**IMMEDIATE RELEASE – TUESDAY, JANUARY 30th 2018**

**POWERFUL VIDEO LAUNCHED TO EDUCATE HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS ABOUT SUPPORTS NEEDED WHEN A PERSON RECEIVES A DEMENTIA DIAGNOSIS**

The Irish Dementia Working Group (IDWG) and the Dementia Carers Campaign Network (DCCN) and have today launched a joint campaign that will focus on educating healthcare professionals about the supports people want and need when receiving a dementia diagnosis.

A new video ‘The Experience of a Dementia Diagnosis’ has been developed to highlight the different experiences that people have of receiving a diagnosis including people of different ages, genders and with different types of dementia.

The video includes personal experiences from people with dementia and family carers including members of the IDWG Ronan Smith (Dublin), Kathy Ryan (Tipperary) and Anne McGeown (Dublin) and members of the DCCN Micheál Rowsome (Limerick) and Laura Reid (Dublin).

In addition to this, the advocates are joined by Dr Tony Foley from the PREPARED project (Primary Care Education, Pathways & Research of Dementia), a three-year national primary care dementia project, which aims to support GPs and Primary Care Team members in their delivery of integrated dementia care in the community.

The video is available via this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=STBw-k1Hl28>

In the coming months, the two advocacy groups, which are both coordinated and supported by The Alzheimer Society of Ireland, will seek opportunities to present to healthcare professionals – including GPs, Public Health Nurses, Geriatricians, Neurologists, Memory Clinics, Physicians, Nursing Homes Ireland and third-level students – about this issue.

All healthcare professionals are being encouraged to visit dementiapathways.ie which is a web-based clinical education resource designed for Irish GPs and community based healthcare professionals.

Dementiapathways.ie is part of a broader clinical education initiative called PREPARED (Primary care Education, Pathways and Research in Dementia), which is a project that is part of the overall implementation of the Irish National Dementia Strategy.

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 affects 50 million people worldwide – a number that will almost triple by 2050.

**Member of the Irish Dementia Working Group (IDWG) Anne McGeown said:**

“We are hoping that this campaign will raise awareness among healthcare professionals of the supports people with dementia and their families want and need at the time of their diagnosis. I wasn’t surprised when I got my diagnosis because, for a long time, I knew something was wrong. The doctor said: ‘There’s a little bit of dementia there’. And, even though I didn’t know much about the condition, I knew it was more than a little.”

**Member of the Irish Dementia Working Group (IDWG) Kathy Ryan said:**

“I was told I had Mild Cognitive Impairment – that didn’t sound so bad. But as I was crossing the carpark [following the meeting], I met the nurse who had assessed me, she apologised for not being with me for the diagnosis. I thanked her and said I was fine. Again she apologised. In that moment I knew, either I hadn’t heard something or something hadn’t been said. I asked her: ‘Are you saying I have Alzheimer’s?’ And the answer was ‘yes’. Even though it can be heartbreaking to hear those words for the first time, I would have preferred if I had been told straight out that I had dementia. For me, not using the word gives it more power and helps to reinforce the stigma that, as people living with the condition, we are fighting against.”

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

“We are hoping this campaign can really help to support people with dementia and their families at the time of a diagnosis. My mum, Kate, wasn’t told that she had dementia because in her case it was difficult to diagnose and it wasn’t clear cut, but that meant we couldn’t access the services we needed. When I first spoke to the Public Health Nurse she explained that without a diagnosis she couldn’t get involved in our case.”

**Dr Tony Foley from the PREPARED project said:**

“As a healthcare professional it can be extremely hard to give somebody a diagnosis of dementia – you may not feel confident about diagnosing the condition or it might not be clear exactly who – the GP, geriatrician or neurologist – is responsible for disclosing it.

“As a community-based healthcare professional there is support out there for you too. Dementia Pathways provides resources that will help you in providing a diagnosis and supporting families. In many cases, you may have a long-standing relationship with the person and their family so you are of course extremely concerned for them and how this will change their lives.”

**ENDS**

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

**About The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI):**

The 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.

**The ASI provides the following services:**

* National Helpline
* Social Clubs
* Support Groups
* Day Care Services
* Home Care
* Dementia Advisor Service
* Mobile Information Bus

**Helpline:** 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.
**Website:** [www.alzheimer.ie](http://www.alzheimer.ie/)
**Twitter:** @alzheimersocirl
**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/TheAlzheimerSocietyofIreland/](http://www.facebook.com/TheAlzheimerSocietyofIreland/)

**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*

**Dementia Pathways Website**

The dementiapathways.ie is a web-based clinical education resource designed for Irish GPs and community based healthcare professionals. If you are a carer or person with dementia you may be interested in visiting the new public information website; Dementia - Understand Together. Dementiapathways.ie has been launched as part of a broader clinical education initiative called PREPARED (Primary care Education, Pathways And Research in Dementia), which is a project that is part of the overall implementation of the Irish National Dementia Strategy.

PREPARED is coordinated by the Department of General Practice at University College Cork, and is funded by the Health Service Executive and Atlantic Philanthropies. PREPARED is an award-winning initiative, scooping the Best Educational Project (GP/Pharmacy) at the 2017 Irish Healthcare Awards.

**Dementia: Understand Together campaign**

Dementia: Understand Together is a public support, awareness and information campaign led by the HSE, working with the Alzheimer Society of Ireland and Genio, that aims to inspire people from all sections of society to stand together with the 500,000 Irish people whose families have been affected by dementia. For more information on dementia, and the services and supports available, Freephone 1800 341 341 or visit [www.understandtogether.ie](http://www.understandtogether.ie)