

# COMMUNITY ASSETS

**People with dementia, like anyone else, enjoy and are involved in various community activities. Supporting people with dementia to stay connected and to participate in their hobbies and groups maintains their social inclusion.**

Community assets are the collective resources which individuals and communities have at their disposal; those which can be leveraged to develop effective solutions to promote social inclusion and improve the health and well-being of citizens. Assets include organisations, associations and individuals.

A list of community assets could include libraries, health centres, citizen information services, education centres, leisure centres, family resource centres, Gardai stations, local bus services and GP practices. Businesses such as banks, post offices and shops. Voluntary and community groups such as faith groups, sports clubs, yoga and meditation groups, support groups, residents' association, Men's sheds, craft groups, Active Retirement groups and charities such as Vincent de Paul, Meals on Wheels, Alone, Senior Helpline and Age Action.

Assets also include individuals such as volunteers, families and community leaders, as well as the physical environment such as parks and public buildings.

Knowing about these different assets will give you an idea of the strengths and resources within the community and can help uncover potential resources that can be enhanced to address the identified support needs of people with dementia and family carers.

## COMMUNITY ASSETS

These are anything that improves the quality of community life. For people with dementia it can include:

- The capacities and abilities of community members;
- A physical structure or place;
- A business that is dementia inclusive;
- Community Associations and groups;
- Local private, public, and non-profit organizations.

### *Collecting information on community assets*

- To start, make a list of the different resources in the community that are widely used, for example supermarkets, churches, leisure centres, Citizens Information Services etc. The questions asked in the reflection box below will help you think about community assets.
- Information on organisations providing services and supports to citizens may also be available to you. For example Section 38 organisations, who are funded to provide a defined level of service on behalf of the HSE, and section 39 organisations, who are grant-aided organisations to provide services, usually complete yearly returns on activities and target groups.
- Community directories and County Council Age Friendly directories of services for older people are another good source of information on different resources within a community.
- Local newspapers, parish newsletters and community noticeboards are also sources for this type of information.

**EXAMPLE 3: LOCAL ASSET MAPPING PROJECT (LAMP)** is a project that mapped the social, public, and health services, sports and fitness centres that promote health in St. James's Hospital catchment area of Dublin. Over time, the range of services has been expanded to include businesses and community groups.



The objective of the programme is to integrate the hospital into the community by using the data to socially prescribe local services and activities to improve health and wellbeing. Social prescribing is where GPs and primary care professionals link people with sources of support and social activities within their community that can enhance their well-being.

A description of LAMP can be accessed from <http://www.ehealthireland.ie/Case-Studies-/Local-Asset-Mapping-Project-at-St-James-Hospital/>. To see how the programme operates, visit <http://locidokey.com/>.

The information collected from your community assessment can be recorded on the Community Assets template on Worksheet 2, 'Services and Supports Available'. See Appendix Two.

### **REFLECTION: ANSWERING THESE QUESTIONS MAY HELP YOU IDENTIFY ASSETS IN YOUR AREA**



1. Who are the faith-based and community organisations serving people in the community/region?
2. What services are they providing and are they dementia inclusive?
3. What services are local public bodies providing? Are they dementia inclusive?
4. What organisations are funded by HSE, government agencies and charities for older people, people with disabilities and are these dementia inclusive?
5. What are the various intervention strategies being used in the community to support people with dementia and family carers?
6. Who in the HSE, local government and the community are involved with local dementia service development?
7. What local volunteer groups serve the community, are they dementia inclusive?
8. What community organisations are involved in supporting people with dementia and family carers?

Approaches to identifying community assets are outlined in the guide *Conducting a Community Assessment* which can be accessed from [http://strengtheningnonprofits.org/resources/guidebooks/Community\\_Assessment.pdf](http://strengtheningnonprofits.org/resources/guidebooks/Community_Assessment.pdf)

To gain a better understanding of the services being provided by different groups and to determine whether they are dementia inclusive may mean contacting those involved in organising the different group(s) or those who provide services. You may find it helpful to send a short questionnaire to all groups and organisations identified to get this information or by speaking directly to those involved by phone or arranging to meet (see survey tools, STEP 4 and 5 resources). Information on community assets that are important to people with dementia and family carers can be collected as part of STEP 3.



### **Resources that may be useful for undertaking Step 2**

- Conducting a Community Assessment  
[www.strengtheningnonprofits.org/resources/e-learning/online/communityassessment/default.aspx?chp=0](http://www.strengtheningnonprofits.org/resources/e-learning/online/communityassessment/default.aspx?chp=0)
- Asset Based Mapping  
[www.assetbasedconsulting.net/uploads/publications/A%20glass%20half%20full.pdf](http://www.assetbasedconsulting.net/uploads/publications/A%20glass%20half%20full.pdf)
- Co-producing services using community assets - 'We're Here Too'  
<http://otbds.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Were-Here-Too-Report-2015-and-16.pdf>
- Building Community Based Supports with Older People  
[www.otbds.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/buildingcommunitybasedsupportwitholderpeople23.pdf](http://www.otbds.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/buildingcommunitybasedsupportwitholderpeople23.pdf)