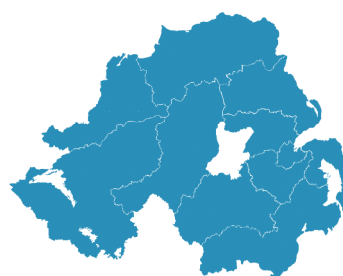




 SAFER  
AGEING  
INDEX



Northern Ireland  
 **Hourglass**  
Safer ageing · Stopping abuse

Part funded by the Hallmark Foundation.

 **Hallmark Foundation**  
Age Well, Every Step of the Way

## ABOUT HOURGLASS

**The Hourglass mission is simple: to end the harm, abuse and exploitation of older people. Every year, more than a million older people across the UK experience physical, sexual, psychological, financial abuse and neglect.**

This is a truly damning indictment of how our society views and values older people. Hourglass is the only UK-wide charity dealing with the issue and has been doing so for almost thirty years. Over that time our work has touched the lives of tens of thousands of people, shaped government policy and amplified the issue in national press. That is why Hourglass is so vital.

Hourglass operates Europe's only 24/7 helpline for older victims, their families and care practitioners, and it's a lifeline for them. We collaborate with key stakeholders and other frontline organisations to nurture a safer ageing agenda. We also have created programmes that change lives and ways of thinking. Our specially trained Community Response Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs) and Domestic Abuse Officers specialise in helping people over 60 affected by abuse. Providing them with tailored and specialist support and addressing the safety of victims at risk of harm from intimate partners, ex-partners or family members to secure their safety and support them to recover from the harm they have suffered. This is an often emotional job and, whilst there are many success stories and recoveries, abuse of this type is often a life-shortening experience.

This, the first Safer Ageing Index for Northern Ireland, highlights how the most vulnerable generation of people, so deeply affected by the pandemic and now the economic crisis, have another battle on their hands. And that is to live in a society that understands and flexes to the needs of an ageing society.

This Index, which will be updated and re-issued every year, is a call to parliamentarians, assembly members, other influencers and policy-makers to ensure that older

people are no longer the last in line. The Northern Ireland Safer Ageing Index was conceived to illustrate and examine how Northern Ireland is progressing towards a safer ageing society for all and to highlight the challenges older people may face.

### WHAT IS SAFER AGEING?

Safer ageing (Hourglass official definition):

Older people face physical and attitudinal barriers that create circumstances of actual or presumed age-related vulnerability – an environment which puts older adults at risk. Our campaign for safer ageing seeks to remove these barriers to empower older people to age securely and live free from abuse.

### WHAT IS SAFER AGEING IN PRACTICE?

- Focussing on prevention first and foremost.
- Understanding the impact of abuse in older age.
- Knowing what abuse is/what abuse looks like, for example, through education and awareness.
- Knowing how to respond to abuse or signs of abuse.

This isn't about growing old gracefully. Safer ageing is about creating environments and procedures so that older people are not put at risk of abuse or neglect. Just as crucially, it's about empowering older people so they can, where suitable, live their lives independently and fully trusting those people around them. Hourglass believe in safer ageing and stopping abuse for all older people. And we invite you to join us in our mission.

**December 2022**

# A Safer Ageing Culture for Northern Ireland: The future starts here?

**For generations, we have known that populations around the world are ageing. More people than ever are living beyond the age of 60. But we have not even begun to make the investments that enable all of us to experience healthy and safer ageing.**

The Safer Ageing Index for Northern Ireland is a launch pad for this debate. An opportunity to begin to embed safer ageing into our collective conscience.

We, at Hourglass, want older age to be a period of hope and opportunity in a safer environment. We believe that older people should be able to age free from abuse, harm, discrimination, exploitation and neglect. But for that to happen we first need to change how we think about ageing and take action at all levels to foster a new era of safer ageing. That is why Hourglass have produced the Safer Ageing Index. We want to save and change lives for the better and ensure the last chapters of life are just as important as the first.

This new Index wants to bring stakeholders together to improve the prospects of current and future generations of older people. To learn from the lessons of the past and, as this Index becomes ingratiated into a yearly performance marker of progress, share successes and good practice across council areas, constituencies and amongst our villages, towns, cities and communities.

Globally, for the first time in history, most people can expect to live into their 60s and beyond. This increase in life expectancy is occurring at an unprecedented pace and it will accelerate in coming decades, particularly in developing countries. This Index underlines these knowns from a Northern Ireland context.

A longer life provides the opportunity to recontextualise what 'older age' might mean and how the whole of our lives might yet unfold. However, the number of options

that come from an extended life expectancy will depend heavily on two key factors: health and safety.

Hourglass, a charity constituted on ending the harm and abuse of older people, believes that building a safer ageing agenda will contribute to developing those opportunities in later life. Older people can contribute more to society (both economically and socially) if they thrive in that healthy and safe context.

But safer ageing affects far more than the individuals, their families and those who provide core services. The impacts of population ageing touch upon health, social care, employment and financial markets and the demand for services and goods. Therefore, this report speaks to the whole community as well as policy influencers. Safer ageing affects all and contributes to economic and physical well-being.

What about the core focus of Hourglass? How does abuse and neglect fit within our future goals? Safer ageing needs an understanding of how the abuse of older people robs people of those extended life opportunities. And this comes from government intervention, collaboration with charities, third sector organisations, public bodies, social enterprises and corporates. If we can create a platform that begins the process of re-thinking older age and ensuring an ageing population is central to policy design and implementation – surely that means equality too?

Equality means understanding that older people need unique services to support them at a time of crisis. This is the Hourglass mantra – ensuring older people are not last in line for government support.

Does this data somehow conclude that Northern Ireland is mistreating its older people and that abuse levels are sky high? No. It concludes that with action and collective goals older people can age safer and continue to add to

society in a variety of ways. Much like many older people already do – but with support and focused policy-making this can be a shared goal for all.

As a result of the pandemic, society became more aware of the prevalence of ageism, stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination. In general, ageism means we do not view the second half of life with the same hope, interest, creativity, and rigour as we do the first. Age is often used as the sole criterion for access to care or physical isolation, as was the case during the pandemic, leading to unequal access to treatment and increased social isolation.

There is a shortage of health care services for older people across the whole of the UK. Despite a higher prevalence of disease and the need for care, investment is targeted at people in the first half of life, rather than those in the second half.

Therefore, there are a number of points for consideration that arise from this, the first Safer Ageing Index for Northern Ireland.

1. Are there enough services and support functions that prioritise the needs of older people in every local council? And are they designed to fit the individual need of the locality as well as the population (rural vs urban service provision)?
2. Why are services that support the needs of older people (Hourglass' own 24/7 helpline, for example) considered a niche need – when we are in the throes of a growing ageing society?

3. Why are there no 'Violence Against Older People' strategies to work alongside VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls) action plans?
4. Can we combine the global push towards healthy ageing – with the need for safer ageing? To ensure that the abuse and neglect of older people goes hand-in-hand with a healthy lives agenda?
5. Can we create a multi-generational forum a cross Northern Ireland that seeks to build consensus on these issues and moves away from pockets of support in local council areas? But also generates innovative thinking and collective responsibility for safer ageing?

Much like an open-ended debate, people will form their own conclusions from this Index. But one thing that stands out amongst the data, analytics and the ranking – that if we can all take a moment to recognise the need for safer ageing and then begin to take steps to buy into that model, we are already building consensus.

No-one is immune from the effects of growing old. Perhaps it's time to create a safer and fairer Northern Ireland for everyone, and maybe this is the starting point?



Veronica Gray  
Policy Director and Deputy Chief Executive Officer  
Hourglass

## NORTHERN IRELAND SAFER AGEING INDEX: SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

**In 2021/22 Mid Ulster is the safest place to grow older in Northern Ireland, closely followed by Mid and East Antrim, while Fermanagh and Omagh is the safest from a crime perspective.**

From our rankings we can see that Mid Ulster is in the lower half of council areas for Crime, Economics, and Isolation, and occupies the 11th spot in terms of Population. The lower the score, the lower the risk.

The only high scoring factor for Mid Ulster is its higher prevalence of older people that suffer from mobility and pain issues. Nonetheless, our Index scores Mid Ulster in 2021/22 as a council area that provides a relatively safe, economically secure and mentally healthy lifestyle for older people to safely grow old in.

Currently the overall highest scoring council area is Belfast and consequently, this is the least safe place to grow older in Northern Ireland in 2021/22. This is followed by Derry City and Strabane, and Causeway Coast and Glens. From our rankings we can see that Belfast is ranked highest risk in Northern Ireland council areas in our indices for Health, Crime, and Isolation, and is in the bottom half of council areas for Economics. The only area where Belfast does well is in Population, being ranked 10th out of 11th.

As such, Belfast in 2021/22 is a council area that provides a risk of poor health, higher likelihood of being a victim of crime, and a higher chance of suffering an isolated and mentally unhealthy lifestyle for older people to safely grow old in. The Index explains the rationale for this assessment.

**Some of the other key findings of the Northern Ireland Safer Ageing Index are as follows:**

- Over 65s in Belfast are 40% more likely to be living alone than the NI average.

- Nearly a quarter of over 65s in Northern Ireland are living alone and in Belfast it's over a third.
- Older people are 48% more likely to be victims of crime in Belfast than the NI average.
- Over 65s are twice as likely to be economically active in Fermanagh and Omagh than in Belfast.
- Over 65s in rural/coastal areas are more mobile and in less long-term pain than their urban counterparts.
- The most income deprived older people are more likely to live in rural/coastal council areas as opposed to urban.
- Data collection has not recovered from the Covid-19 pandemic and this makes it difficult to understand and support older people fully if we are not fully informed or aware of their experiences.
- Political attention is focused elsewhere and away from supporting older people in Northern Ireland.

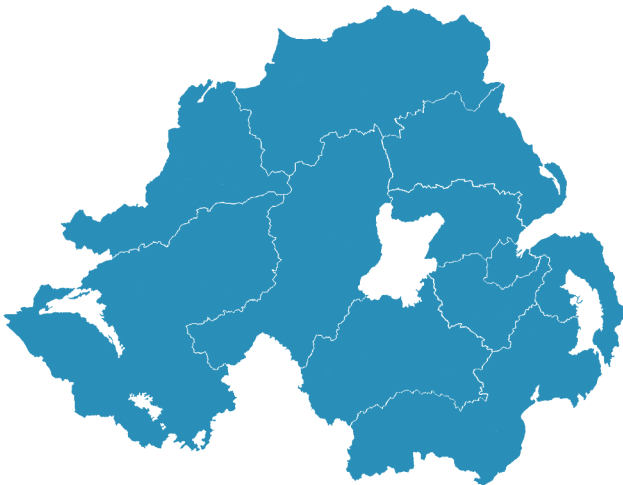
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NORTHERN IRELAND

# SAFER AGEING INDEX

An Index to assess the level of policy, public sector and movements within the assembly, and other actions towards achieving safer ageing for all older people in Northern Ireland.



**Country/area:** Northern Ireland  
**Assessment Year:** 2021-22  
(Older data used when necessary)

**Commitment and conditions for greater action on safer ageing and preventing/intervening in the abuse of older people:**

## INTRODUCTION

The Northern Ireland Safer Ageing Index was conceived to illustrate and examine how Northern Ireland is progressing towards a safer ageing society for all and to highlight the challenges older people may face.

Hourglass hopes that the Index will:

- Create a resource that delivers insights for all stakeholder audiences. It will enable the monitoring of progress towards a safer ageing agenda and provides an opportunity to describe and shape the challenges. These will then become trends and insights on such progress as well as indicators towards creating support networks for victim survivors of abuse and neglect. All data, analysis and commentary can be revisited yearly.
- Increase levels of awareness and engagement on the issue of safer ageing for all audiences – across a variety of sectors and within core influencers.
- Start a debate which puts safer ageing in the centre of the discussion, rather than on the periphery and ensures that ageing safer becomes a byword within all policies and strategies.
- Media focus and public engagement related to safer ageing.

It also seeks to provide a data sheet, ranking, and scorecard measurement for each council area in Northern Ireland, focused around five categories:

- Population
- Health
- Economics
- Crime
- Isolation

The **Population** category measures and analyses the 2021 over 60s population profile (total population, older population – over 60) to indicate the prevalence of older people across Northern Ireland, and in each council area. It also explores the predicted over 60s population growth (predictions for 2043) and compares it with the Northern Ireland average – to examine the relative speed of 60+ population growth across each council area.

The Population Indices: Prevalence of over 60s in Council Area = Over 60s population profile divided by total population profile multiplied by 100.

Predicted over 60s population growth vs National Average = % of expected over 60s population council area growth divided by % of expected over 60s population in Northern Ireland multiplied by 100.

The **Health** category measures and analyses the health profiles of over 65s in each council area, specifically mobility/dexterity difficulty and long-term pain/discomfort (2011 data) and compares it with the national average to indicate the prevalence of these forms of health difficulties and discomforts for older people across Northern Ireland, and in each council area.

## PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

The overall Safer Ageing Index will seek to rank each nation by analysing three specific aspects in the last year relating to safer ageing. The three aspects are:

- Political focus and commitment towards safer ageing.
- Legislation passed and consultations undertaken related to safer ageing.

### Key for Council Area Ranking

- 1-4 Challenge
- 5-7 Average
- 8-11 Advantage



## INTRODUCTION

The **Health** Indices: Prevalence of mobility or dexterity difficulty vs National average = % of over 65s with mobility or dexterity difficulties in council area divided by % of over 65s with mobility or dexterity difficulties in Northern Ireland multiplied by 100.

Prevalence of Long-term pain or discomfort vs National average = % of over 65s with long term pain or discomfort in each council area divided by % of over 65s with long term pain or discomfort in Northern Ireland by 100.

Average Health Indices = Addition of above indices scores divided by 2.

The **Economics** category measures and analyses the economic profiles of over 65s in each council area, specifically around economic deprivation (number of income deprived over 65s living in households whose equalised income is below 60% of the Northern Ireland median) and the number of economically active over 65s (2011 data). This is compared with the overall average of Northern Ireland.

The Economic Indices: Income deprived older people 65+ living in households whose equalised income is below 60 per cent of the NI Median v national average = % of income deprived older people 65+ living in households whose equalised income is below 60 per cent of the NI Median in each council area divided by Income deprived older people 65+ living in households whose equalised income is below 60 per cent of the NI Median in Northern Ireland multiplied by 100.

Prevalence of economically active over 65s (transposed to negative) = % of over 65s economically active in Northern Ireland divided by % of over 65s economically active in each council area multiplied by 100.

Average Economic Indices = Addition of above indices scores divided by 2.

The **Crime** category measures and analyses the most recent Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) data (2021) on the number of crimes in the following groupings where the victim is listed as over 60.

- Violence Against the Person
- Burglary
- Vehicle Theft
- Criminal Damage
- Other Offences.

The Crime Indices: Prevalence of over 60s victims of crime vs older population = % of over 60s who are victims of crime in each council area divided by % of over 60s who are victims of crime in Northern Ireland multiplied by 100.

Finally, the **Isolation** category measures and analyses the isolation profiles of over 65s, specifically using the number of over 65s living alone, and levels of self-belief and comparing these to the Northern Ireland average.

The Isolation Indices: Prevalence of over 65s living alone vs National average = % of over 65 population living alone in each council area divided by % of over 65 population living alone in Northern Ireland multiplied by 100.

Level of low self-belief vs % of over 65 population living alone = % of levels of low self-belief in each council area divided by % of over 65 population living alone in each council area multiplied by 100.

## DATA

**Efforts have been made to ensure that the Northern Ireland Safer Ageing Index has utilised the most up to date data available in order to guarantee the most comprehensive and accurate measure of safer ageing across Northern Ireland. Unfortunately, it wasn't possible to get all data from 2021/22 sources.**

This is due to several reasons. We know older people face significant risks of harm and abuse perpetrated by those in a position of trust. The abuse of older people requires specialised policy responses as older people are unique from the general population of victims of interpersonal abuse. There are different demographic and relationship characteristics associated with victims and perpetrators. However, there is an absence of convincing data to depict the experience of abuse in later life in the UK. This poses a problem to developing effective evidence-based policies and to monitoring progress on the issue.

In the UK and internationally, older people are excluded from datasets. The UN's Economic and Social Research Council identified how data systems leave older people behind. In general terms, age-caps in data gathering and the lack of disaggregation between older groups are key problems. On the latter the report recommended 'that research and statistical data on ageing can be

disaggregated into smaller five-year cohorts'<sup>1</sup>. On data on violence and abuse, the report identified a global scarcity and highlighted that where countries are supported in measuring gender-based violence<sup>2</sup>, no such guidelines exist for violence and abuse in later life.

Whilst police forces in England, Wales and Scotland do not routinely record the age of complainants in police statistics<sup>3</sup>, Northern Ireland can be cited as an example of best practice in this regard, appearing to be unique in police forces routinely including information on the age of the alleged victim. The pandemic appears to have delayed the updating of other data sources across Northern Ireland, leading to gaps in the data around the lives of older people. Regrettably, in some cases we have had to use data covering over 60s rather than over 65s wherein the breakdown into smaller cohorts is not available.

