**IMMEDIATE RELEASE – THURSDAY, MAY 24th 2018**

**EXTRA GOVERNMENT FUNDING REQUIRED TO ENSURE FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL DEMENTIA STRATEGY FOLLOWING MID-TERM REVIEW**

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI) has called on the Government to make extra funding available for further implementation of the National Dementia Strategy (NDS) following the publication of the mid-term review of the implementation of the Strategy.

The Government published Ireland’s first NDS in 2014 with the purpose of transforming dementia services and supports so that people with dementia and their families and carers can live as well as possible for as long as possible in their own homes and communities.

In 2014, The Atlantic Philanthropies invested €12.5 million to support the Strategy’s implementation and this was matched by €15 million from the Department of Health and the HSE. However, this funding runs out in mid-2019 and the Government must continue to invest in the Strategy to ensure implementation continues beyond this date.

This mid-term review, which was prepared by the National Dementia Office (NDO) and the Department of Health, acknowledges that significant challenges remain in ensuring that people with dementia and their carers get the support they need to live as well as possible.

In addition to this, the review acknowledges that a significant increase in the amount of funding to provide the supports and services is now required. The ASI strongly supports this view.

In the recently-published dementia-specific community-based mapping project that the ASI carried out with the NDO a number of gaps in the availability and provision of appropriate dementia-specific community services and supports were identified.

This mapping report highlighted a lack of supports and interventions for people earlier in the dementia journey, particularly in relation to post-diagnostic supports such as Dementia Advisers, dementia counselling, dementia cognitive therapies, dementia information and signposting services/resources and support groups for people with dementia.

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

“We welcome the publication of this mid-term review into the implementation of the National Dementia Strategy. It is a very positive move to have a review of the implementation of this Strategy at the half-way point so we can get a sense of the emerging gaps in the supports and services for people with dementia and their family carers across Ireland.

“It is positive to see it acknowledged in the report that ongoing funding in the budget allocation from the Department of Health will be needed to ensure that the National Dementia Office remains viable and functional. It is clear that additional funding will be required to move from this preparatory phase into the establishment of new dementia services and structures. For example, considerable resources will be required to implement the diagnostic and post-diagnostic supports pathways.

“Overall, 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 by planners at a national and local level and resourced properly.”

**Advocate and Member of the NDS Monitoring Group Helen Rochford-Brennan said:**“While acknowledging that progress has been made in implementing the National Dementia Strategy so far, it is clear that significant challenges remain in ensuring that all people with dementia and their carers get the support they need to live as well as possible in their communities. This is also my personal experience as someone who has been diagnosed with dementia. It is very obvious that more funding is now required to take the next steps in the implementation of this Strategy.”

**Advocate and Member of the NDS Monitoring Group Sean Donal O’Shea said:**
“It is clear from reading this mid-term review of implementation of the National Dementia Strategy that additional investment will be needed to fill gaps in services and expand existing services to meet the needs of people with dementia and family carers in Ireland today. More funding is required to ensure that this important Strategy is implemented further.”

**ENDS**

**For more information contact The Alzheimer Society of Ireland Communications Manager Cormac Cahill on 086 044 1214 or cormac.cahill@alzheimer.ie**

**The Alzheimer Society of Ireland:**

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI) is the national leader in advocating for and providing dementia-specific supports and services and each year the organisation provides more than one million hours of community-based dementia-specific care throughout Ireland. A national non-profit organisation, the ASI is person centred, rights-based and grassroots led with the voice of the person with dementia and their carer at its core. The ASI also operates the Alzheimer National Helpline offering information and support to anyone affected by dementia at 1800 341 341 and provides a number of others supports and services to people with dementia and their carers across Ireland including 51 Day Care Centres and two Respite Care Centres. The ASI also provides Home Care, Family Carer Training, Dementia Advisers, Alzheimer Cafes and Social Clubs.

**The National Dementia Strategy (NDS):**

The NDS, published in 2014, sets out a framework for the development of dementia supports and services in Ireland.

In 2014, The Atlantic Philanthropies agreed to invest €12.5 million to support the NDS’s implementation. This was matched by funding of €15 million from the Department of Health and the Health Service Executive. This investment allowed for a number of key actions within the Strategy to be resourced and implemented. Additional actions within the Strategy are being implemented by (i) reconfiguring existing resources (ii) finding alternative funding streams and (iii) considering future resource allocation.

The NDS outlines 35 actions to improve dementia care in Ireland. These actions are grouped under the following six Action Areas: Better Awareness and Understanding; Timely Diagnosis and Intervention; Integrated services, supports and care for people with dementia and their carers; Training and Education; Research and Information Systems; and Leadership.

The Strategy Implementation / Monitoring Group is chaired by the Department of Health and ASI is represented on the group by CEO Pat McLoughlin, member of our Irish Dementia Working Group (IDWG) Helen Rochford-Brennan and member of the Dementia Carers Campaign Network (DCCN) Sean Donal O’Shea. This monitoring group meets three times each year.

**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 progressive. There is currently no cure. Dementia is not simply a health issue but a social issue that requires a community response.

● 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.

● 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.

● The Alzheimer Society of Ireland National Helpline is open six days a week Monday to Friday 10am–5pm and Saturday 10am–4pm on 1800 341 341.

*Figures referenced to Cahill, S. & Pierce, M. (2013) The Prevalence of Dementia in Ireland*