**IMMEDIATE RELEASE – MONDAY, 1st OCTOBER 2018**

**GOVERNMENT URGED TO ALLOCATE €2.31 MILLION TO ROLL OUT DEMENTIA ADVISER SERVICE NATIONWIDE IN BUDGET 2019 FOLLOWING RELEASE OF HSE EVALUATION REPORT**

With just over a week to go until the Budget 2019 announcement, The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI) is renewing its call on the Government to expand and develop the Dementia Adviser Service nationwide for people with dementia and their families in Budget 2019 following the release of a new evaluation report about the crucial service from the HSE.

The study, ‘Evaluation of The Alzheimer Society of Ireland Dementia Adviser Service Report’, was commissioned by the HSE’s National Dementia Office (NDO) as part of the implementation of the National Dementia Strategy.

In the report, people with dementia, carers, families, health and social care professionals and Dementia Advisers (DA) themselves recommended an increase in the number of DAs to meet the increasing demand, as a result of the increasing prevalence of dementia. The report recommends development of the service to achieve national coverage.

In its Pre-Budget Submission 2019, The ASI has already costed rolling out the DA Service nationwide to support individuals and their families throughout their dementia journey at €2.31 million as part of the €12 million required to give a basic dementia service in every county.

This independent evaluation is the first external evaluation of the service in Ireland and it has provided evidence of overall high levels of satisfaction with the service. People living with dementia and their carers and health and social care professionals reported satisfaction with the information, advice, peer support and signposting of services provided by the service.

The ASI’s DA Service offers a unique community-focused support service to people with dementia and their families and helps to provide information and advice throughout your journey with dementia; help connect people with dementia supports and services and help the community to be more dementia inclusive.

However, there are only eight DAs covering 11 counties and demand is increasing. The report found that there are challenges with equity of access to the service across the country and a large number of people with dementia and their families simply cannot access the service because of where they live.

The majority of people reported that the service helped them by providing support and understanding about dementia and confidence to ask questions and demonstrated the positive influences of the DAs on themselves and their family and that they valued the support and information provided.

The service is a multi-faceted role that has grown organically from an information and advice service to include advocacy, incorporating a wide variety of person-centred tasks to meet the growing needs of people with dementia and their families.

**The ASI’s DA Service was piloted in Dublin and Cork in 2013 and by 2017, there were eight advisors working across 12 counties in Ireland; Cork, Kerry, Tipperary, Limerick, parts of Clare, Galway, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan and Dublin.**

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

“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 supports were identified. In the absence of equal access to supports and services and a lack of basic minimal services for people with dementia which has been highlighted by the Government themselves, it seems deeply unfair that access to this crucial Dementia Adviser service is not available to everyone who wants to avail of it.

“Currently there are only eight Dementia Advisers in Ireland and large sections of the country cannot access the service and this report recommends development of the service to achieve national coverage. As part of the €12 million required to give a basic dementia service in every county, we have already costed rolling out the DA service nationwide at €2.3 million and this report must now be reflected in the Government’s thinking in the lead up to Budget 2019 which is just over a week away. This service, as this evaluation recommends, must be rolled out nationwide as soon as possible.”

**Further Information:**

For all media enquiries, please contact The Alzheimer Society of Ireland Communications Manager Cormac Cahill on 086 044 1214.

**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.

**‘Evaluation of The Alzheimer Society of Ireland Dementia Adviser Service Report’**

The report was completed by University of Limerick, Ireland; National University of Ireland Galway, Ireland; University College Cork, Ireland; and University of Edinburgh, Scotland. **This research was commissioned by the National Dementia Office with the support of the Office of the Nursing and Midwifery Services Director (ONMSD) Ms. Mary Wynne.**

**The authors wish to acknowledge Professor Charlotte Clarke Head of the School of Health in Social Science International Dean, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences University of Edinburgh and Professor Jonathon Drennan Professor of Nursing and Health Services Research School of Nursing and Midwifery University College Cork who acted as expert advisors and collaborators for this review.**

**In addition, the team would like to acknowledge the guidance of the steering group: Dr John Linehan Office of the Head of Operations and Service Improvement, Ms Anna de Siún Senior Project Manager - National Dementia Office HSE and Ms Samantha Taylor, National Information & Advice Services Manager, The Alzheimer Society of Ireland.**

**The full report is available via this link: https://tinyurl.com/ybqzhwle**

**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**