**IMMEDIATE RELEASE – TUESDAY, OCTOBER 9th 2018**

**THE ALZHEIMER SOCIETY OF IRELAND FRUSTRATED WITH LACK OF DEDICATED DEMENTIA FUND IN BUDGET 2019**

**INSISTS THAT THIS IS ADDRESSD IN HSE’S 2019 NATIONAL SERVICE PLAN**

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI) is frustrated following the Government decision not to designate a dedicated ring-fenced budget for dementia supports and services in Budget 2019 today, but insists that this is addressed in the HSE’s 2019 National Service Plan 2019.

It is very important to note that the announced investment maintains the status quo and does not address the scale of dementia which affects 55,000 people in Ireland and the significance of the issues that requires a specific budget.

Today, the Minister for Finance Paschal Donohoe announced a further increase of €1.05 billion in Health funding for 2019 bringing the Health budget to €17 billion, The ASI will work tirelessly to ensure that when the HSE’s National Service Plan is announced in December, that the Government will direct part of that €1.05 billion funding to dementia-specific supports and services.

This could represent a first step in dealing with the inadequate and glaring gaps in services and supports that have been so widely and so recently identified across the country.

In recent times, there has been a groundswell of support for more community supports for people with dementia across Ireland:

● Recent dementia services mapping project carried out by The ASI and the HSE’s National Dementia Office (NDO) states that not only does access to community dementia-specific services vary depending on where you live but no county in Ireland has an acceptable level of dementia support;

● 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;

● Recent evaluation of the Dementia Adviser Service, which was commissioned by the HSE’s National Dementia Office (NDO) as part of the implementation of the National Dementia Strategy (NDS), people with dementia, carers, families, health, social care professionals, Dementia Advisers and the actual report itself all recommended development of the service to achieve national coverage;

● In addition to this, 1,274members of the public from around Ireland sent letters to their local TDs calling on the Government to invest over community supports for people with dementia in Budget 2019 and the All-Party Oireachtas Group on Dementia also advised the Government to invest in community supports for people with dementia in their Pre-Budget 2019 statement last month.

There is 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.

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

“We are very disappointed that the Government has yet again decided not to make specific funding available for people with dementia and their family members in Budget 2019. There are thousands of families up and down the country who have been struggling to access basic minimum level of supports and services for loved ones with dementia, and as a society we are failing to provide these people with the supports they need.

“A number of times over the past 12 months alone, we have had a number of high-profile reports that have suggested additional community supports are needed for people with dementia and their family members - 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. Budget 2019 represented a great opportunity to address this issue.

“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. The Government now has an opportunity in the HSE’s National Service Plan later this year to direct funds for dementia-specific supports and services to address the pressing issue of dementia in Ireland.”

**Further Information:**

For all media enquiries, please contact The Alzheimer Society of Ireland Communications Manager Cormac Cahill via cormac.cahill@alzheimer.ie or 086 044 1214.

**Notes to the Editor:**

**The Alzheimer Society of Ireland 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

**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**