Although the 2021 census has been completed, not all results and data have been released yet and as such, this Safer Ageing Index uses statistics and data from the 2011 census. As soon as the relevant census data is released in January 2023, this Safer Ageing Index will be updated and modified. The Safer Ageing Index for Northern Ireland will necessarily be updated as and when new data is available and this will become an annual release.

## EXISTING PROTECTIONS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

**While much more work is needed to better protect older people from violence and abuse and ensure they can age safely, some legislative protections already exist in Northern Ireland. Specific to Northern Ireland, The Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland is a non-departmental public body, set up following the Commissioner for Older People Act (Northern Ireland) 2011.**

**The Commissioner's duties are listed as:<sup>4</sup>**

1. To promote awareness of the interests of older people in Northern Ireland.
2. To keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of the law as it affects older people.
3. To keep under review the adequacy and effectiveness of services provided to older people by "relevant authorities" which includes health and social care providers.
4. To promote the provision of opportunities for and the elimination of discrimination against older people.
5. To encourage best practice in the treatment of older people.
6. To promote positive attitudes towards older people and encourage participation by older people in public life.
7. To advise the Assembly, the Secretary of State and any relevant authority on matters concerning the interests of older people.
8. To take reasonable steps to communicate with older people.

More general legislation about safeguarding of vulnerable adults (and children) in Northern Ireland is provided by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007. The Order defines six categories of activity which are regulated activity with vulnerable adults. They are:

- providing health care
- providing personal care
- providing social work
- helping with general household matters
- helping with the conduct of a person's own affairs
- conveying

The Commissioner for Older People in Northern Ireland has publicly called for more specific legislation to protect older people from abuse<sup>5</sup>. Specifically, the Commissioner has noted that definitions currently used in Northern Ireland for adult safeguarding are unclear, and that clear definitions in law were needed for the following terms:<sup>6</sup>

- 'a person who is at risk'
- 'abuse and harm'
- 'financial abuse'

In 2015, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety Northern Ireland and the Department of Justice Northern Ireland published the policy document *Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership*. The document does define adults at risk of harm as 'those whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their personal characteristics or life circumstances, and who are unable to protect their own well-being, property, assets, rights or other interests; and where the action or inaction of another person or persons is causing, or is likely to cause, him/her to be harmed'<sup>7</sup>.

## NORTHERN IRELAND SAFER AGEING OVERVIEW

**From a safer ageing standpoint, Northern Ireland is in a state of change. In the past year, a number of measures and new legislation have been instituted and underlaid to offer more protections to older victim-survivors, specifically from a domestic and sexual violence perspective. These include:**

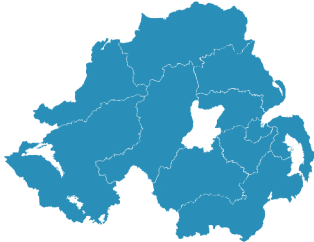
- The Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (Northern Ireland) 2021 includes the creation of a domestic abuse offence covering physical violence, non-physical abusive behaviour (including coercive and controlling behaviour) and sexually abusive behaviour.
- More funding for frontline services and support organisations. This includes the 24 hour Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline; the Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre; emergency accommodation and refuge provision.
- The Identification and Referral to Improve Safety programme (also known as 'IRIS') is being piloted in the Belfast and Newry, Mourne and Down areas to train and support GPs to recognise and respond to domestic and sexual abuse.
- Introduction of Domestic Homicide Reviews.
- The launch of 'ASSIST NI', a new regional advocacy support service.
- The institution of a consultation focused around a proposed new domestic, sexual and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy for Northern Ireland.

As to the prevalence of crimes and abuse/violence affecting older victim-survivors in Northern Ireland in 2021/22:

- Hourglass received 8 domestic abuse cases on its helpline from Northern Ireland in 2021.
- Hourglass received 3 sexual abuse cases on its helpline from Northern Ireland in 2021.
- In 2020/21, the PSNI recorded 614 domestic abuse offences where the victim was aged 65 or over.
- In 2021/22, the PSNI recorded 804 domestic abuse offences where the victim was aged 65 or over.
- In 2020/21, 271 of these cases involved male victims, and 343 involved female victims.
- In 2021/22, 334 of these cases involved male victims, and 470 involved female victims.
- In 2021, there were 17 domestic abuse incidents and 11 domestic abuse crimes per 1,000 population, compared with 17 domestic abuse incidents and 10 domestic abuse crimes recorded during the previous 12 months.
- In 2021, 631 sexual offence crimes were recorded by the PSNI (all ages).

# An overview of key factors affecting Safer Ageing in Northern Ireland.

## Northern Ireland



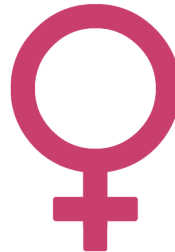
Total Population (2021)  
**1,903,175**

Older Population (2021) Over 60s  
**439,520**

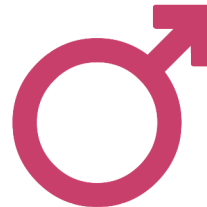
Number of older people living alone. (2021)  
**78,101**

Predicted Older Population (2043) Over 60s  
**601,115**

## Life Expectancy

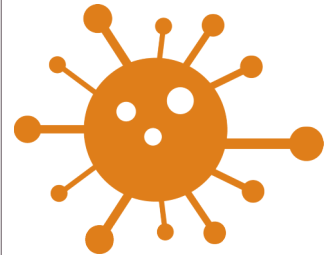


Males - **78.7 years**



Females - **82.4 years**

## Living with Diseases of Old Age (All Ages) 2020/21



Dementia  
**14,728**

Osteoporosis  
**7,366**



Number of older people living in communal/institutional establishments (2011)

**4.5%**

## Levels of Low Self Belief (65+) (2011)



## Long Term Conditions (65+) (2011)



Mobility or dexterity difficulty  
**102,612**

Long term pain or discomfort  
**73,874**

Chronic Illness  
**57,464**

# Political focus and commitment towards greater action and progress on safer ageing through a policy agenda.

## Achievement of goals - Substantial - 7



**Key progress:** All Northern Ireland council areas have continued to position themselves as Age Friendly districts with the launch and adoption of the Age Friendly Strategy 2021-23. Policy measures to support victims of VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls) crimes have been instituted across Northern Ireland.

### Point 1

Introduction of Domestic Homicide Reviews in Northern Ireland.

### Point 2

More funding for frontline services and support organisations. This includes the 24 hour Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline; the Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre; emergency accommodation and refuge provision.

### Point 3

The Identification and Referral to Improve Safety programme (also known as 'IRIS') is being piloted in the Belfast and Newry and Mourne areas to train and support GPs to recognise and respond to domestic and sexual abuse.

### Point 4

The launch of 'ASSIST NI', a new regional advocacy support service.

**Key challenges:** This attention to an age friendly society needs to be continued with an ever-increasing number of over 65s in Northern Ireland.

### Point 1

Collapse of Stormont and struggles over power sharing may mean political attention is focused elsewhere.

### Point 2

The Northern Ireland Protocol may also take attention away from safer ageing issues.

## Key

Political support and policy priorities - Goals Achieved – Scorecard of 1 to 10  
 (1) None | (1-3) Negligible | (4-6) Some | (7-8) Substantial | (9-10) Total

# Legislative and consultative focus on issues affecting safer ageing and older people.

## Achievement of goals - Substantial - 7



### Substantial Progress on a Northern Ireland wide level.

#### Point 1

Cross departmental Northern Ireland wide focus on strategy to stop domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

#### Point 2

Creation of a new domestic abuse offence within the within the Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (Northern Ireland) 2021.

#### Point 3

Launch of a consultation focused on improving the experiences of victims and witnesses in the criminal justice system.

### Key challenges: Lack of localised consultations and legislation.

#### Point 1

Recent consultations have not been focused on a council level, understanding of localised issues and good local data is urgently needed.

### Key

Political support and policy priorities - Goals Achieved – Scorecard of 1 to 10  
(1) None | (1-3) Negligible | (4-6) Some | (7-8) Substantial | (9-10) Total

Consistent media focus on older people, violence against older people, and safer ageing. Public consciousness and awareness of the issues that older people face.

**Achievement of goals - Substantial - 7**



**Key progress:**

**Point 1**

Institution of PSNI “There is no excuse domestic abuse prevention campaign” which focused on Domestic Abuse over Christmas and New Year – however older victim-survivors were not specifically mentioned or seen within campaign video.

**Point 2**

Continued promotion and celebration across Northern Ireland on positive ageing month in October 2021.

**Point 3**

Launch of Digital Tool – DAART NI which offers information and support about domestic abuse and violence.

**Key challenges:**

**Point 1**

Keeping a safer ageing agenda in the public eye, when there are a number of other competing topics for the public.

**Point 2**

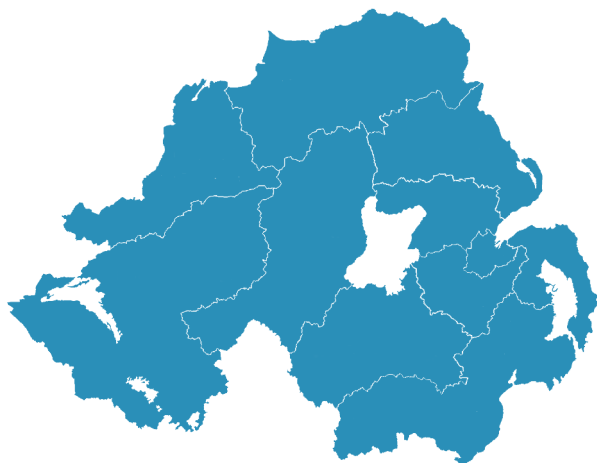
The difficulty in measuring public understanding and awareness of issues related to abuse and violence perpetrated towards older people.

**Key**

Political support and policy priorities - Goals Achieved – Scorecard of 1 to 10  
(1) None | (1-3) Negligible | (4-6) Some | (7-8) Substantial | (9-10) Total



## NORTHERN IRELAND



## POPULATION INDEX

Position	Local Council Area	Population Index
1	Ards and North Down	125
2	Mid and East Antrim	113
3	Causeway Coast and Glens	111
4	Fermanagh and Omagh	106
5	Lisburn and Castlereagh	102
6	Antrim and Newtownabbey	100
7	Newry, Mourne and Down	98
8	Derry City and Strabane	95
9	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	94
10	Mid Ulster	88
11	Belfast	88

Data from 2021 Census

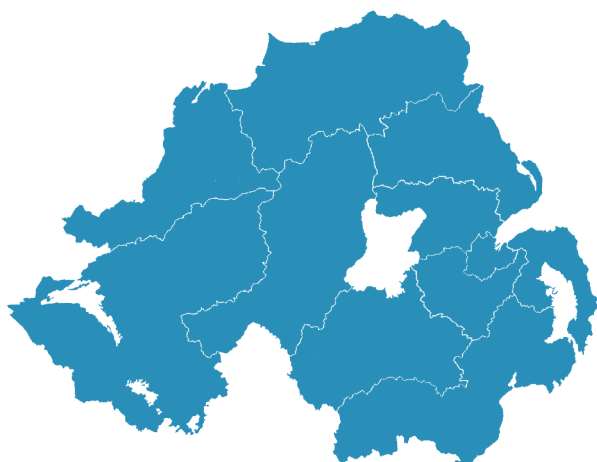
We can see from the above indices measuring prevalence, that the council areas in Northern Ireland with the highest proportion of older people are Ards and North Down, Mid and East Antrim, and Causeway Coast and Glens. The council areas with the lowest number of older people are Belfast, Mid Ulster, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon, and Derry City and Strabane.

Ards and North Down occupies the highest spot on our older people population index (125), while Belfast and mid Ulster occupy the lowest population rank on the index (88).

This suggests that older people are more prevalent in Northern Ireland council areas that are predominately rural and to a certain extent coastal, while cities or urban centres see a smaller prevalence of older people. In safer ageing terms, this could present a number of

issues – firstly, rural or coastal areas may mean increased loneliness and social isolation for older people, a more pronounced digital divide, a lack of support networks – especially if older people have moved into a rural or coastal area from an urban conurbation, and dangerous roads and poor rural transport connectivity.<sup>8</sup> While these issues may affect all older people, older LGBTQ+, older men, and older ethnic minorities may particularly struggle from these problems in rural and/or coastal areas.<sup>9</sup>

NORTHERN IRELAND



# POPULATION GROWTH INDEX

60+ POPULATION PROFILES AND PREDICTED GROWTH

<p><b>Low Profile/High Growth</b></p> <p>Mid Ulster                  Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon                  Newry, Mourne and Down</p>	<p><b>High Profile/High Growth</b></p> <p>Lisburn and Castlereagh                  Causeway Coast and Glens</p>
<p><b>Low Profile/Slow Growth</b></p> <p>Antrim and Newtownabbey                  Derry City and Strabane                  Belfast</p>	<p><b>High Profile/Slow Growth</b></p> <p>Fermanagh and Omagh                  Ards and North Down                  Mid and East Antrim</p>

Position	Predicted Growth Index	Now
Mid Ulster	145	88
Lisburn and Castlereagh	133	102
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	133	94
Newry, Mourne and Down	118	98
Causeway Coast and Glens	104	111
Antrim and Newtownabbey	96	100
Fermanagh and Omagh	92	106
Derry City and Strabane	80	95
Mid and East Antrim	78	113
Belfast	75	88
Ards and North Down	72	125

Source: Predicted Growth Data from NISRA Age Friendly Profiles for NI

## NORTHERN IRELAND

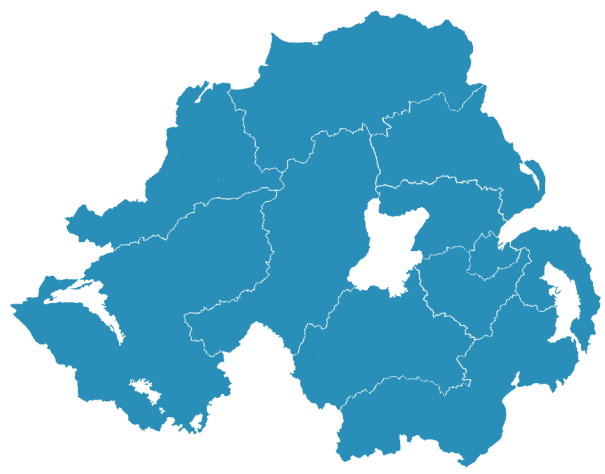
**Looking now at the predicted growth of older people by the year 2043, the above index shows the speed of predicted over 60s population growth in each council area versus the national Northern Ireland average predicted over 60s population growth. As we can see each council area can be fit into a prevalence and growth box, ranging from low prevalence of older people and slow/low older population growth, through to high prevalence and fast/high population growth.**

We can see again a disparity between rural/coastal and urban areas, predominantly rural areas such as Mid Ulster and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon, and Newry, Mourne and Down which are predicted to see high predicted growth among the over 60 population. Mid Ulster and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon in particular are currently, as seen on the page before two of the council areas with the lowest current prevalence of over 60s, but are predicted to experience fast and high growth. In Mid Ulster, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon – the percentage of the over

60s population is predicted to at least double. Attention must be paid to this, to ensure that rural areas are given enough support and infrastructure by central and local government to deal with the pressure of the increase in the older population.

As a comparison to this, we can see low/slow growth in urban areas, especially Belfast (although Lisburn and Castlereagh, an area which contains a number of Belfast suburbs is predicted to see high and fast growth). While Belfast has the highest number of over 60s of all council areas, the percentage of over 60s to the rest of the adult population is quite low compared to other council areas (20%). Apart from Ards and North Down (the council area with the highest current percentage of over 60s compared to the adult population), Belfast is predicted to see the slowest and lowest growth increase, Ards and North Down however is predicted to see its percentage of over 60s decrease, from 29% of the population at the moment to 26% by 2043.

NORTHERN IRELAND



# HEALTH INDEX

Position	Local Council Area	Health Index (inc Belfast)	Health Index (exc Belfast)
1	Belfast	135	
2	Derry City and Strabane	107	114
3	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	99	105
4	Mid Ulster	98	104
5	Antrim and Newtownabbey	97	103
6	Mid and East Antrim	92	98
7	Newry, Mourne, and Down	91	97
8	Causeway Coast and Glens	90	96
9	Lisburn and Castlereagh	90	96
10	Fermanagh and Omagh	89	95
11	Ards and North Down	87	92

Looking at our Safer Ageing Health Index, we can see that the council areas with the highest prevalence of older people with mobility/dexterity difficulties, or long-term pain/discomfort are Belfast, Derry City and Strabane, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon, and Mid Ulster. The council areas with the lowest prevalence of older people with mobility/dexterity difficulties, or long-term pain/discomfort are Ards and North Down, Fermanagh and Omagh, Lisburn and Castlereagh, and Causeway Coast and Glens.

