

FIVE WAYS TO MAKE THIS ELECTION COUNT

During Election 2011 Older & Bolder highlights five important issues for older people and Ireland. The election is also a good chance for you or your group to discuss the issues you feel most strongly about and share your views with candidates of all parties.

1 ON THE DOORSTEPS!

When candidates and canvassers come to your door, ask them where they stand on the issues you think are important. Hearing your concerns can have a real impact on candidates, who in turn put pressure on their parties at national level.

- Why not keep an Older & Bolder campaign card close to the door or in your pocket where you can use it as a quick reminder of just some of the questions you might ask?
- Older & Bolder is also asking each political party for its official response to our five priority issues. You can read their answers on our website www.olderandbolder.ie or phone us on 01-8783623 and we'll send you a copy by post.
- The canvassers who come to your door may not be the candidates themselves – they are often local volunteers who may not be familiar with the details of every issue. Always ask them to pass your views on to the candidate. If they can't answer your questions you could ask them to follow up by sending you more information.

2 WRITE OR CALL

You needn't wait for candidates to call to your house! You can get in touch directly by visiting their clinic, phoning, writing or emailing to share your concerns.

- During election time, clinics and phone lines can be busier than usual and candidates are often out of the office so they may take a little longer than usual to reply. If you have not heard back after a week then you might follow up with a phonecall.

- As they say, there's strength in numbers – so if it's possible, send a joint letter as part of a group. Afterwards, nominate one individual to make a follow-up phonecall.

3 HUSTINGS AND PUBLIC FORUMS

Will candidates be speaking or answering questions at any public events in your area? Why not attend alone, or with friends?

- Think about just one important question that you'd like to ask if you get the chance.
- If you are part of a group it can be good to divide up questions in advance and also decide if you will be speaking as individuals or as members of the group.
- If the event has a specific theme, tailor your question to fit. Bring a pen and paper to take notes – that way, if other questions arise you can follow up in writing.
- Texting, phoning or emailing your comments into radio or television programmes where candidates are debating can be another way to raise the issues you think are important.

4 STAY IN TOUCH!

Older & Bolder would love to hear about your experience and the responses you get. Help us to build a stronger national picture by calling us on 01-8783623 or emailing info@olderandbolder.ie

5 LASTLY - BE SURE TO GO OUT AND VOTE ON FEB 25TH!

OLDER & BOLDER'S ELECTION TOOLKIT

When politicians and canvassers come to your door this election, you have a real opportunity to make a difference for an age-friendly Ireland. Remember, your views and your voice can make a real impact on candidates and that message goes back to their party at national level.

In this toolkit we highlight **5 key questions** to ask when

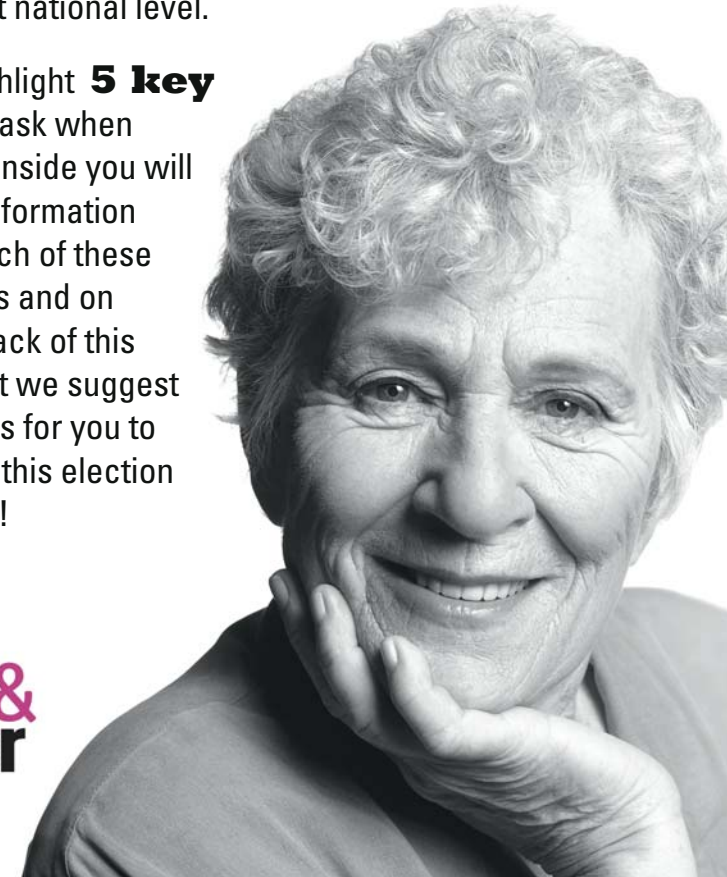
canvassers call. Inside you will

find more information about each of these

issues and on the back of this leaflet we suggest 5 ways for you to make this election count!



