



NEWS IN BRIEF DECEMBER 2025

**ISCP
VOICE OF OLDER PEOPLE**

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Uachtarán na hÉireann Comhghairdeas Catherine Connolly



The Irish Senior Citizens Parliament extends congratulations to our newly inaugurated Uachtarán na hÉireann, Catherine Connolly.

ISCP were delighted that our CEO, Pat Mellon, was invited by An Taoiseach Mr Micheál Martin T.D. to represent the organisation at a civic reception in Dublin Castle in honour of the inauguration of President Catherine Connolly.

The President warmly accepted our congratulations, we look forward to working with President Connolly on building a country for all.

ISCP CEO, Pat Mellon pictured at the civic reception with Uachtarán na hÉireann, Catherine Connolly.



The ISCP wish President Michael D. Higgins a happy and healthy retirement. ISCP members were appreciative of his support and encouragement most recently in his generous letter to our 2025 APM.

Workshops and Events



Our MDO, Sharon Casey, has delivered a series of talks and workshops on planning for the future using the Irish Hospice Foundation (IHF) Think Ahead Planning Pack as an aide. Far from morbid, many participants have found the talks lighthearted, with some humorous moments standing out. If your organisation or group would like to avail of a large group workshop please contact Sharon at 085 2604955 or e-mail development@seniors.ie

IHF website introduces the topic as follows: "Conversations about dying, death and bereavement should happen in every home, workplace, and school in Ireland. Start these talks with family and friends."

More information is available on IHF Website I Want To Think Ahead - Irish Hospice Foundation – visit website to access recorded events or to check out dates and venues for IHF in-person workshops.

IHF contact details: phone (01) 679 3188 or info@hospicefoundation.ie To request a quote or enquire about invoicing, please contact thinkahead@hospicefoundation.ie

Information Sharing

Blister Packing by Pharmacies



Liz O'Hagan,
Pharmacist &
Lifestyle Medicine
Expert.

Many people rely
on their local
pharmacy's
blister-pack
service to help
them take

medicines safely and on time. Blister packs
organise tablets into clearly labelled time
slots, such as morning, afternoon, evening, or
bedtime, and are prepared weekly or
monthly. For many patients, this makes
managing medication much easier and
reduces the risk of missed or incorrect doses.

It's important to note that phasing fees and
blister-pack fees are not the same
thing. Phasing fees are payments made to
pharmacies for dispensing a patient's
medicines in smaller, more frequent "phases"
(for example, weekly). However, many
pharmacies have historically used these
phasing fees to subsidise the much higher
cost of preparing blister-packs for patients
who collect their medication in weekly
phases. Without these fees, blister-pack
services become a much more costly service
for pharmacies to provide.

From January 2026, the Government will no
longer fund phased dispensing for most
medicines. Only a small list of higher-risk
medicines will continue to receive this
support. As a result, some pharmacies may
no longer be able to offer blister-packing as a
service.

Many pharmacies plan to continue offering
blister packs but will need to introduce a
charge, or increase their current charge for
this service, with some pharmacies
suggesting a monthly charge of €25-€40. This
is because blister-packing involves much
more work and cost than many people
realise. It requires extra staff time, careful
checking, and carries a higher risk of errors if

not done correctly. For many pharmacies, this
service has been running at a financial loss
for years.

The loss of phased fees in January is going
to put pharmacists in a very uncomfortable
position as it targets the most vulnerable
people. We will need to charge to be able to
continue offering the service - but what about
our patients who we know won't be able to
afford it, and can't manage their medicines on
their own? What happens if there is an older
couple, with dementia, who cannot pay the
extra charges for their blister packs? Many
carers are only allowed to give their clients
medicines when they're in a blister-pack too!
How will this change impact them?
Pharmacists are very disappointed with the
loss of phased fees from the Government. I
encourage the public to speak up and contact
your local representatives about this issue.

Raffle 2025 - Results



We extend a heartfelt thanks to all who
supported the Raffle this year 2025.
We are delighted to say our Prize winners
are:

1 st Prize	M McComish	Coolock D5
2 nd Prize	P Yeats	Donaghmede D13
3 rd Prize	T Somers	Dublin 11
4 th Prize	A Crowe	Donaghmede D13

A big **Thank you** also to those who
sponsored prizes.

And to the following Shopping Centres who
facilitated us with Sales Days.
We are extremely grateful for your support.
Omni Shopping Centre Santry, Dublin 9
Donaghmede Shopping Centre, Dublin 13



Your Voice Matters: Summary of the Older People's Consultation



Why We Asked You

The Irish Senior Citizens' Parliament (ISCP) and Age Action asked people like you to share their thoughts. The main goal was to understand:

- How **included** and **represented** older people in Ireland feel in public life.
- What is needed to make sure your **voices are truly heard** and **acted upon** by those in charge.



Who Took Part?