Belfast occupies the highest spot on our health index (when Belfast is included), while Derry City and Strabane occupies it when Belfast is not included (135 and 114 respectively,) while Ards and North Down

occupies the lowest spot on our health index both when Belfast is included and when it isn't (87 and 92 respectively.)

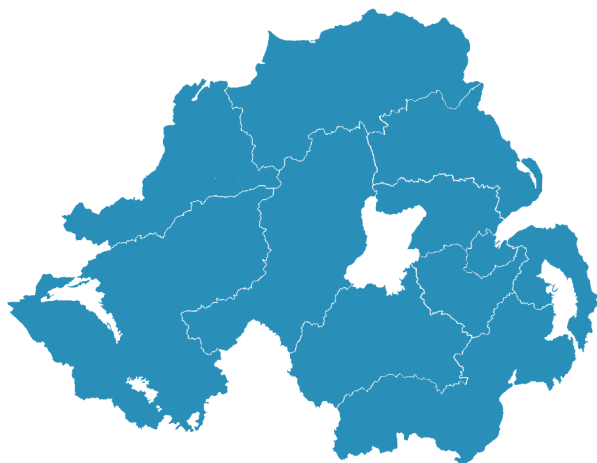
Much like within our population index, we can see a difference between rural and urban areas – with seemingly a much higher proportion of mobility/dexterity difficulties, or long-term pain/discomfort in urban areas like Belfast or Derry City and Strabane. This is somewhat surprising, as rural and coastal areas are known to have certain issues concerning worse access to health services in terms of distance to travel; poorer infrastructure, and health and social care providers finding it challenging to recruit and retain staff in rural areas and thus services that do exist are often exposed to being cut back or facing closure<sup>12</sup>.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

However, it could be suggested that the chosen health inequalities within the index (mobility/dexterity and pain/discomfort) may account for this – rural/coastal areas may offer a greater opportunity to participate in regular physical activities which may help stave off mobility/dexterity and pain/discomfort problems (physical inactivity is one of the top behavioural risk

factors for preventable disability in later life)<sup>13</sup>. Urban places with less accessible parks or active focused areas may not offer the same geographical or spatial opportunities for older people to participate in regular exercise or health based activities.

## NORTHERN IRELAND



## ECONOMIC INDEX

Position	Local Council Area	Economics Index (inc Belfast)	Economics Index (exc Belfast)
1	Derry City and Strabane	108	106
2	Newry, Mourne, and Down	108	106
3	Causeway Coast and Glens	107	105
4	Fermanagh and Omagh	107	105
5	Belfast	106	
6	Ards and North Down	104	102
7	Mid and East Antrim	101	99
8	Mid Ulster	98	97
9	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	97	96
10	Lisburn and Castlereagh	93	91
11	Antrim and Newtownabbey	92	91

Looking at our Safer Ageing Economic Index, which focuses on deprivation and economically active adults over 65, we can see a close relationship between the top five council areas, with only four points between fifth and the top.

Joint first and the two council areas with the highest prevalence of economically active over 65s, and the largest percentage of deprived older people are Derry City and Strabane, and Newry, Mourne and Down, with Causeway Coast and Glens, Fermanagh and Omagh, and Belfast rounding out the top five.

Newry, Mourne and Down is also the council area containing the most deprived area in the whole of Northern Ireland – Forkhill 2. The council areas with the

lowest prevalence of economically active over 65s, and the smallest percentage of deprived older people are Antrim and Newtownabbey, Lisburn and Castlereagh, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon, and Mid Ulster.

Deprivation and the level of economic activity among older people is not as we've seen in other indices primarily centred on either urban or rural/coastal areas, but spread through both urban and rural/coastal communities. However, poverty and deprivation in rural/coastal areas can be associated with additional barriers that may not exist in urban areas, these could include – more inclement or colder weather, less support infrastructure (charity organisations or foodbanks), more expensive and less frequent transport infrastructure, and less community/social support.

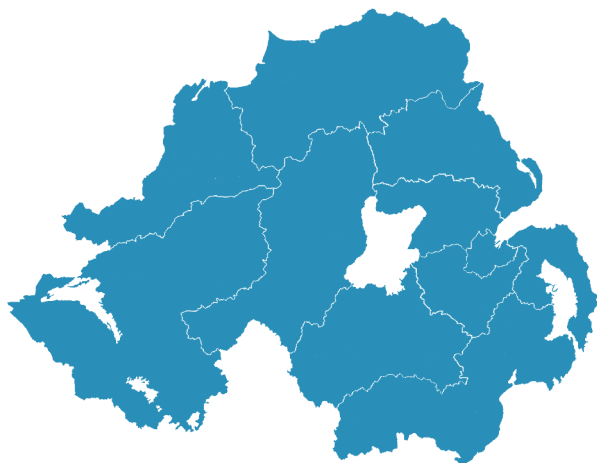
## NORTHERN IRELAND

Experiences of poverty and deprivation throughout life can impact economic and financial security in older age, and lead to older adults having to work longer in life to make ends meet, a link between economic deprivation and economic activity in older life.

Socio-economic disadvantages can also lead to older adults suffering from increased loneliness, stress, depression, and anxiety – as well as being a potential risk factor for abuse and mistreatment at the hands of others. Poverty in many senses, can be seen as a form

of structural violence, it affects the life quality of a person and their participation in everyday life through the restricting of access to jobs, housing, healthcare, education, and justice systems, and threatens their mental and physical wellbeing, and their human rights. Economic inequality and socio-economic issues create a number of additional intersectional barriers for older people, and can create a cycle of multiple disadvantage - victimising and making vulnerable people at risk of more forms of abuse and violence.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

CRIME  
INDEX

Position	Local Council Area	Crime Index (inc Belfast)	Crime Index (exc Belfast)
1	Belfast	148	
2	Derry City and Strabane	120	132
3	Newry, Mourne, and Down	110	121
4	Antrim and Newtownabbey	104	115
5	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	100	110
6	Causeway Coast and Glens	91	101
7	Lisburn and Castlereagh	84	92
8	Mid Ulster	79	87
9	Ards and North Down	75	83
10	Mid and East Antrim	75	82
11	Fermanagh and Omagh	69	76

Looking at our Safer Ageing Crime Index, we can see that the council areas with the highest prevalence of crimes committed against the over 60s were Belfast, Derry City and Strabane, Newry, Mourne and Down, and Antrim and Newtownabbey.

The council areas with the lowest prevalence of crimes committed against the over 60s were Fermanagh and Omagh, Ards and North Down, Mid and East Antrim, and Mid Ulster.

When included, Belfast occupies the highest spot on our crime index, while Derry City and Strabane occupies it when Belfast is not included (148 and 132 respectively), while Fermanagh and Omagh occupies the lowest spot on our crime index both when Belfast is included and

when it isn't (69 and 76 respectively). Interestingly we can see that although Ards and North Down has the highest proportion of older people, it had the third lowest number of crimes committed against older victims.

Crime and crime victimization can have a devastating effect on all those who experience it, from the victims who suffer from violence and theft, the emergency services who have to deal with its environmental and social consequences, and the unaffected member of the public who feels stress and fear after seeing media constructed articles on crime in the news<sup>14</sup>.

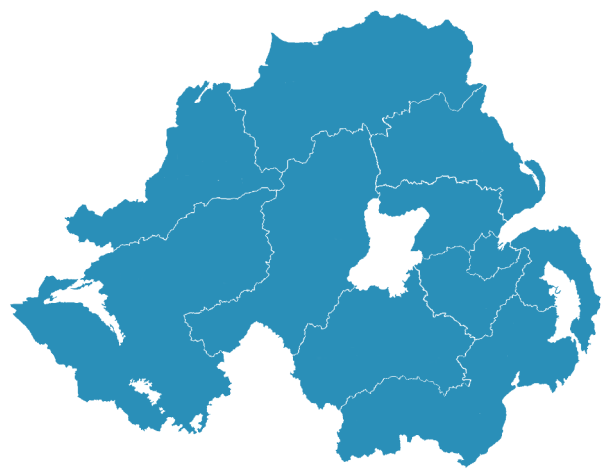


## NORTHERN IRELAND

Detrimental mental, physiological and social effects of crime are common, and the risk of these effects is especially true for older people, who may suffer from a weakened physical condition, as well as other assorted age-related effects<sup>15</sup>. As such, while people over 65 are statistically the age group in the UK at least risk of being

a victim of crime, older people as victims of crime is an extremely significant and worrying phenomenon, and one that deserves closer attention in both public and academic areas.

NORTHERN IRELAND



# ISOLATION INDEX

Position	Local Council Area	Isolation Index (inc Belfast)	Isolation Index (exc Belfast)
1	Belfast	132	
2	Causeway Coast and Glens	106	119
3	Derry City and Strabane	106	118
4	Lisburn and Castlereagh	95	106
5	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	93	104
6	Newry, Mourne, and Down	92	103
7	Mid Ulster	89	100
8	Fermanagh and Omagh	88	99
9	Antrim and Newtownabbey	76	85
10	Ards and North Down	75	84
11	Mid and East Antrim	74	82

Looking at our Safer Ageing Isolation Index, we can see that the council areas with the highest prevalence of over 65s living alone, and the highest levels of low self-belief are Belfast, Causeway Coast and Glens, Derry City and Strabane, and Lisburn and Castlereagh.

The council areas with the lowest prevalence of over 65s living alone and the lowest levels of low self-belief are Mid and East Antrim, Ards and North Down, Antrim and Newtownabbey, and Fermanagh and Omagh.

Belfast occupies the top spot on our rankings with a score of 132, and when Belfast is not included Causeway Coast and Glens is top with a score of 119. Mid and East Antrim inhabits the lowest spot, with a

score of 74 (including Belfast) and 82 (excluding Belfast.)

As a risk factor of the abuse of older people, and a potential consequence of abuse and violence, loneliness in older age is a continual concern. Older victims may find themselves cut off from support networks both during violence and abuse, and post violence and abuse.

Living alone in older age stemming from divorce or bereavement, may be linked to a higher risk of mortality compared to older people who live with others<sup>16</sup>.

Age UK notes that 1.4 million older people (over 50s) in the UK are often lonely<sup>17</sup>. Other studies note the high

## NORTHERN IRELAND

prevalence of loneliness and social isolation among older people, with approximately 50% of people over 60 at risk of social isolation, and one third will experience some degree of loneliness in later life<sup>18</sup>.

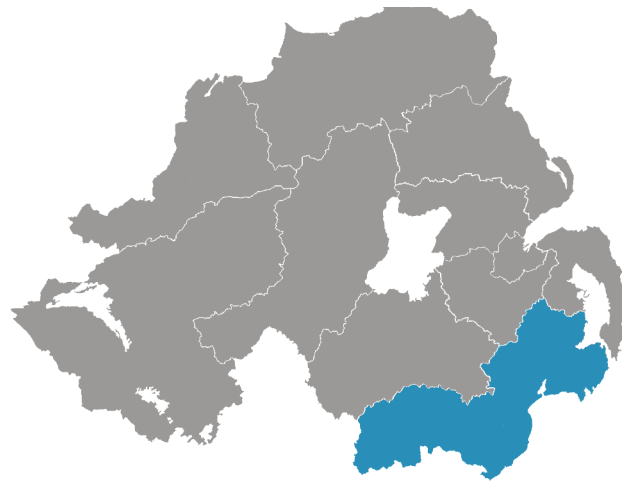
Social isolation and loneliness have also been identified as increasing the risk of poor physical and mental health. Social isolation has been associated with a 32% increase in stroke risk, a 29% increase in coronary heart disease, and a 50% increased risk of developing dementia<sup>19</sup>.

While diminished immune system functioning, anxiety, and increased risk of Alzheimer's disease can also stem from loneliness in older age.

As for risk factors, social isolation and lack of social engagement is a key risk factor for older male victims. Male victim-survivors seem less likely to receive social support from informal networks than women and are mainly focused on their partners or spouses<sup>20</sup>.

Overall, it appears that men show a lower level of social engagement, due to their prevalent reliance on their spouses/partners for social support, and consequently have lower participation in social activities<sup>21</sup>. The reliance on spousal relationships may mean that older male victim-survivors in general are lacking any form of "escape valve" or other friends and family to confide in.

NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN

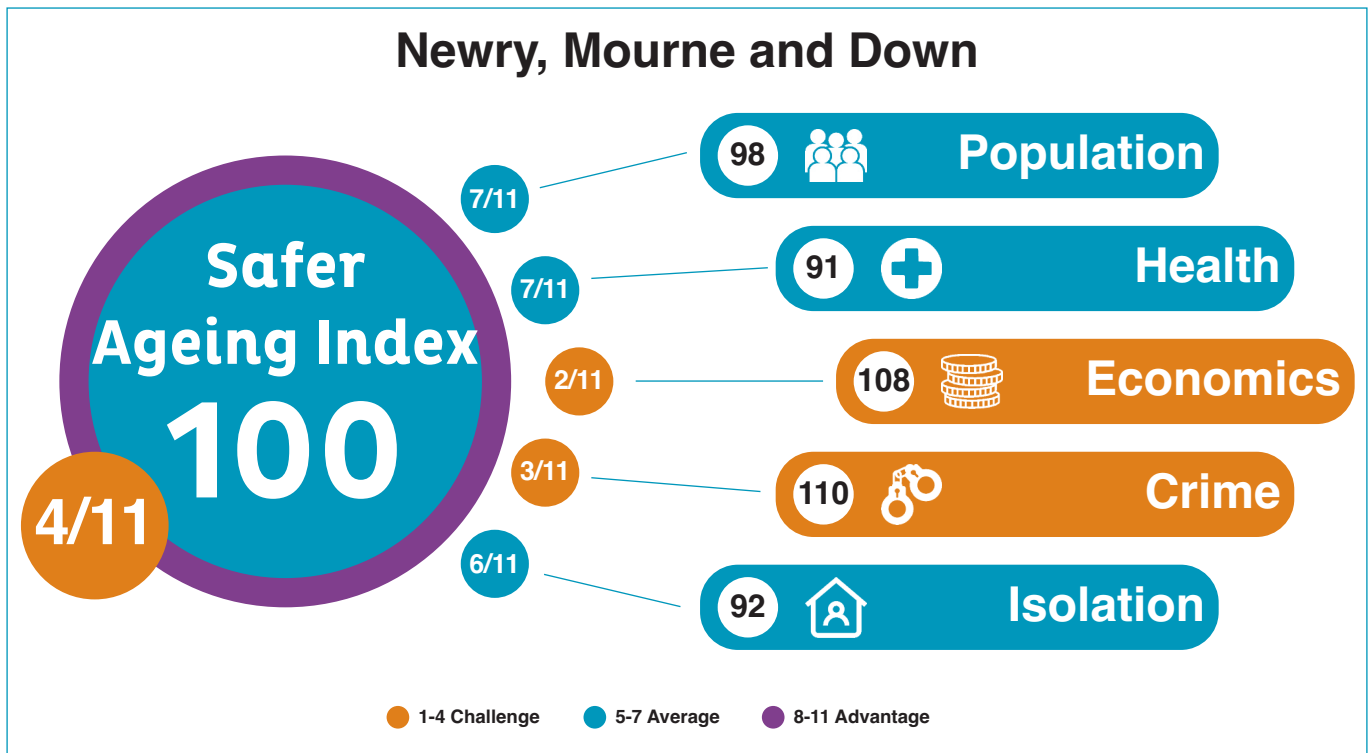


# SAFER AGEING INDEX

Commitment and conditions for greater action on safer ageing and preventing/intervening in the abuse of older people:

Country/area: NI: Newry, Mourne and Down

Assessment Year: 2021-22  
(Older data used when necessary)



Newry, Mourne and Down is a council area in the South East of Northern Ireland. It covers parts of County Down and County Armagh and borders the Republic of Ireland. Predominantly rural, its main urban centres are the small city of Newry, and the town Downpatrick. Its population is 182,074 (2021).

Looking at where Newry, Mourne and Down sits on the five safer ageing indices, we can see mostly mid-high table rankings, but a high overall ranking. **Overall**, Newry, Mourne and Down sits at position 4 out of 11 council areas, with a score of 100.

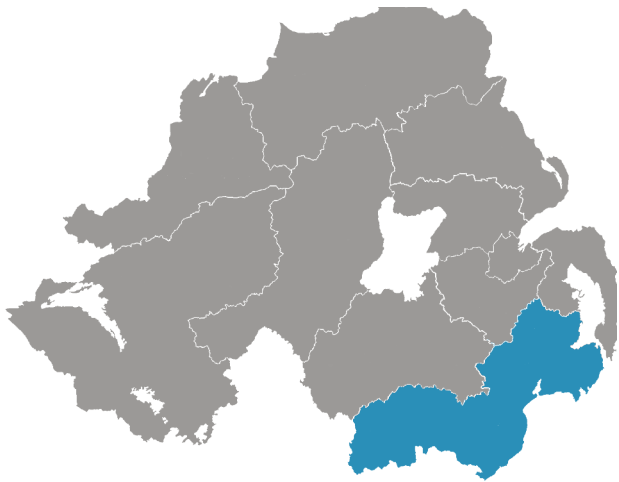
In **Economics**, Newry, Mourne and Down occupies the second highest position, with a high percentage of over

65s living in households where equalised income is below 60% of the Northern Ireland median. Newry, Mourne and Down is also joint third with the amount of over 65s still economically active.