KEY ISSUES FOR OLDER PEOPLE & IRELAND



OUR HIGH FIVE IN DEPTH

More details on the 5 Key Issues for older people and Ireland

Older & Bolder suggests 5 important questions to ask canvassers who come to your door. These are issues for older people at a critical moment in time for our country. But they are crucial issues for everyone in Ireland too. These policy choices will help shape the kind of country we're going to rebuild and will also define the kind of people we are – what it means to be Irish in 2011 and beyond.



1 **Fairer Health Care** **WILL YOU SUPPORT A UNIVERSAL HIGH QUALITY, PROPERLY PLANNED AND FUNDED SYSTEM OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE FOR EVERYONE?**

We need a universal system of health and social care. One that provides everyone with equal and timely access based on need. One that we all believe in and proudly contribute to, through taxation or social insurance, based on ability to pay.

Currently, access to health and social care is too often affected by factors such as age, availability of insurance, medical card status or even geographic location. That's why Ireland needs a securely-funded, well-planned and fair health system for people of all ages. The current system also places too much emphasis on acute and hospital-based services. We believe there's a real need for wise investment in a broader, joined-up system of care. One that spans health promotion, disease prevention, home care, community care, dementia supports and mental health services right through to quality end-of-life care. Older people also need clearer, more straightforward ways to access information about their health entitlements.

2 **Secure Pension** **WILL YOU MAKE A LASTING AND GENUINE COMMITMENT TO A FAIR AND SECURE PENSION SYSTEM FOR ALL?**

Over 43,000 citizens of all ages recently joined Older & Bolder in campaigning to protect the State Pension and basic supports. Any new government must offer a firm guarantee to protect the State Pension and other essential supports like the Household Benefits Package from direct or

indirect cuts such as the new Universal Social Charge. Experience in recent years has shown the need for greater fairness, security and transparency in the area of private pensions and those same values should underpin any longer-term planning for our national pension system.

3 **Local Transport** **WILL YOU IMPROVE THE LOCAL TRANSPORT SYSTEMS WHICH ARE ESSENTIAL FOR OLDER PEOPLE'S INDEPENDENCE AND PARTICIPATION?**

Accessible and affordable local transport is a lifeline that many older people rely on to link with family and community, visit banks or shops and access health and social services. Improved public transport systems not only promote older people's independence and participation, they also support local and rural economies and communities. The Free Travel and the Rural Transport Schemes must be continued and improved. There are also many gaps in the system which need to be addressed through a joined-up approach, developed in consultation with those who use the services.

4 **My Involvement** **WILL YOU PROMOTE AND WORK FOR OLDER PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN ALL ASPECTS OF LIFE?**

An age-friendly society in which everyone can contribute and participate is a better society. When we actively promote the inclusion and engagement of older people in all aspects of civic, public and cultural life, everyone benefits. The many voluntary organisations that are working

across Ireland to promote involvement and highlight its importance need to be supported in their work. Any new government must embrace participation and should also offer practical steps to take account of older people's opinions on the issues, policies and services that affect all our lives.

5 **National Plan on Ageing** **WILL YOU DELIVER THE LONG-OVERDUE NATIONAL POSITIVE AGEING STRATEGY?**

Many older people know the importance of planning – that's why we need our next government to deliver Ireland's long overdue 'National Positive Ageing Strategy'. This Strategy could help make Ireland a stimulating, inclusive, healthy and safe place in which to grow old. Thousands of older people, NGOs and stakeholders have already contributed their time, energy and ideas towards the development of a National Strategy and any new government should make it a priority action. Otherwise, policies and actions will remain haphazard and disconnected. To be truly effective the strategy must be championed by a Minister for Older People and also underpinned by real resources and clear targets.

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