- **Nearly 800 older people** took part through surveys, meetings, and interviews between August and September 2025.
- Participants came from **all parts of Ireland** (rural and city areas) and included those from minority groups, those living with disability or illness, and various backgrounds.
- The consultation was supported by **over 30 local groups and partners** who helped reach people in their communities.



What You Told Us

You gave us a clear but complicated message:

1. We Want to Be Involved, but We Feel Ignored

- Older people **want to be more involved** in decisions that affect their lives.
- However, many often feel **left out**, treated as an **afterthought**, or judged by **stereotypes**.
- There's great **frustration** when you're asked for your opinion, but then nothing ever changes (this is called **'tokenism'**).

2. Listening Isn't Enough—We Need Action!

You stressed that being listened to is only meaningful if it leads to **real change**.

- *One person said: "Feeling listened to is different from action – politicians will listen, but they don't act, so it's a pointless exercise."*
- You want stronger ways to be represented and for public systems to take the voices of older people seriously.

3. Barriers to Being Heard

You pointed out several challenges that stop you from participating fully:

- **Digital Exclusion:** Many feel left out when everything moves **online**, saying they lack confidence or easy access to technology.
- **Accessibility:** Problems like limited transport or support make it hard to attend events.
- **Respect:** Many feel they are treated as 'idiots' or are **patronised** (talked down to) by professionals or services.

4. What Works Best?

When you *do* feel included, it's often:

- Through **local community groups** (like the Irish Senior Citizens Parliament or local committees).
- When organisations or people **follow through** on what they say and show you the result of your input.



Key Numbers from the Report

- **764 people** across Ireland shared their views.
- **80%** of participants were aged **60 to 79**.
- **68.6%** of survey respondents were **women**.
- **Online participation (77%)** was high, but paper and phone options were also used to ensure everyone could contribute.
- **Feeling Heard:**
 - **Only 19.4%** felt they were "Yes" heard on public issues.
 - **Over 56%** either felt "No," were "Not sure," or had "Never tried to engage."

Fuel Allowance

Have you applied for Fuel Allowance prior to 2023 and been refused? Have you not applied because you think you will not qualify?

One of the criteria is to satisfy a means test but many payments are disregarded, changes since 2023 mean you do not need to be in receipt of a core Social Welfare payment. Currently, you can earn €524 gross per week for single or €1,048 per week for a couple and still qualify. If you are over 66, the first €50,000 of your capital is not taken into account.

Get help to complete your application form in person at your local Intreo Centre, Social Welfare Branch Office, or any Citizens Information Centre.

In the Spotlight:



Winter Vaccinations – Why They Matter

By Liz O'Hagan, Pharmacist

As we head into the colder months, many people begin

to worry about staying well over winter. One of the simplest ways to protect yourself is by keeping up to date with your flu and Covid-19 vaccines. Most pharmacies, including Meaghers, offer both. If you're over 60, have a long-term health condition, are a carer, work in healthcare, or are pregnant, you can get the flu vaccine free of charge. The Covid-19 vaccine is also recommended for everyone aged 60 and over, and for anyone at increased risk – it is also free.

Why the Flu Should Be Taken Seriously

Flu isn't just "a bad cold." It's a highly contagious virus that affects the lungs and airways. It usually comes on suddenly- often with a high temperature, aches, pains, headache and extreme tiredness. Many people say they feel too weak to even get out of bed.

Most people recover in about a week, but it can leave you wiped out for much longer. And for some, especially older adults or those with other health issues, flu can lead to serious complications like pneumonia. Sadly, in Ireland, **200–500 people die from flu each year**. That's why prevention is so important.

How the Flu Vaccine Helps

The flu vaccine teaches your immune system how to fight the virus. It takes 10–14 days to build full protection, so the earlier in the season you get it, the better.

It's also important to know that the flu vaccine cannot give you the flu. It does not contain any live virus. Some people do experience mild side effects such as a sore arm, a slight temperature or feeling a bit achy or tired. These usually pass quickly and can be helped with paracetamol.

What About Covid-19?

Flu and Covid-19 can feel similar at first, but they are caused by completely different viruses. That's why the flu vaccine doesn't protect against Covid-19, and why it's recommended to get both if you're eligible.

A Little Protection Goes a Long Way

Winter can be a challenging time for many, especially those managing long-term health conditions. Vaccination is a simple step that offers real protection—not just for yourself, but for your family and community too.

If you have any questions or worries about the flu or Covid-19 vaccines, please don't hesitate to pop into the pharmacy for a chat.

One final piece of advice to boost your immunity this winter is to make sure you are taking a **Vitamin D** supplement (the sunshine vitamin!) every day. You can buy it without prescription and there are lots of very affordable brands available in all pharmacies.

ISCP – Christmas Wishes



ISCP Christmas Office hours

*The office will be closed from
Wednesday 24th December.*

*It will reopen on Tuesday 6th January
2025.*

If required - CEO

*Pat Mellon can be contacted
on 087 4303342.*

E-mail pat@seniors.ie.



An Bólaíocht Faoilte agus Pobail