In **Crime**, Newry, Mourne and Down occupies the third highest position seeing a relatively high prevalence in over 60s crime compared to the over 60s population in 2021. In **Isolation**, Newry, Mourne and Down places mid table at position 6 out of 11, with a comparatively low number of older people living alone, and lower levels of low self belief.

**Health** wise, Newry, Mourne and Down also sits mid-table, as it does in **Population**.

NEWRY, MOURNE AND DOWN



# SAFER AGEING INDEX


An overview of key factors affecting Safer Ageing in Newry, Mourne and Down.

Newry, Mourne and Down

Older Population (2021) Over 60s  
**23% (41,084 people)**


Predicted Older Population (2043) Over 60s  
**58,909**

Life Expectancy



Males - **78.9 years**  
Females - **83.1 years**

Long Term Conditions (65+) (2011)




Mobility or dexterity difficulty  
**8816**


Long term pain or discomfort  
**6127**

Chronic Illness  
**4842**

Levels of Low Self Belief (65+) (2019/20)



**20.1%**



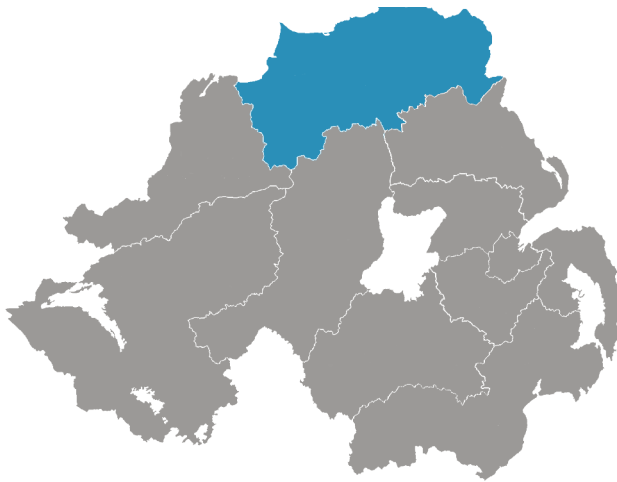
Number of older people living in communal/institutional establishments (2011) victim 65+

**4.3%**

# Criminal Justice Factors in Newry, Mourne and Down.



CAUSEWAY COAST AND GLENS

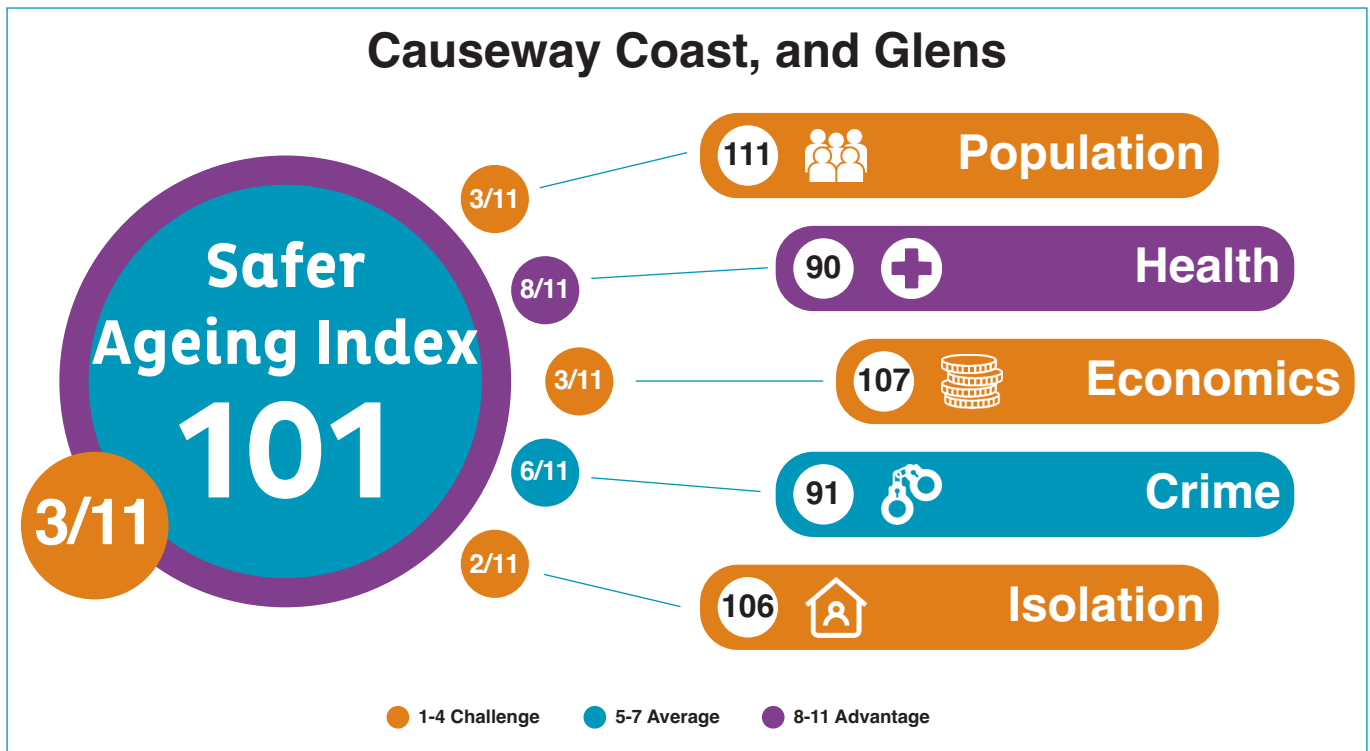


# SAFER AGEING INDEX

Commitment and conditions for greater action on safer ageing and preventing/intervening in the abuse of older people:

Country/area: NI: Causeway Coast and Glens

Assessment Year: 2021-22  
(Older data used when necessary)



Causeway Coast and Glens is a council area in the North of Northern Ireland. It covers parts of County Antrim and Derry/Londonderry. Predominantly coastal and rural, its main urban centres are the towns of Coleraine and Limavady. Its population is 141,746 (2021).

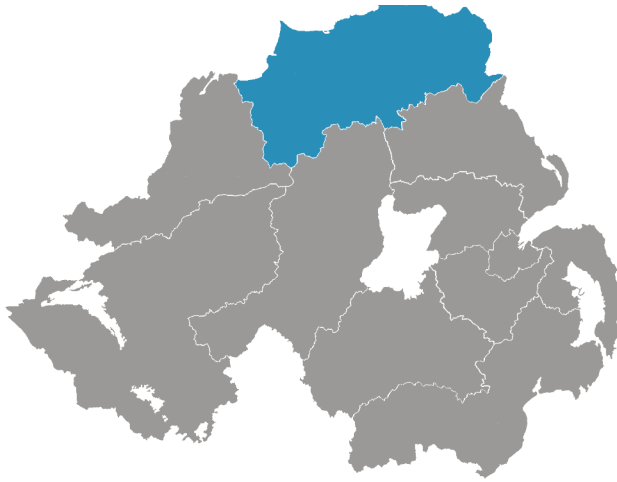
Looking at where Causeway Coast and Glens sits on the five safer ageing indices, we can see high to mid table rankings and a high overall ranking.

**Overall**, Causeway Coast and Glens sits at third position out of 11 council areas, with a score of 101.

In **Population**, Causeway Coast and Glens sits in third, with a relatively high percentage of over 60s population (23%) and a high over 60s predicted growth profile (38%).

In **Health**, Causeway, Coast and Glens does much better, sitting in eighth. Likewise, in **Crime**, Causeway Coast and Glens sits solidly mid-table in sixth, however, in **Isolation**, Causeway Coast and Glens sits in second and suffers from having a relatively high percentage of older people living alone, and the third highest percentage of older people having low self-belief (26.5%) with only Derry City and Strabane, and Belfast doing worse (27.5% and 26.6% respectively).

CAUSEWAY COAST AND GLENS



# SAFER AGEING INDEX


An overview of key factors affecting Safer Ageing in Causeway Coast and Glens.

Causeway Coast and Glens

Older Population (2021) Over 60s  
**2% (36,486 people)**


Predicted Older Population (2043) Over 60s  
**50,408 (over 60s)**

Life Expectancy



Males - **79.3 years**  
Females - **83.1 years**

Long Term Conditions (65+) (2011)




Mobility or dexterity difficulty  
**7613**

Long term pain or discomfort  
**5624**


Chronic Illness  
**4479**

Levels of Low Self Belief (65+) (2019/20)



**26.4%**

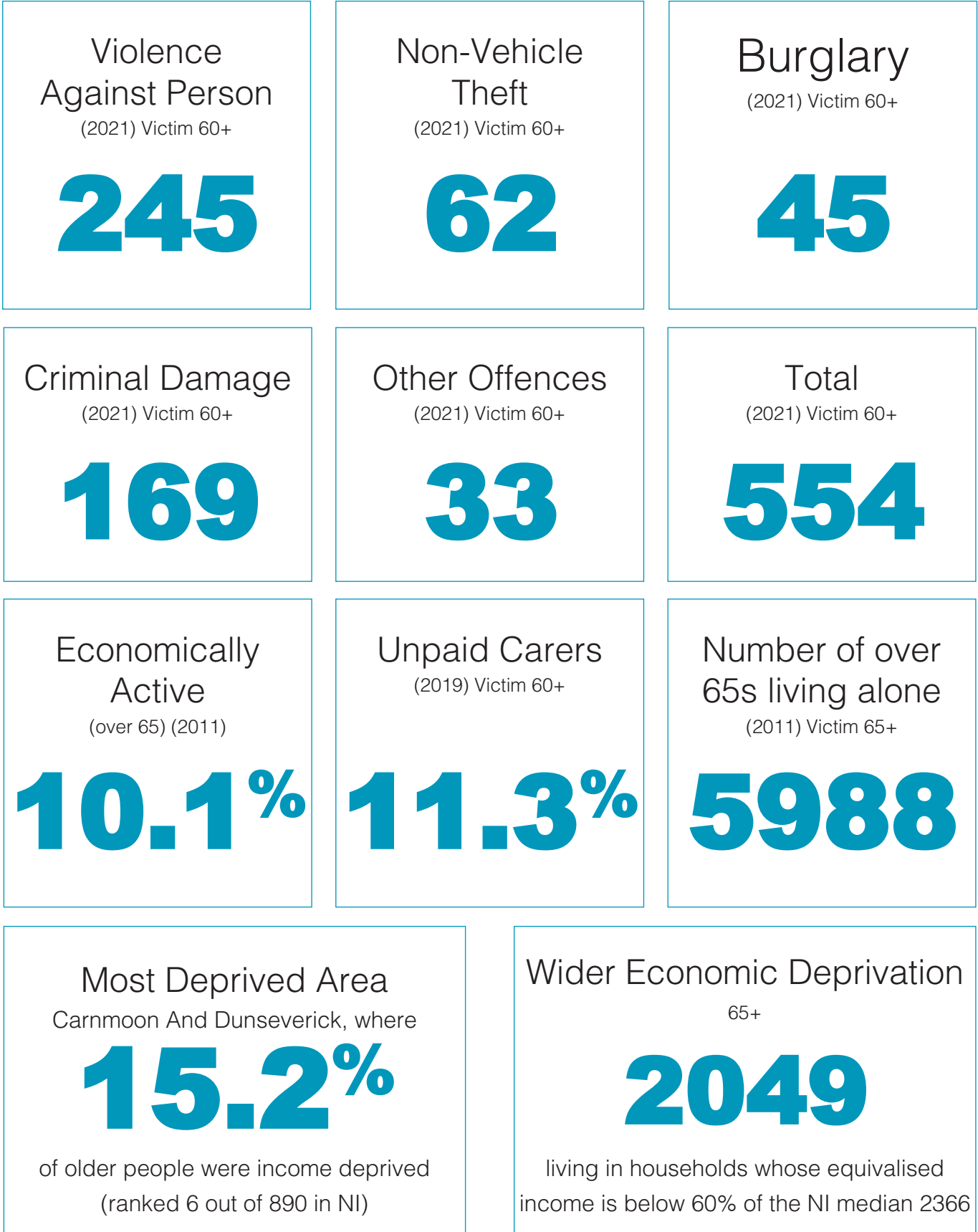
Number of older people living in communal/institutional establishments (2011) victim 65+



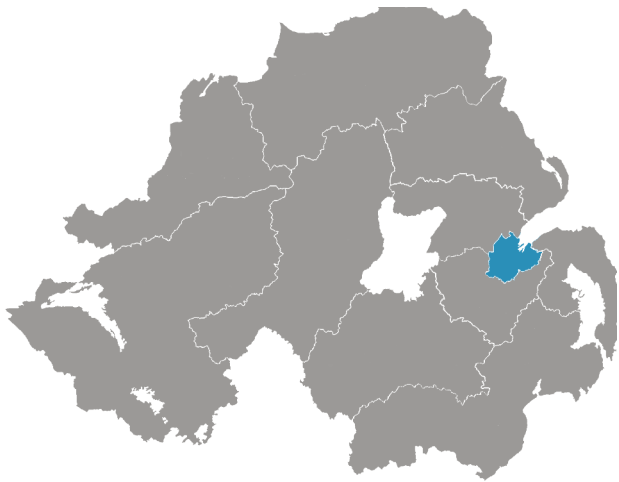
**4.2%**



# Criminal Justice Factors in Causeway Coast and Glens.



**BELFAST**

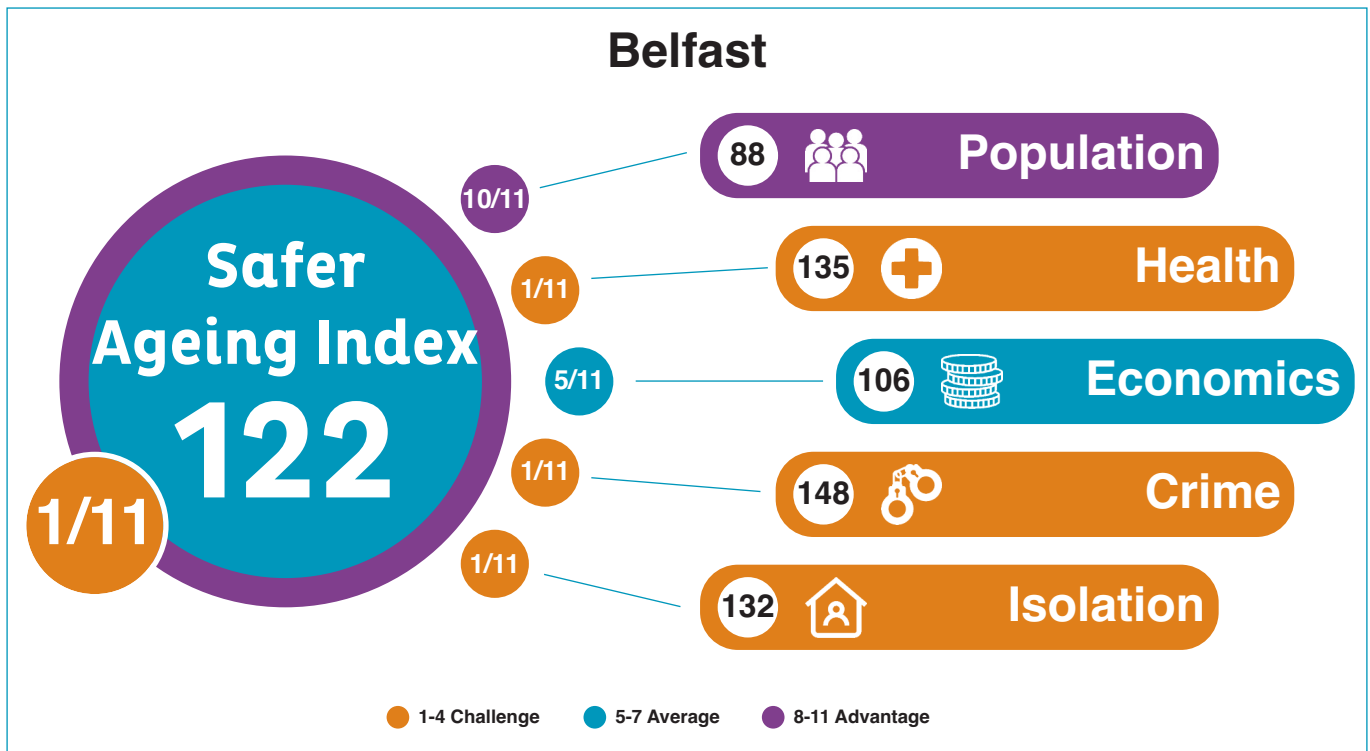


# SAFER AGEING INDEX

Commitment and conditions for greater action on safer ageing and preventing/intervening in the abuse of older people:

Country/area: NI: Belfast

Assessment Year: 2021-22  
(Older data used when necessary)



Belfast is a council area in the centre of Northern Ireland covering the capital and largest city of Northern Ireland, and its metropolitan area. Predominately urban, its population is 345,418 (2021).

