**IMMEDIATE RELEASE – THURSDAY, JUNE 28th 2018**

**FORMER MINISTER FOR JUSTICE NORA OWEN ISSUES RALLYING CALL FOR FRESH INVESTMENT IN COMMUNITY SUPPORTS FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA IN BUDGET 2019**

**NEW MAPPING OF DEMENTIA-SPECIFIC SERVICES IN IRELAND SHOWS NO COUNTY IS PROVIDING BASIC MINIMUM STANDARD OF CARE**

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI) is calling on the Government to invest €12 million towards community supports for people with dementia which has been outlined in the Pre-Budget Submission ‘Dementia Support Across Ireland – Building Communities of Care’.

The mid-term review of the National Dementia Strategy (NDS), which was launched in May 2018, acknowledges that people with dementia and their families are still dealing with inadequate services and supports and states that additional funding is required.

According to a dementia services mapping project carried out by the ASI and the HSE’s National Dementia Office (NDO)***,***not only does access to community dementia-specific services across Ireland vary depending on where you live but no county in Ireland has an acceptable level of dementia support. The time has come for the Government to provide funding to address the matter urgently.

The Pre-Budget Submission, which is being launched this morning at the Buswells Hotel in Dublin, is asking the Government to put appropriate supports in place so people with dementia can remain active in their own communities.

The ASI is looking for the Government to invest €7.415 million for a minimum standard of community services in each county; €2.31 million to roll out a Dementia Adviser service across Ireland; €2.24 million to provide Key Workers in every HSE Local Health Office for the coordinated care of each person with dementia; and €852,000 for Dementia Inclusive Community Coordinators across Ireland.

A video ‘Dementia Care Across Ireland’ has also been launched that features former Minister for Justice Nora Owen, member of our Irish Dementia Working Group (IDWG) Jacinta Dixon, Dementia Carers Campaign Network (DCCN) Micheál Rowsome, Broadcaster Ruth Scott and TV Chef Adrian Martin which looks at how, following the release of a mapping of dementia-specific services in Ireland, people do not have equal access to a basic minimum standard of community services.

The video concept is aimed at encouraging local people to post their own videos on social media identifying the absent services of care for people living with dementia in their own county. There are an estimated 55,000 people with dementia in Ireland and for every one person with dementia three others are directly affected and most people with dementia live at home (63%). The number of people with dementia will rise to 68,216 in the next 10 years.

**Former Minister for Justice Nora Owen said:**  
  
“I’m caring for my husband, Brian, who has dementia. In Ireland today, people with dementia, their carers and families are still dealing with inadequate supports. New mapping of dementia-specific services shows people living in Ireland do not have equal access to a basic minimum standard of community services. Budget 2019 could change this. In Dublin, we still need more vital supports – but it’s not just in my county, it is right across the country. Let’s make access dementia support across Ireland more equal. Let’s build communities of care for people with dementia in Ireland in Budget 2019. Please get involved – contact your local TD and please show your support to the 55,000 people living with dementia in Ireland.”

**The Alzheimer Society of Ireland CEO, Pat McLoughlin said:**

“The mid-term review of the implementation of the National Dementia Strategy, which was released in May, identifies emerging gaps in the supports and services for people with dementia and their families across Ireland. The mid-term report concluded that additional funding is required to establish new dementia services and structures right across the country and, at the launch of our Pre-Budget Submission 2019 today, we are simply calling on the Government to implement their own recommendations.

“In the recent dementia-specific community-based mapping project that we carried out with the HSE’s National Dementia Office a number of gaps in the availability and provision of appropriate dementia-specific community services and support were also identified. If we want to address these service gaps a strategic approach to dementia service development is required at a regional level and additional resources are needed in terms of infrastructure, funding and staffing to develop community-based services to meet the needs of people with dementia and their families in Ireland.

“The Government needs to accept that the scale of dementia needs a specific response and a specific budget that is ring-fenced and targeted to where the greatest need exists for services. A multi-annual budget would allow the real gaps which are emerging in service provision to be dealt with in a planned way, based on need and heavily influenced by persons with dementia and their carers. We are determined to ensure that dementia is taken more seriously and resourced properly in Budget 2019.”

