection
2. experiences of adapting to technology
3. turning to others for support
4. the importance of in-person communication
5. the perception of generational/digital divides

We used focus groups to understand what older men had to say about their experiences of technology. Three main themes were found:

1. the paradox of support (Give a man a fish, feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, feed him for life!)
2. the emotional experience
3. adapting to a digital world

We conducted a stakeholder mapping exercise which provided us with four clear recommendations.

1. applying inclusive and participatory co-design methodologies for any use of technology
2. acceptance and respect for non-adoption of technology
3. sustainable models of education and peer-to-peer support systems that build upon networks presently in place
4. further research and evaluation on what is, and is not working You can read more about the barriers to using digital technology for social connection in our report 'A Qualitative Study of Older Men's Experiences with Digital Technology in Rural Ireland' - click to read and download this report [here \(https://www.ageaction.ie/sites/default/files/age_action_-_qualitative_study_digital_men_.pdf\)](https://www.ageaction.ie/sites/default/files/age_action_-_qualitative_study_digital_men_.pdf).

What is DL MEN?

Digital Literacy MEN is a digital literacy training aimed at improving the wellbeing and social connectedness of older men living in rural Ireland by equipping them with the digital skills needed to interact online, and explore social opportunities both online and offline. This curriculum was developed directly as a response to the needs identified in the above-named report. The five lesson plans and eight practical activities are specifically designed to increase confidence and skills around safety, getting online and connecting with others.

By the end of the course each participant is able use digital tools such as search engines, social media, and online forums to access information on a wide range of topics and like-minded communities. They are directed through the activities section of the course to use the internet to find and engage with offline activities like registering for sports events or joining vintage car clubs. Having the opportunity to connect with clubs or find out about social events can greatly reduce the lived experience of isolation and loneliness. Safe access to online communities can provide a sense of belonging and connection to others who share similar passions.

By taking part in the programme older men also have access to a range of services online, including healthcare, mental health services, online dating, banking, and shopping. This can strengthen their confidence and help them maintain their independence and reduce their reliance on others for assistance.

Aim of the Research

The aim of this research is to follow up on the fourth recommendation of the first piece of research, critically analysing what is, and what is not working in terms of digital literacy supports for older men. This will include a review of the current DL MEN programme, and a national overview of what additional digital literacy supports are available to older men in rural Ireland. The researcher will also be asked to make recommendations on how to effectively scale digital literacy supports to reach more older men in rural Ireland.

It is expected that the successful applicant will conduct desktop research and three focus groups. Age Action will support the researcher to source the focus group participants but the successful applicant will design, facilitate, record and analyse same ensuring adequate GDPR measures are documented.

The specific outcome from the research will be a report, comprising:

- A review of the existing DL MEN programme;
- An assessment of existing digital literacy supports nationally;
- An assessment of similar digital literacy supports that have successfully scaled up internationally.

Please see Tender Document attached below.

Submissions All tender proposals can be submitted to Vicky Harris, vicky.harris@ageaction.ie (<mailto:vicky.harris@ageaction.ie>), **by 5pm on Wednesday 18th December 2024.**

Region

Nationwide

Date Entered/Updated

6th Dec, 2024

Expiry Date

18th Dec, 2024

Attachment

[DLMEN tender request
5.12.24.pdf](#)

Size

254.4 KB

Attachment	Size
<u>age action values statement.pdf</u>	229.77 KB

Source URL: <https://www.activelink.ie/vacancies/tenders/112580-age-action-invitation-to-tender>