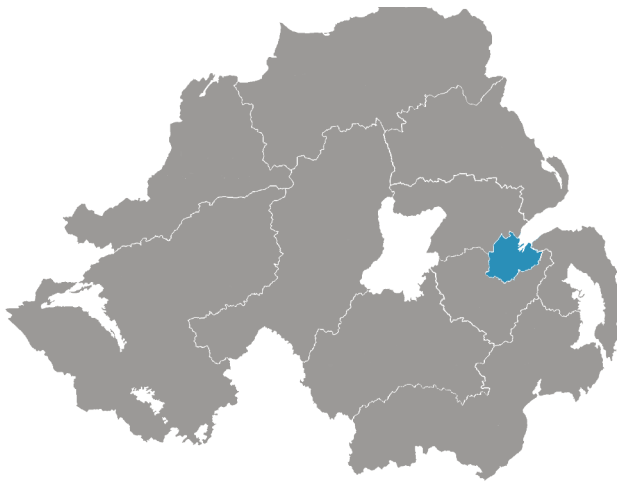
Looking at where Belfast sits on our five safer ageing indices, we can see a mix of high, median, and low rankings. Overall, and predominately because of its size, Belfast sits atop the rankings in position 1 out of 11 council areas, with a score of 122.

However, within the **Population** index, Belfast sits as the lowest ranked council area (equalled by Mid-Ulster) – although Belfast has the highest number of over 60s of all council areas in 2021 with 70,347. However, unlike Mid Ulster, Belfast is not predicted to have a rapid increase in its percentage population

of over 60s by 2043, instead its growth profile is predicted to be low and slow. In **Health**, and again partly because of population density – Belfast is seen to contain the highest prevalence of older people with mobility/dexterity difficulties, or long-term pain/discomfort and sits in a ranking of 1, with a score of 135.

Likewise, in **Crime**, again partly because of population and the urban nature of the Belfast council area – Belfast is ranked 1, seeing the highest percentage of over 60s as victims of crime with a score of 148. In **Economics**, Belfast sits mid-table with a ranking of 5 and a score of 106. While in **Isolation**, Belfast takes the top position with the highest percentage of over 65s living alone (33.3%) and the highest levels of low self-belief (27.5%).

BELFAST



# SAFER AGEING INDEX

An overview of key factors affecting Safer Ageing in Belfast.

## Belfast

Older Population (2021) Over 60s  
**20% (70,347 people)**

Predicted Older Population  
(2043) Over 60s  
**89,694 (over 60s)**

## Life Expectancy



Males - **76.3 years**  
Females - **81.1 years**

## Long Term Conditions (65+) (2011)

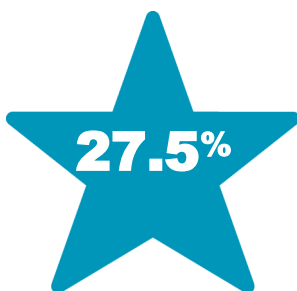


Mobility or dexterity difficulty  
**21,540**

Long term pain or discomfort  
**15,486**

Chronic Illness  
**11,617**

## Levels of Low Self Belief (65+) (2019/20)



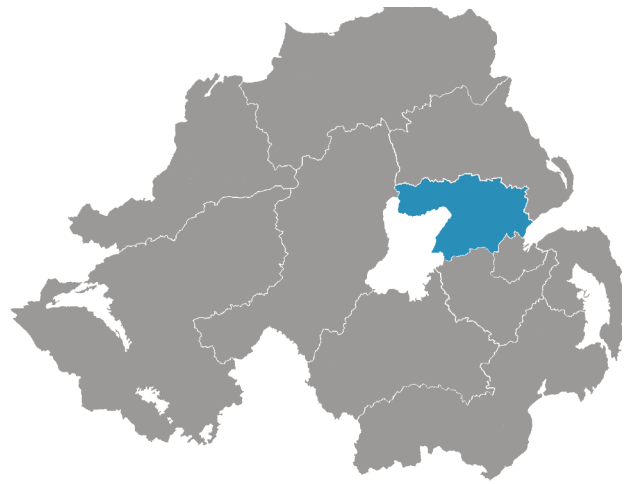
Number of older people living in communal/institutional establishments (2011) victim 65+

# 4.7%

# Criminal Justice Factors in Belfast.



ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY

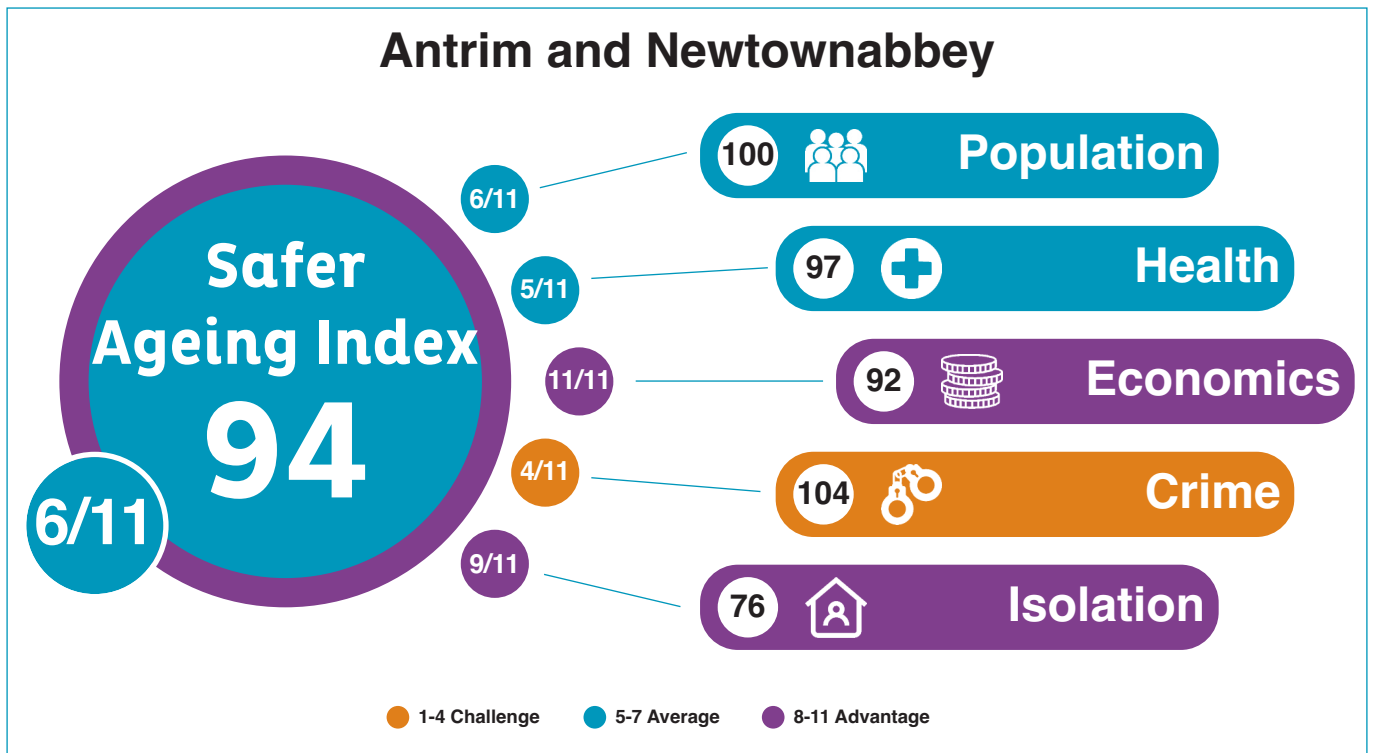


# SAFER AGEING INDEX

Commitment and conditions for greater action on safer ageing and preventing/intervening in the abuse of older people:

Country/area: NI: Antrim and Newtownabbey

Assessment Year: 2021-22  
(Older data used when necessary)



Antrim and Newtownabbey is a council area in the centre of Northern Ireland. Covering an area to the North and East of Lough Neagh and bordering Belfast. Its main urban centres are the towns of Antrim and Newtownabbey. Its population is 145,661 (2021).

Looking at where Antrim and Newtownabbey places on our five safer ageing indices, we can see a broad mix of table rankings, from a couple of spots in the middle, to the top and the bottom of indices. Overall, it sits mid-table in a final position of sixth out of 11 council areas, with a final score of 94.

In **Population**, Antrim and Newtownabbey sits in 6 with a score of 100, seeing a moderate percentage of over 60s living within its borders (23%), but a predicted slow and low increase

by 2043. Likewise, in **Health**, Antrim and Newtownabbey again sits mid table, with a score of 97.

In **Economics**, Antrim and Newtownabbey sits at the bottom of the ranking indices, indicating a low percentage of over 65s living in households whose equalised income is below 60% of the NI medians, and a low percentage of 65s still being economically active.

In **Crime**, Antrim and Newtownabbey is ranked fourth, with a score of 104 and 1.7% of over 60s having been a victim of crime in 2021. Finally, in **Isolation**, Antrim and Newtownabbey sits at position 9, with a score of 76.

ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY



# SAFER AGEING INDEX


An overview of key factors affecting Safer Ageing in Antrim and Newtownabbey.

Antrim and Newtownabbey

Older Population (2021) Over 60s  
**23% (33,550 people)**


Predicted Older Population (2043) Over 60s  
**45,346 (over 60s)**

Life Expectancy



Males - **78.4 years**  
Females - **82 years**

Long Term Conditions (65+) (2011)




Mobility or dexterity difficulty  
**7656**

Long term pain or discomfort  
**5460**


Chronic Illness  
**4568**

Levels of Low Self Belief (65+) (2019/20)



**12.1%**

Number of older people living in communal/institutional establishments (2011) victim 65+

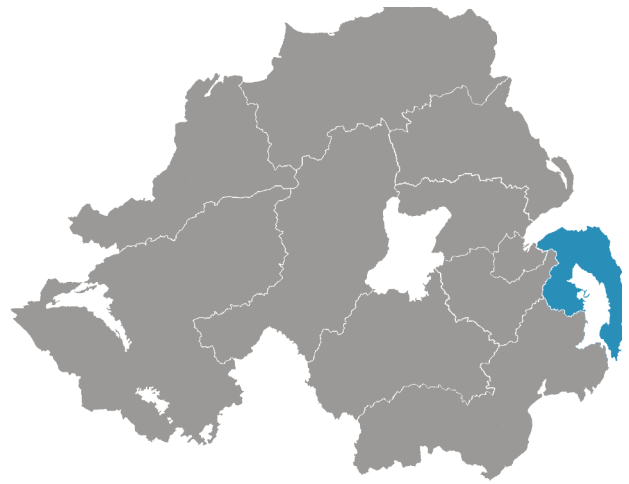


**4.7%**

# Criminal Justice Factors in Antrim and Newtownabbey.



ARDS AND NORTH DOWN

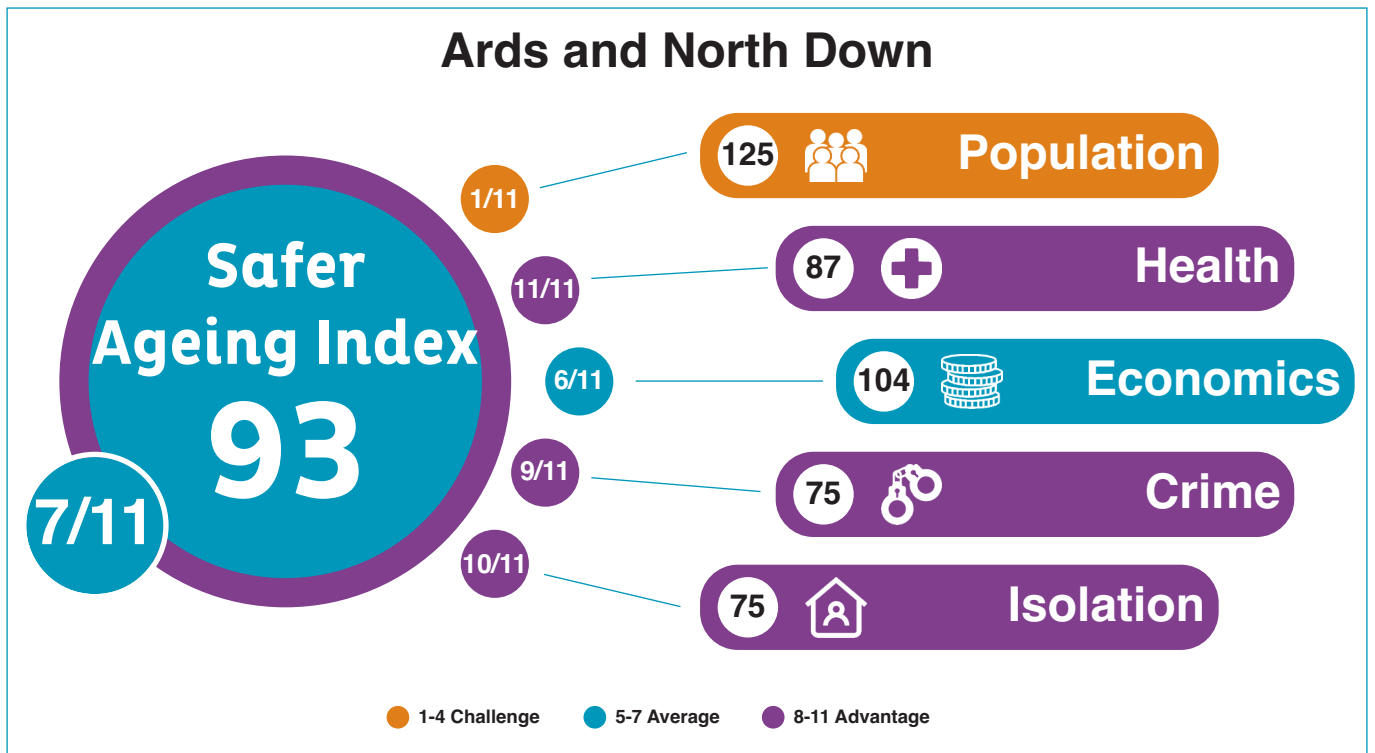


# SAFER AGEING INDEX

Commitment and conditions for greater action on safer ageing and preventing/intervening in the abuse of older people:

Country/area: NI: Ards and North Down

Assessment Year: 2021-22  
(Older data used when necessary)



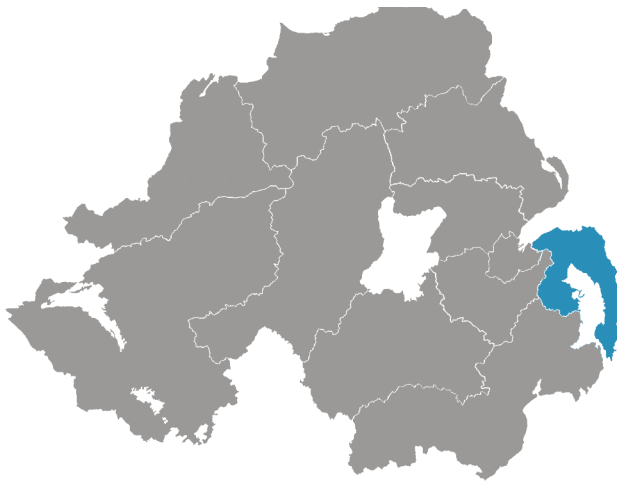
Ards and North Down is a council area in the East of Northern Ireland. Covering the Ards Peninsula, the majority of Strangford Lough, the Southern shore of Belfast Lough, and borders the Irish Sea and the Eastern part of Belfast. A rural and coastal area, its main urban centres are the towns of Bangor and Newtownards. Its population is 163,659 (2021).

Looking at where Ards and North Down sits on our five safer ageing indices, we can see a sweep of mid to low table places, with one top and one bottom index ranking. **Overall**, it sits mid-table in seventh position out of 11 council areas, with a final score of 93. In **Population**, Ards and North Down is ranked in position 1, containing the highest percentage of over 60s compared to the other adult population with a score of 125. In

its predicted population growth profile – Ards and North Down is predicted to see its percentage of over 60s decrease, from 29% of the population at the moment to 26% by 2043. In **Health**, Ards and North Down is ranked at the bottom of the index in position 11 with a score of 87 – Ards and North Down has the lowest prevalence of older people with mobility/dexterity difficulties, or long-term pain/discomfort. Again, in **Crime**, Ards and North Down is ranked towards the bottom of the index in position 9 with a score of 75 and the second lowest percentage of crimes committed against over 60s. In **Economics**, Ards and North Down is ranked mid-table, with a position of 6 and a score of 104. Ards and North Down is one of the better ranked council areas for **Isolation**, sitting at 10 with a score of 75 and seeing the second lowest levels of low self-belief (12.7%).