**Member of the Irish Dementia Working Groups (IDWG),** **Jacinta Dixon said:**

“Things are moving too slowly for me, dementia is a progressive disease and while the government talks about taking action my disease continues to progress. My family are wonderfully supportive but I want to be independent. I want supports and services that ensure I can live my life. A life unique to me not the one size fits all existence that the state expects of me. The health service does not ask what I need; they say here is what we have. I wonder will a time come when I have no choice but to fit into the box in which they want to put me?”

**Member of the Dementia Carers Campaign Network (DCCN),** **Micheál Rowsome said:**

“Dementia care in Ireland needs to change and that begins with early diagnosis. When I first spoke to the Public Health Nurse I was told I couldn't get any services until my Mum was diagnosed, that was a severe blow and I remember thinking we were on our own here. Mums dementia affected us all. Because of a lack of supports and services everyone in the house became unwell.”

**Further Information:**

For all media enquiries, please contact The Alzheimer Society of Ireland Communications Manager Cormac Cahill on 0860441214.

**Notes to the Editor:**

**Pre-Budget Submission 2019 asks:**

**• €7.415 million for a minimum standard of community services in each county**

The National Dementia Strategy committed to identifying gaps in existing provision and prioritise areas for action. The HSE and the ASI mapped dementia specific community services across Ireland and found acute inequity of service between the counties. This clear geographic lottery shows that without delay funding must be provided so that each county can offer a minimum standard of community services.

**• €2.31 million to roll out a Dementia Adviser service across Ireland**

Dementia Advisers support individuals and their families throughout their dementia journey. In the absence of a pathway of care, evidence shows that their advice and support is crucial.

There are only 8 Dementia Advisers covering 11 counties and demand is increasing, fuelled by a growth in awareness due to the HSE’s Understand Together campaign.

**• €2.24 million to provide Key Workers in every HSE Local Health Office**

The National Dementia Strategy outlines a need for the coordinated care of each person with dementia and that continuity of care is promoted. The role of Key Worker is of paramount importance to assisting people to navigate complex care pathways and promoting a collaborative management plan for individual dementia care. It would be critical in supporting and facilitating an integrated approach to dementia care.

**• €852,000 for Dementia Inclusive Community Coordinators across Ireland**

The National Dementia Strategy emphasises the need for a ‘whole community response’ to dementia and the HSE’s Understand Together campaign provides the foundation for this Community Activation work. With that project nearing completion funding must be provided to continue to support the development of a dementia inclusive Ireland.

**‘Dementia Specific Services in the Community: Mapping Public and Voluntary Services’:**

In September 2016, the National Dementia Office (NDO), Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI) partnered on a project to map dementia-specific community-based services nationally. The project supports the implementation of the National Dementia Strategy (NDS) under a commitment by the HSE to critically review health and personal social services for people with dementia to (i) identify gaps in existing provision, and (ii) prioritise areas for action in accordance with resource availability.

**The full report can be accessed via this link:** http://www.understandtogether.ie/news-and-events/news/Final-Report-Dementia-Specific-Services-Mapping-Project.pdf

**The Facts About Dementia:**  
• The number of people with dementia in Ireland is expected to more than double over the next 20 years, from 55,000 today to 113,000 in 2036.  
• Dementia is an umbrella term used to describe a range of conditions which cause changes and damage to the brain.  
• Dementia is progressive. There is currently no cure. Dementia is not simply a health issue but a social issue that requires a community response.  
• The majority of people with dementia (63%) live at home in the community. Over 180,000 people in Ireland are currently or have been carers for a family member or partner with dementia with many more providing support and care in other ways.  
• Each year over 4,000 people develop dementia. That’s at least 11 people every day and anyone can get dementia - even people in their 30s/40s/50s.  
• 1 in 10 people diagnosed with dementia in Ireland are under 65.  
• The overall cost of dementia care in Ireland is just over €1.69 billion per annum; 48% of this is attributable to family care; 43% is accounted for by residential care; formal health and social care services contribute only 9% to the total cost  
• Figures referenced to Cahill, S. & Pierce, M. (2013) The Prevalence of Dementia in Ireland

**Ends**