
POSTER ABSTRACT**Enhancing Wellbeing for Women in Long-Term Residential Care through
Community Linkages**

International Conference on Integrated Care (ICIC26), Birmingham, 13-15 April 2026

Alison Lynch¹1: Age Friendly Ireland

Background: Older women living in long-term residential care are at heightened risk of social isolation and reduced access to community health and wellbeing services. The Women's Health Community Linkage programme, implemented in Counties Roscommon and Leitrim, seeks to address these challenges for 200 residents over 18 months. This pathfinder project is funded by the Women's Health Action Plan.

Approach: Co-designed with Age Friendly Ireland & the Department of Health to include consultation with nursing home staff, volunteers, local authorities, and residents themselves. The project Coordinator will carry out individual consultations with project participants to determine their current level of engagement with community, their interests and their preferences for community involvement.

The initiative includes befriending visits, arts and exercise activities, digital inclusion support, and personalised care plans. Mixed-method evaluation combined quantitative measures of loneliness (Three-Item Loneliness scale), health (EQ-5D-3L), and quality of life (EQoL-3) with qualitative data from focus groups and interviews with residents, families, volunteers, and staff & community services.

Results: /Expected Outcomes: The project is currently underway. Early findings will be available to present to the conference. It is envisaged that findings will show increased social connections, greater engagement with community activities, improved access to health information, and higher levels of physical activity among residents. The primary objective is to impact positively on the health outcomes of these older women.

Data will be presented on the impact of the project on women's participation in regular physical activity, the numbers participating in creative projects, intergenerational connections, uptake of digital technology and library services.

Qualitative research with volunteers will document the project's impact on their sense of purpose and wellbeing. It is expected that family members of nursing home residents will observe positive impacts on residents' mood and quality of life. Uptake varied across facilities, highlighting the importance of staff champions and tailored engagement strategies.

There is good evidence to suggest that participation of older people in creative activities has positive associations with health (TILDA Creative Activity in the Ageing Population).

Implications: This programme will illustrate that structured, co-designed community linkages can meaningfully reduce isolation and improve health outcomes for older women in residential care. By centering the voices of residents and other stakeholders, it provides a replicable model for integrating community supports into long-term care settings. These findings offer transferable lessons for international audiences seeking to enhance social inclusion, intergenerational connections, and health equity among older populations.