ARDS AND NORTH DOWN



# SAFER AGEING INDEX

An overview of key factors affecting Safer Ageing in Ards and North Down.

### Ards and North Down

Older Population (2021) Over 60s  
**29% (47,186 people)**

Predicted Older Population (2043) Over 60s  
**59,615 (over 60s)**

### Life Expectancy



Males - **79.7 years**  
Females - **82.6 years**

### Long Term Conditions (65+) (2011)



Mobility or dexterity difficulty  
**9902**

Long term pain or discomfort  
**7080**

Chronic Illness  
**5663**

### Levels of Low Self Belief (65+) (2019/20)



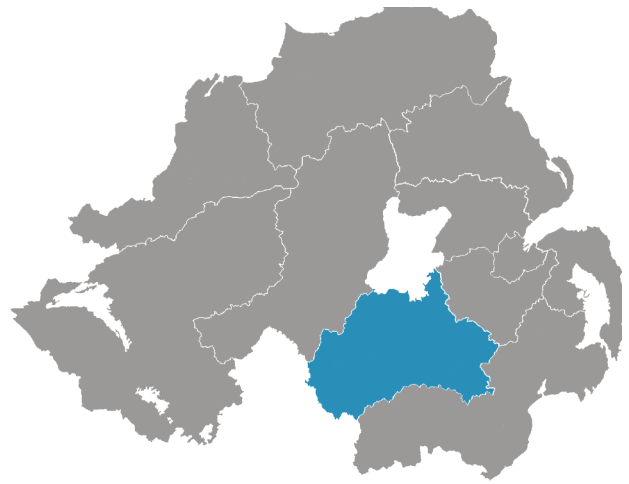
Number of older people living in communal/institutional establishments (2011) victim 65+

# 4.5%

# Criminal Justice Factors in Ards and North Down.



ARMAGH CITY, BANBRIDGE AND CRAIGAVON

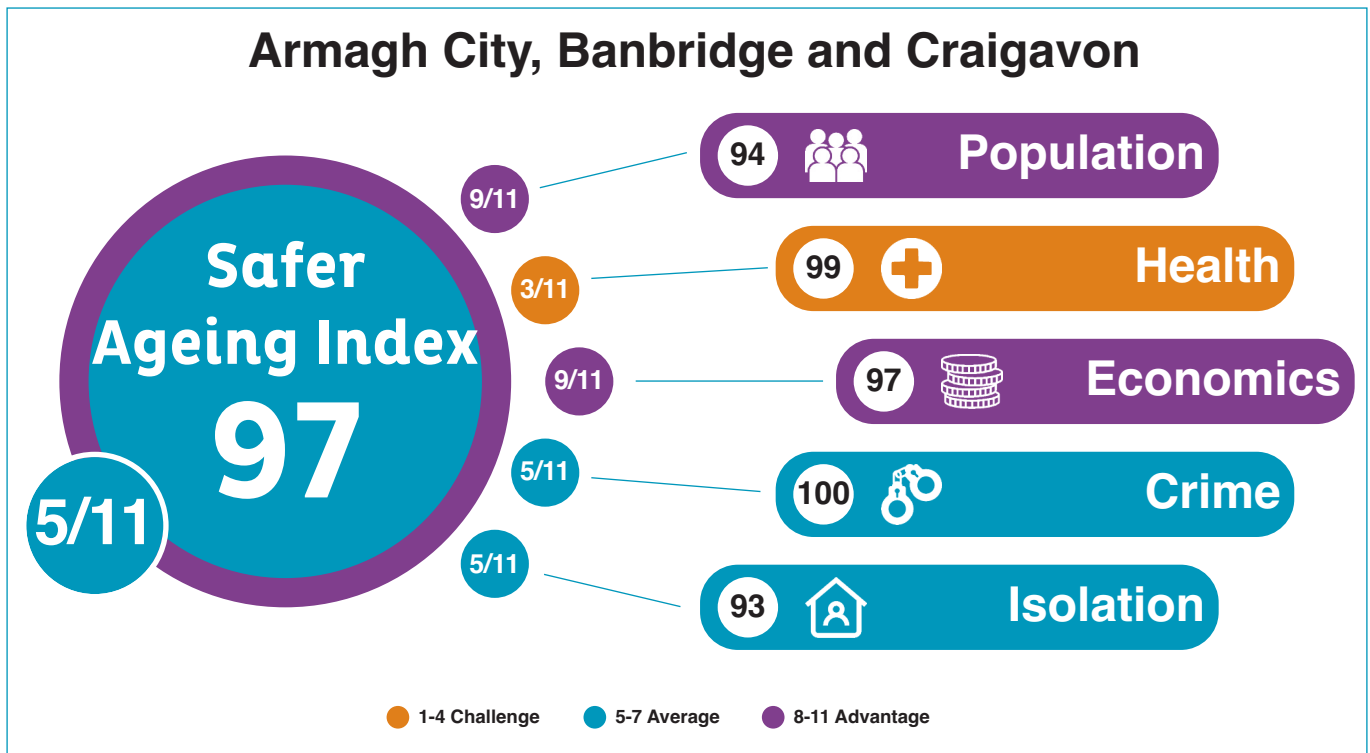


# SAFER AGEING INDEX

Commitment and conditions for greater action on safer ageing and preventing/intervening in the abuse of older people:

Country/area: NI: Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon

Assessment Year: 2021-22  
(Older data used when necessary)



Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon is a council area in the South of Northern Ireland. Covering parts of County Armagh and County Down, the Southern coast of Lough Neagh and bordering the Republic of Ireland. The largest urban area is the City of Armagh. Its population is 218,656 (2021).

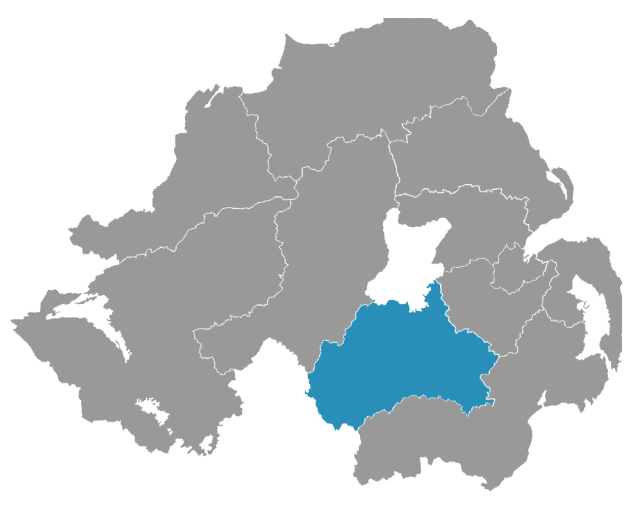
Looking at where Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon sit on our five safer ageing indices, we can see mostly mid-low ranked places. Overall, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon is ranked fifth out of 11 council areas with a final score of 97. In Population, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon is ranked at 9 with a score of 94. In the Health index, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon sees one of the highest prevalence of older people with mobility/dexterity

difficulties, or long-term pain/discomfort and is ranked third just after Belfast and Derry City and Strabane, with a score of 99.

In Economics, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon is ranked at ninth with a score of 97.

Looking at Crime, Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon sees the average percentage of crime (index 100) committed against over 60s at 1.7% and is ranked fifth. Finally, looking at Isolation – Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon is again ranked mid-table, ranked fifth with a score of 93.

ARMAGH CITY, BANBRIDGE AND CRAIGAVON



# SAFER AGEING INDEX

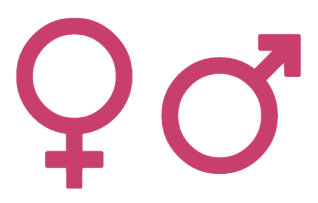
An overview of key factors affecting Safer Ageing in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon.

Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon

Older Population (2021) Over 60s  
**22% (47,215 people)**


Predicted Older Population (2043) Over 60s  
**70,257 (over 60s)**

Life Expectancy



Males - **79.1 years**  
Females - **82.9 years**

Long Term Conditions (65+) (2011)



Mobility or dexterity difficulty  
**10,827**


Long term pain or discomfort  
**7864**

Chronic Illness  
**5865**

Levels of Low Self Belief (65+) (2019/20)



**20%**



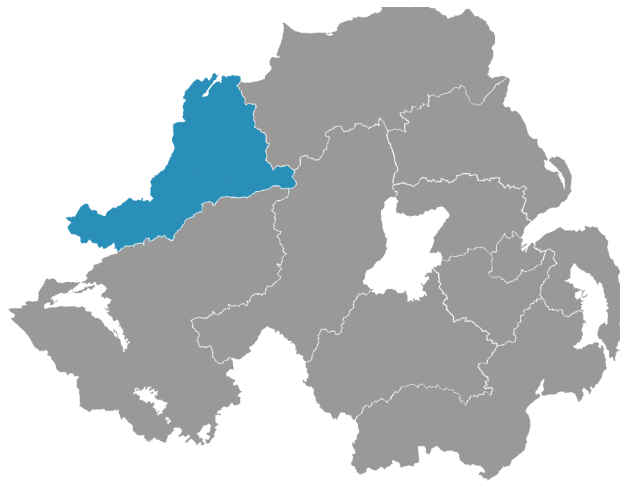
Number of older people living in communal/institutional establishments (2011) victim 65+

**4.1%**

# Criminal Justice Factors in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon.



**DERRY CITY AND STRABANE**

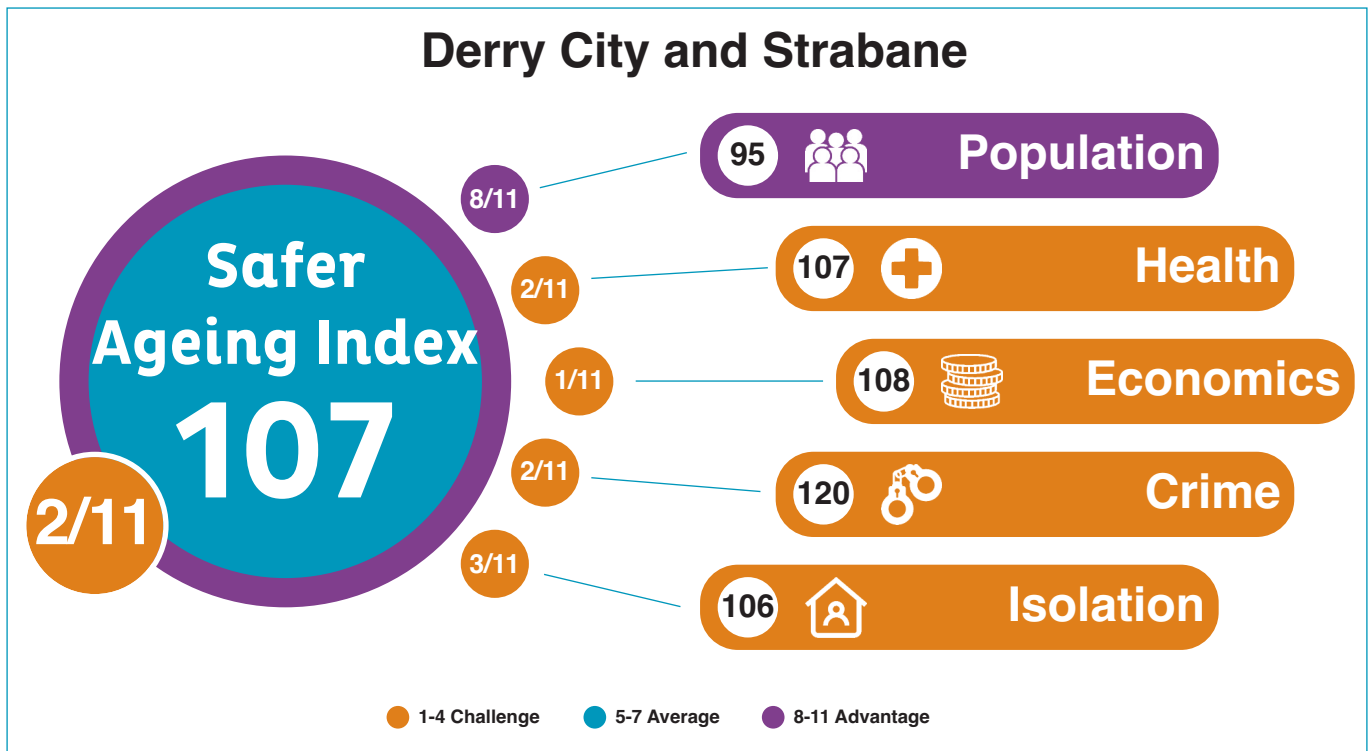


# SAFER AGEING INDEX

Commitment and conditions for greater action on safer ageing and preventing/intervening in the abuse of older people:

Country/area: NI: Derry City and Strabane

Assessment Year: 2021-22  
(Older data used when necessary)

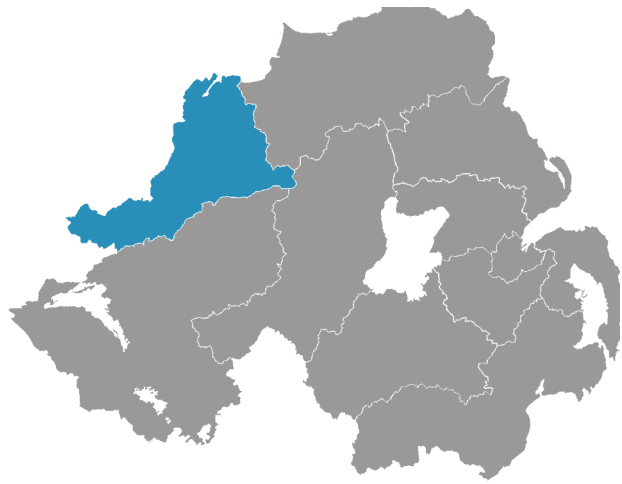


Derry City and Strabane is a council area in the North West of Northern Ireland, covering parts of County Londonderry and County Tyrone, and bordering County Donegal in the Republic of Ireland. Predominantly rural, the largest urban areas and the city of Derry/Londonderry and the market town of Strabane. Its population is 150,756 (2021).

Looking at Derry City and Strabane’s position in our five safer ageing indices, we can see that it occupies a top three spot on a majority of the indices, and when Belfast is taken out – it generally occupies the top position. Overall, Derry City and Strabane is ranked second out of 11 council areas with a score of 107. In Population, Derry City and Strabane sits in eighth with a score of 95, and has a predicted population growth score of 80 with a low and slow population prediction profile.

In Health, Derry City and Strabane sees one of the highest prevalence of older people with mobility/dexterity difficulties, or long-term pain/discomfort and is ranked in second with 107, just behind Belfast. In Economics, Derry City and Strabane takes the top position, and sees a high level of income deprived older people and those still economically active after 65, and a score of 108. Looking at Crime, and again like Belfast somewhat because of population size and the urban area, Derry City and Strabane is ranked second (first without Belfast) in the percentage of victims of crime over 60 in 2021 with a score of 120. Again, in Isolation, Derry City and Strabane sits high, third in the rankings – thanks to the highest levels of low self-belief (26.6%) and a relatively high percentage of older people living alone (21.5%).

DERRY CITY AND STRABANE



# SAFER AGEING INDEX


An overview of key factors affecting Safer Ageing in Derry City and Strabane.

