Fingal County Council

Press release

November 23 2017

Computer home tutoring and new bus routes introduced under Fingal’s Age Friendly Initiative

Fingal County Council has announced the delivery of two services which give elderly people greater access to technology and public transport.

As part of the Fingal Age Friendly Initiative being implemented by Fingal County Council, Fingal Leadership Partnership and Blanchardstown Area Partnership, the ‘Computer Home Supports’ programme was launched on Monday November 20.

This programme is the first of its kind in Ireland and its objective is to allow elderly people equal access to the benefits and convenience of the internet and technology. Delivered by the Department of Social Protection under the TUS Scheme, users are taught by Garda-vetted tutors trained by the Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board how to use computers in their own homes, free of charge.

Coinciding with the introduction of this scheme are three new bus routes which service Swords, Ballyboughal, Garristown and the Naul. The three new routes are operated by rural transport provider LocalLink.
During her speech at the launch of Fingal’s Age Friendly Initiative at the Atrium in Fingal County Council’s County Hall in Swords, Mayor of Fingal Cllr Mary McCamley said: “Both the ‘Computer Home Support Service’ and introduction of new LocalLink bus routes are extremely valuable to older residents of Fingal. In recent years, using Online Banking, Skype and Email has become second nature for many of us. The ‘Computer Home Support’ service will allow elderly people to benefit from these convenient online resources. I am confident that the introduction of the LocalLink bus routes and ‘Computer Home support’ services will allow Fingal’s older residents to stay connected with their communities.”

LocalLink Co-ordinator Miriam McKenna was also in attendance and explained that the routes have been designed to meet the needs of people in rural areas: “These new routes have all been identified to fill specific needs for commuters and bus users in Fingal, and are part of the greater network of LocalLink services. Apart from the three new routes, we are looking to hear from anyone who knows someone they feel could benefit from transport to hospital or health appointments, nursing home visits or social activities such as Men’s Sheds, Active Retirement groups or just going to a matinee in the cinema. The key to LocalLink is access. Our users are people who could benefit from a door-to-door transport service, and we are asking people to contact us so we can support them in independent living.”

She added that they are seeking help from volunteer drivers for the LocalLink community car service and that those interested could enquire by calling 1800 303 707.

Meanwhile, CEO of Fingal Leadership Partnership Chris O’Malley highlighted the need for the Computer Homes Support service to increase computer literacy among the elderly: “Computers and smart phones are used widely to keep in touch with loved ones who live far away, access online-shopping, the health system and other public services. This has made life more convenient for most of us but there is a digital divide that needs to be addressed. If elderly people cannot access the benefits of modern technology, this is a form of social exclusion. The ‘Computer Home Support’ is a free service that will allow our older residents to make the most of online resources in their own homes.”

Fingal County Council’s Chief Executive, Paul Reid welcomed both initiatives: “The introduction of new bus routes servicing rural Fingal coinciding with the introduction of the ‘Computer Home Support Service’ is great progress for tackling isolation among the elderly. Many of us rely on public transport and depend on technology for everyday services. If older people in our communities could benefit from accessible transport and be taught how to use online services, there is great potential for improving their independence and quality of life.”

Speaking at the launch, Head of Fingal’s Age Friendly Alliance Nora Owen encouraged older residents to utilise the resources available: “As you get on in life, little things may cause you trouble. But if you raise these issues with Fingal’s Age Friendly alliance, you can have your voice heard and your needs met.”

Also in attendance were CEO of Blanchardstown Area Partnership Adeline O’Brien, CEO of Local Link John Burns, and Principal Manager of Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board Sharon Henessy.

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For further enquiries and pictures, please contact press@fingal.ie

Photo caption 1: (Front row, left to right) Fingal County Council Chief Executive Paul Reid, Director of Housing and Community Margaret Geraghty, Mayor of Fingal Cllr Mary McCamley, Head of Fingal’s Age Friendly Alliance Nora Owen, Principal Manager of Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board Sharon Hennessy (Back row left to right Fingal County Councillor Kieran Dennison, Blanchardstown Area Partnership CEO Adeline O’Brien, Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board Seamus Hughes, Fingal County Councillor Eithne Loftus, CEO of Fingal Leadership Partnership Chris O’Malley, Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board Catherine McGuigan

Photo caption 2: Mayor McCamley with Computer Home Support Service Provider Justine Boyle, Principal Manager of Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board Sharon Hennessy and Fingal County Council Chief Executive Paul Reid.

Photo caption 3: Mayor McCamley with Computer Home Support Service Provider Nemanjoni Betoko, , Principal Manager of Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board Sharon Hennessy and Fingal County Council Chief Executive Paul Reid.

Photo caption 4: Mayor McCamley, Nora Owen Director of Operations David Storey and Fingal County Council Community, Culture and Sports Officer Eithne Mallin with LocalLink coordinators.