Derry City and Strabane

Older Population (2021) Over 60s  
**22% (32,999 people)**


Predicted Older Population (2043) Over 60s  
**42,756 (over 60s)**

Life Expectancy



Males - **78 years**  
Females - **81.3 years**

Long Term Conditions (65+) (2011)




Mobility or dexterity difficulty  
**8117**


Long term pain or discomfort  
**5901**

Chronic Illness  
**4275**

Levels of Low Self Belief (65+) (2019/20)



**26.6%**



Number of older people living in communal/institutional establishments (2011) victim 65+

**4.0%**

# Criminal Justice Factors in Derry City and Strabane.





**FERMANAGH AND OMAGH**

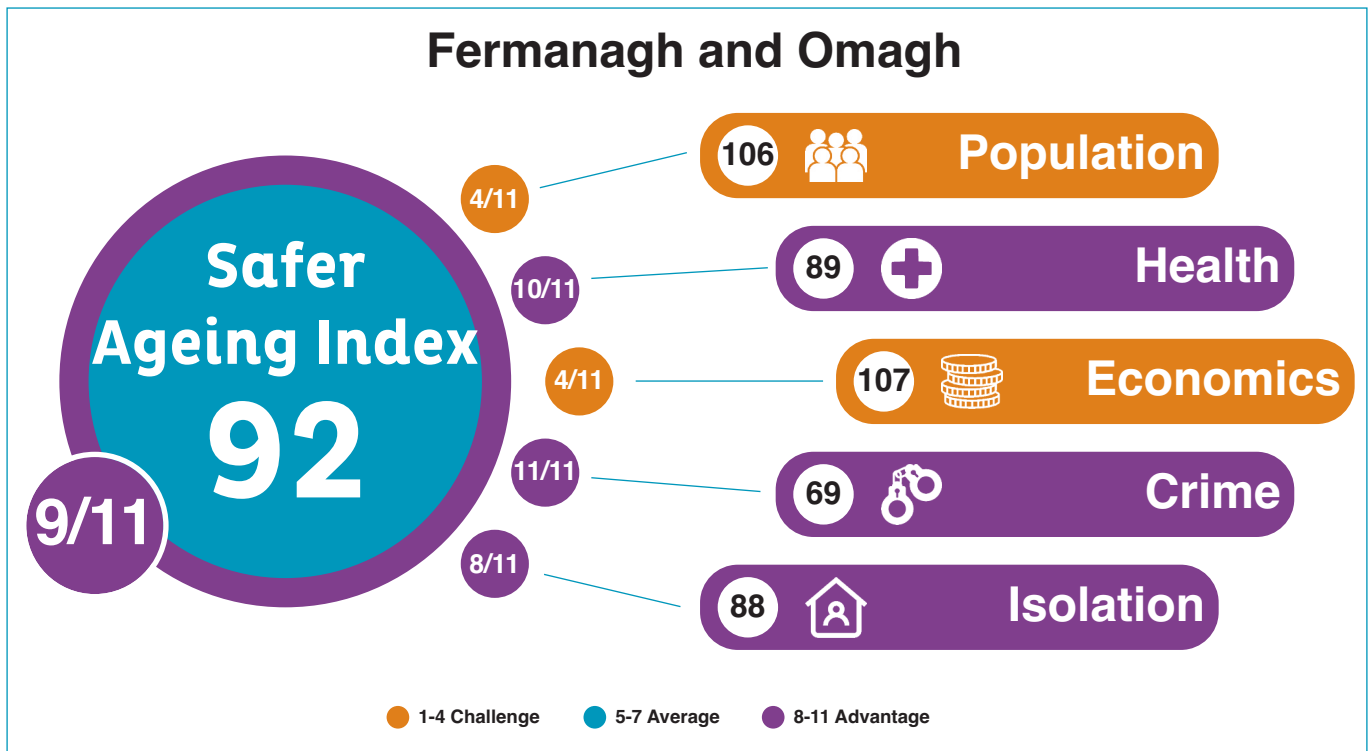


# SAFER AGEING INDEX

Commitment and conditions for greater action on safer ageing and preventing/intervening in the abuse of older people:

Country/area: NI: Fermanagh and Omagh

Assessment Year: 2021-22  
(Older data used when necessary)



Fermanagh and Omagh is a council area in the Southwest of Northern Ireland, covering all of County Fermanagh and parts of County Tyrone, and bordering Counties Donegal, Leitrim, Cavan, and Monaghan in the Republic of Ireland. Predominantly rural, it's main urban centres are the towns of Enniskillen and Omagh. Its population is 116,812 (2021).

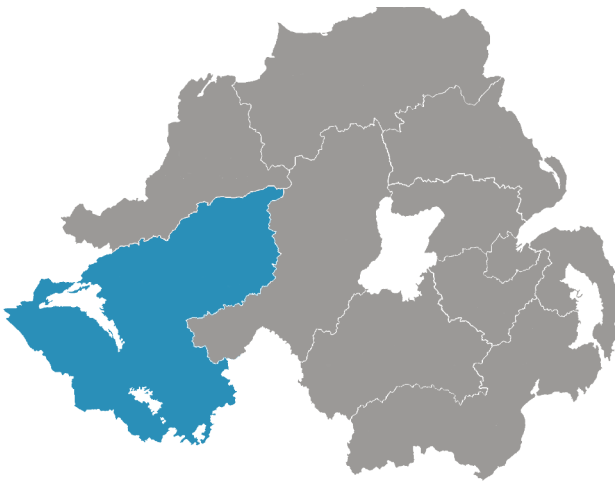
Looking at where Fermanagh and Omagh sit on our five safer ageing indices, we can see that it occupies a position of mid-low table across the indices. **Overall**, Fermanagh and Omagh is ranked ninth out of 11 council areas with a score of 92. In **Population**, Fermanagh and Omagh is ranked relatively high in fourth with a score of 106. In predicted population growth, Fermanagh and Omagh has a predicted growth index of 92, with a high population profile and predicted slow growth. In

**Health**, Fermanagh and Omagh have the second lowest prevalence of older people with mobility/dexterity difficulties, or long-term pain/discomfort after Ards and North Down.

In **Economics**, Fermanagh and Omagh is ranked quite high in fourth with a score of 107.

Looking at **Crime**, in 2021, Fermanagh and Omagh had the lowest percentage of over 60s who were victims of crime with just over 1% (1.1%), and as such, it sits at the bottom of the rankings in 11th with a score of 69. In **Isolation**, Fermanagh and Omagh sits in eighth with a score of 88.

FERMANAGH AND OMAGH



# SAFER AGEING INDEX

An overview of key factors affecting Safer Ageing in Fermanagh and Omagh.

### Fermanagh and Omagh

Older Population (2021) Over 60s  
**2% (28,709 people)**

Predicted Older Population (2043) Over 60s  
**38,375 (over 60s)**

### Life Expectancy



Males - **79.2 years**  
Females - **83 years**

### Long Term Conditions (65+) (2011)



Mobility or dexterity difficulty  
**5918**

Long term pain or discomfort  
**4355**

Chronic Illness  
**3276**

### Levels of Low Self Belief (65+) (2019/20)



Number of older people living in communal/institutional establishments (2011) victim 65+

**5.2%**

# Criminal Justice Factors in Fermanagh and Omagh.



LISBURN AND CASTLEREAGH

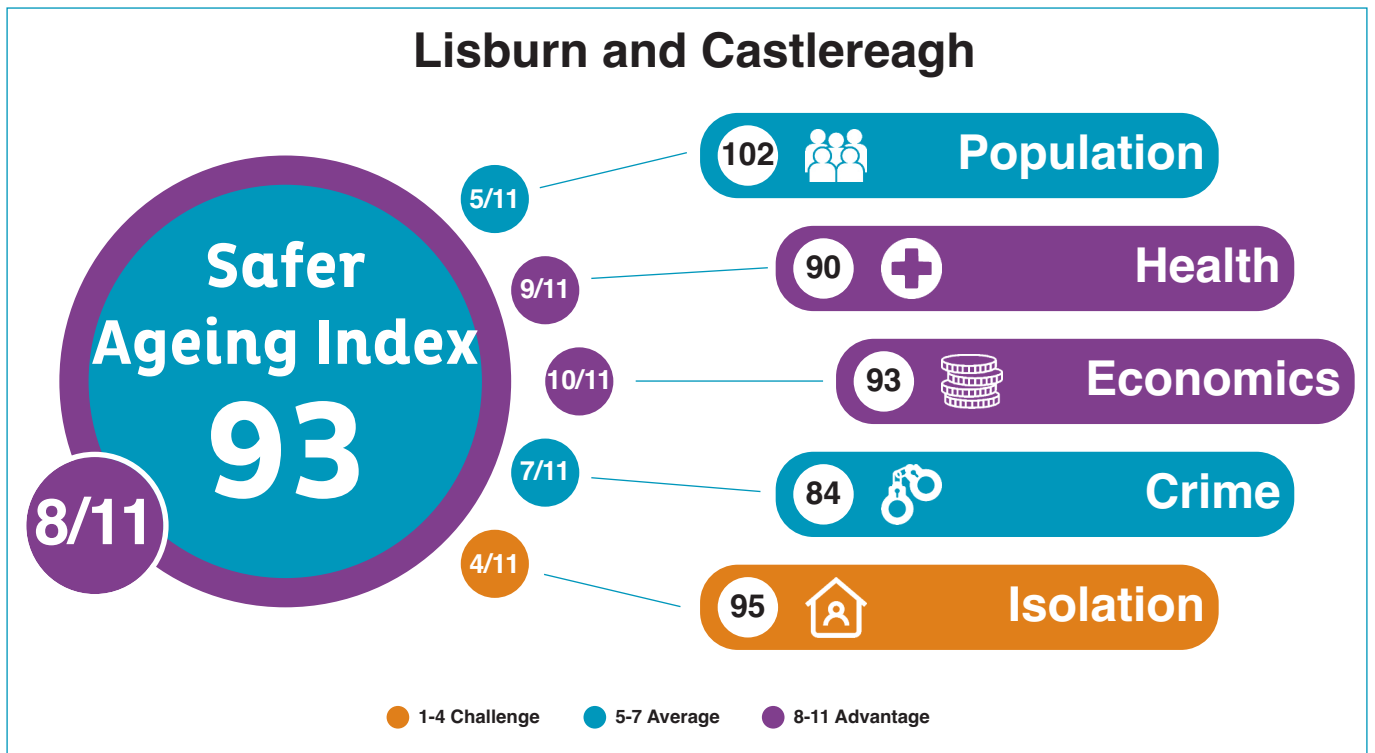


# SAFER AGEING INDEX

Commitment and conditions for greater action on safer ageing and preventing/intervening in the abuse of older people:

Country/area: NI: Lisburn and Castlereagh

Assessment Year: 2021-22  
(Older data used when necessary)



Lisburn and Castlereagh is a council area in the East of Northern Ireland surrounding Belfast to the South and partly the East and West. Its main urban centre is the town of Lisburn. Its population is 149,106 (2021).

Looking at where Lisburn and Castlereagh sit on our five safer ageing indices, we can see that it tends to occupy a mid-low position of each index. **Overall**, Lisburn and Castlereagh is ranked eighth out of 11 council areas, with a score of 93.

In **Population**, Lisburn and Castlereagh is ranked fifth with a score of 102, in predicted growth population – Lisburn and Castlereagh is the second highest with a growth score of 133.

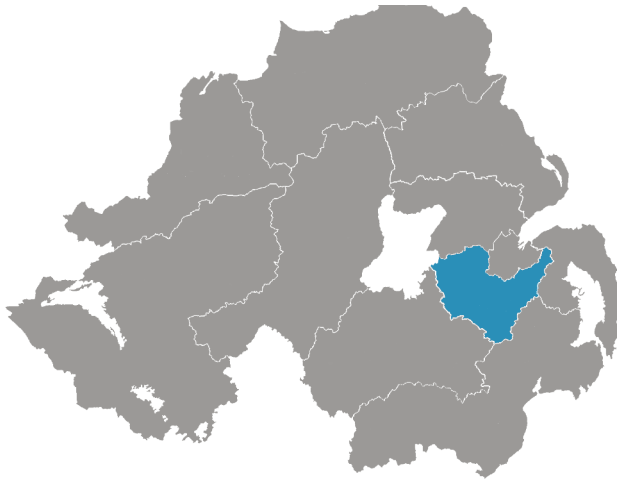
In **Health**, Lisburn and Castlereagh is one of the council areas

with the lowest prevalence of older people with mobility/dexterity difficulties, or long-term pain/discomfort, occupying position 9 with a score of 90.

In **Economics**, Lisburn and Castlereagh is again occupying a low spot on the ranking board, in a position of 10 out of 11 council areas with a score of 93.

Again, in **Crime**, Lisburn and Castlereagh is solidly mid-low table with a position of 7 and a score of 84. In **Isolation**, Lisburn and Castlereagh is high up the index, with a position of 4 and a score of 95.

LISBURN AND CASTLEREAGH



# SAFER AGEING INDEX

An overview of key factors affecting Safer Ageing in Lisburn and Castlereagh.

### Lisburn and Castlereagh

Older Population (2021) Over 60s  
**24% (35,158 People)**

Predicted Older Population (2043) Over 60s  
**52,320 (over 60s)**

### Life Expectancy



Males - **80.2 years**  
Females - **83.2 years**

### Long Term Conditions (65+) (2011)



Mobility or dexterity difficulty  
**7440**

Long term pain or discomfort  
**5300**

Chronic Illness  
**4410**

### Levels of Low Self Belief (65+) (2019/20)



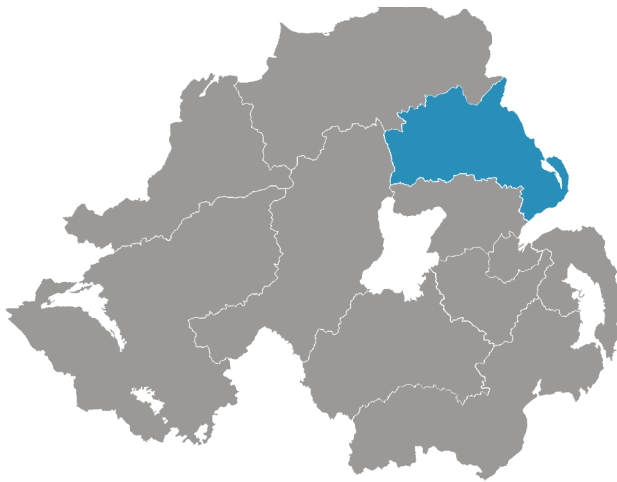
Number of older people living in communal/institutional establishments (2011) victim 65+

# 4.6%

# Criminal Justice Factors in Lisburn and Castlereagh.



MID AND EAST ANTRIM

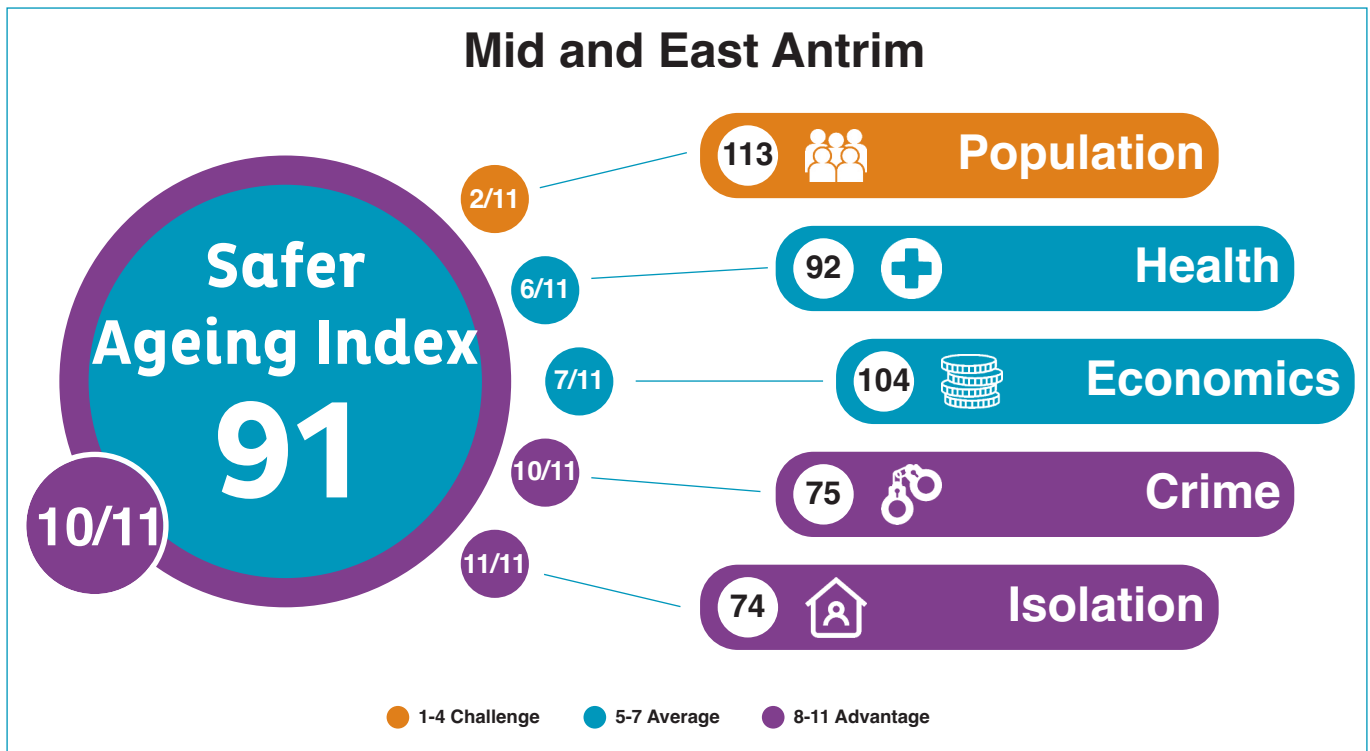


# SAFER AGEING INDEX

Commitment and conditions for greater action on safer ageing and preventing/intervening in the abuse of older people:

Country/area: NI: Mid and East Antrim

Assessment Year: 2021-22  
(Older data used when necessary)



Mid and East Antrim is a council area in the North East of Northern Ireland. Wholly located in County Antrim and bordering the Irish Sea, its main urban areas are Ballymena, Carrickfergus, and the port of Larne. Its population is 138,994 (2021).

Looking at where Mid and East Antrim sit on our five safer ageing indices, we can see that covers a broad sweep of ranked places, mostly mid table. Overall, Mid and East Antrim is ranked tenth out of 11 council areas with an overall score of 91.

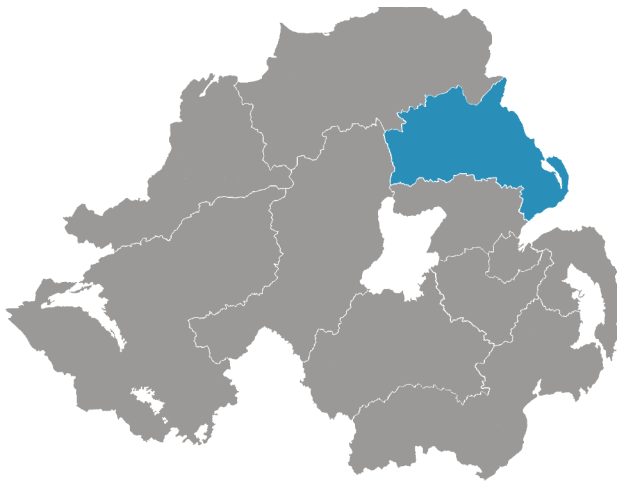
In **Population**, Mid and East Antrim is ranked second with a score of 113, just behind Ards and North Down. It currently has a large over 60s percentage population (26%) but its growth

population profile is predicted to be low and slow (a predicted growth index of 78) and an increase from 26% over 60s to 29%.

In **Health**, Mid and East Antrim is ranked seventh with a score of 92. In **Crime**, Mid and East Antrim again sits mid-table, with a position of 6 out of 11 council areas and a score of 75.

Finally, in **Isolation**, Mid and East Antrim is ranked 11 out of 11 with a score of 74 – Mid and East Antrim sees the lowest levels of low self-belief at 10.8%.

MID AND EAST ANTRIM



# SAFER AGEING INDEX

An overview of key factors affecting Safer Ageing in Mid and East Antrim.

### Mid and East Antrim

Older Population (2021) Over 60s  
**26% (36,348 people)**

Predicted Older Population (2043) Over 60s  
**46,768 (over 60s)**

### Life Expectancy



Males - **78.9 years**  
Females - **82.5 years**

### Long Term Conditions (65+) (2011)



Mobility or dexterity difficulty  
**7928**

Long term pain or discomfort  
**5650**

Chronic Illness  
**4761**

### Levels of Low Self Belief (65+) (2019/20)



Number of older people living in communal/institutional establishments (2011) victim 65+

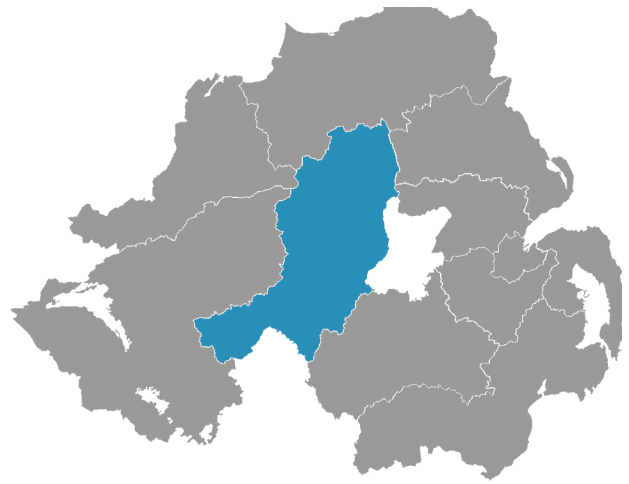
# 4.6%



# Criminal Justice Factors in Mid and East Antrim.



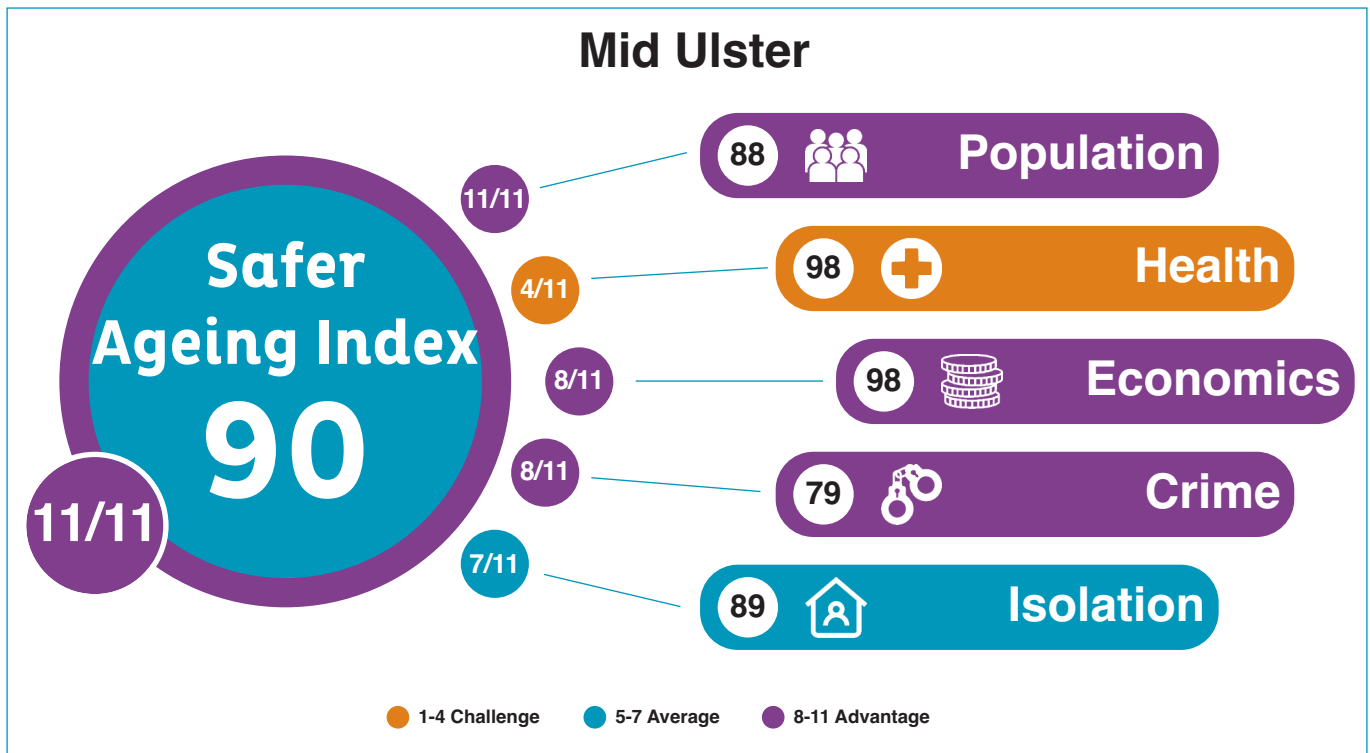
MID ULSTER



# SAFER AGEING INDEX

Commitment and conditions for greater action on safer ageing and preventing/intervening in the abuse of older people:

Country/area: NI: Mid Ulster  
 Assessment Year: 2021-22  
 (Older data used when necessary)



Mid Ulster is a council area in the centre of Northern Ireland, covering parts of County Londonderry, County Tyrone, and County Armagh, and bordering County Monaghan in the Republic of Ireland. The main urban areas are Magherafelt and Dungannon. Its population is 150,293 (2021).

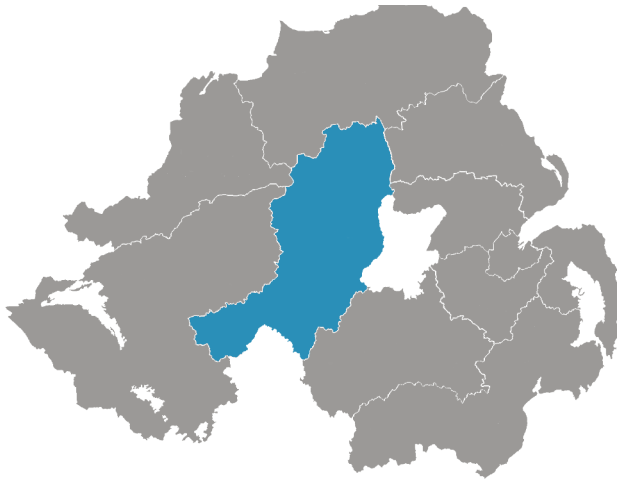
Looking at where Mid Ulster sits on our five safer ageing indices, we can see that it broadly is placed in a mid-low table ranking. Overall, Mid Ulster sits at the bottom of the rankings in position 11 out of 11 council areas with a score of 90. In **Population**, Mid Ulster sits at 10 just above Belfast with a score of 88, with only 20% of its population being over 60.

In **Health**, Mid Ulster sees a relatively high prevalence of older people suffering from mobility or lasting pain, sitting in fourth with a score of 98.

In **Economics** and **Crime**, Mid Ulster is ranked towards the bottom of the indices in position eight with a score of 98 and 79 respectively.

In **Isolation**, Mid Ulster is ranked seventh out of 11, with a score of 89.

MID ULSTER



# SAFER AGEING INDEX

An overview of key factors affecting Safer Ageing in Mid Ulster.

## Mid Ulster

Older Population (2021) Over 60s  
**20% (30,438 people)**

Predicted Older Population (2043) Over 60s  
**46,667 (over 60s)**

## Life Expectancy



Males - **79.3 years**  
Females - **82.7 years**

## Long Term Conditions (65+) (2011)



Mobility or dexterity difficulty  
**6855**

Long term pain or discomfort  
**5027**

Chronic Illness  
**3708**

## Levels of Low Self Belief (65+) (2019/20)



Number of older people living in communal/institutional establishments (2011) victim 65+

# 4.0%

# Criminal Justice Factors in Mid Ulster.



## CONCLUSION

**As we have seen from this first Safer Ageing Index, safer ageing in Northern Ireland is in a state of flux and change. While national policy and political measures that provide increased protections from abuse and violence to all victims, and continued legislative attention to domestic violence and wider violence against Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) are all very welcome, it is questionable how much public attention and understanding is given to abuse and violence directed towards older people, and how this cohort in particular is affected.**

Part of the issue is due to the challenges of keeping a subject matter in the public eye which by its very nature is hidden, deemed painful and upsetting to hear about or to discuss, and it is hoped that this inaugural Northern Ireland Safer Ageing Index will begin a discussion around some of the issues affecting older people in Northern Ireland and set out a pathway towards greater understanding and commitment to safer ageing; an essential and necessary obligation in a rapidly ageing society.

Another challenge that is consistent in exploring safer ageing and the experiences of older people is the paucity and lack of up to date and consistent data by national and local government as well as other related organisations, and this problem has challenged the creation of this Index. This poses an issue in developing effective evidence-based policies and to monitoring progress on the issue; effective data collection can create a narrative to inform policy and practice, and as such filling in the gaps regarding the abuse of older people should be an urgent priority.

From the face of the Index, which measures risk factors, we can see that currently the best place to grow older in Northern Ireland in 2021/22 is Mid Ulster, closely followed by Mid and East Antrim, and Fermanagh and Omagh. Why is Mid Ulster in this position? From our risk rankings we can see that it is in the lower half of council areas for Crime, Economics, and Isolation, and occupies

the 11th spot in terms of Population. The lower the score, the lower the risk. The only area where Mid Ulster is lacking is having a high risk prevalence of older people that suffer from mobility and pain issues. As such, Mid Ulster in 2021/22 is a council area that provides a relatively safe, economically secure, and mentally healthy lifestyle for older people to safely grow old in. Mid Ulster is also one of the local council areas that is predicted to see significant growth in its older population statistics – with a 53% growth predicted, compared to a 37% growth across Northern Ireland.

As to a wider exploration of the data in the Index itself, there are a number of interesting insights. Firstly, it is clear that we can see a key disparity within the results as to urban and rural/coastal areas in Population, Health, Economics and Crime. For Health, urban council areas such as Belfast and Derry City and Strabane see their over 60 and 65 residents suffering from higher levels of mobility and pain problems, as well as a higher likelihood of crime, and higher population densities in general. Rural and coastal areas on the other hand provide more opportunities for exercise and activity and as such see a lower prevalence level of older residents suffering from long term mobility and pain issues.

In the inverse of this, both rural and coastal areas and urban areas see Economic deprivation and poverty affecting older people. As we've noted in the Index, both different types of geographic environment, urban and rural provide different barriers to help and support for older people in alleviating economic poverty, and strategies and efforts should acknowledge and work with this. The current cost of living crisis affecting the whole of the UK places an additional pressure on older people with high inflation and cost increases, and a focus on better support for all people, including older people suffering from deprivation and poverty, should be the most important priority for council areas.

Crime committed against older people should also be a key focus for the PSNI and all councils – again we can

## CONCLUSION

see a difference in the Index between rural and urban areas, with older people in Belfast and Derry City and Strabane being far more at risk of being victims of crime than those living in rural areas. Of course, a level of high prevalence can be connected to the high number of over 60s living in the council areas of Belfast and Derry City and Strabane, compared to more rural areas. However risk of crime should not be underestimated - fear of crime can be hugely damaging to the social network and capital of older people, as concern about crime or feeling unsafe in their local community or neighbourhood is a key determinant for quality of life for older people in the UK. Media reports of crime that concern the wider area or indeed nation, may also contribute to stress or anxiety as older people may also be more likely to experience altruistic fear, that is a fear for others whose safety they care about, i.e. friends, family or colleagues. Experiencing crime, especially violent crime – leaves older people at risk of suffering physical harm and injuries, from broken bones, to sexual diseases, punctured organs, or even death. The experience of one form of crime or abuse alone could also lead to a consequential effect - it may leave an older victim disproportionately at risk of “polyvictimization” – that is multiple abuses or crimes occurring to the same victim.

As well as being a risk to older people’s psychological or physical health, a secondary result of crime may also potentially be the dislocation, disengagement and social

isolation of older victims from their friends, families, and communities. Isolation continues to be a key risk factor in abuse and violence committed towards older people. Likewise with Economics, we can see a mix in the Index between rural and urban council areas concerning the prevalence and number of older people living alone and levels of low self-belief. Social isolation can lead to increased mortality, stroke, and dementia risks – and can dramatically change the life of an older person for the worse. A focus on this, on community togetherness and placing older people back into the community is necessary and essential to push forward safer ageing and help create a society that cares for all.

For further information or to discuss any aspect of this report please contact Hourglass by emailing [policy@wearehourglass.org](mailto:policy@wearehourglass.org)

- <sup>1</sup> ESRC, How Data Systems Leave Older People Behind, HelpAge International. (2017). Pg 3.
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid. Pg 16.
- <sup>3</sup> Brown, Kevin J.; Gordon, Faith. Older victims of crime. *International Review of Victimology*, (2018). Pg 9.
- <sup>4</sup> Reappointment of the Commissioner for Older People for Northern Ireland | Northern Ireland Executive
- <sup>5</sup> [https://www.copni.org/media/1129/protecting\\_our\\_older\\_people\\_in\\_northern\\_ireland\\_report\\_1.pdf](https://www.copni.org/media/1129/protecting_our_older_people_in_northern_ireland_report_1.pdf)
- <sup>6</sup> Layout 1 (safeguardingireland.org) 'Protecting our older people in Northern Ireland: A Call for Safeguarding Legislation'; Commissioner for Older People in Northern Ireland, 2014.
- <sup>7</sup> Adult Safeguarding: Prevention and Protection in Partnership key documents (health-ni.gov.uk)
- <sup>8</sup> Centre for Ageing Better "Ageing in a Rural Place: A commentary on the challenges and opportunities for people ageing in rural and coastal places" (April 2021), 9.
- <sup>9</sup> AgeUK "Ageing in Coastal and Rural Communities: Exploring the factors underlying health inequalities for older men, older people from ethnic minorities, and older LGBTQ+ people" (2020)
- <sup>10</sup> Centre for Ageing Better "Ageing in a Rural Place: A commentary on the challenges and opportunities for people ageing in rural and coastal places" (April 2021), 9.
- <sup>11</sup> AgeUK "Ageing in Coastal and Rural Communities: Exploring the factors underlying health inequalities for older men, older people from ethnic minorities, and older LGBTQ+ people" (2020)
- <sup>12</sup> AgeUK "Ageing in Coastal and Rural Communities: Exploring the factors underlying health inequalities for older men, older people from ethnic minorities, and older LGBTQ+ people" (2020)
- <sup>13</sup> Centre for Ageing Better "Ageing in a Rural Place: A commentary on the challenges and opportunities for people ageing in rural and coastal places" (April 2021), 9.
- <sup>14</sup> Andrew J. Baranauskas and Kevin M. Drakulich, "Media Construction of Crime Revisited: Media Types, Consumer Contexts, And Frames of Crime and Justice," *Criminology*, 2018, doi:10.1111/1745-9125.12189. BARANAUSKAS, A. J. and DRAKULICH, K. M. (2018), MEDIA CONSTRUCTION OF CRIME REVISITED: MEDIA TYPES, CONSUMER CONTEXTS, AND FRAMES OF CRIME AND JUSTICE. *Criminology*. doi:10.1111/1745-9125.12189
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