



All-Party **Oireachtas Group**
on **Dementia**

The All-Party Oireachtas Group on Dementia Budget Proposals October 2017

Over the last year a diverse group of TDs and Senators from all parties and none have been actively working together to enhance the lives of people with dementia and their carers. Members have heard first hand from people with dementia. We travelled to Scotland to witness its response and we have heard evidence from leading academics, frontline workers, IT industry leaders, innovators and others. All of this has helped to inform and shape our first Budget Submission.

We are advising the Government that the following should be prioritised in the forthcoming budget:

- €6m for dementia home care, moving towards €30m by 2021
- €1.5m for 30 Dementia Advisors – Link Scheme (€50,000 per post)
- €1m for assistive technology
- €1m for the GP PREPARED project
- €1m for Regional Centers of Excellence for people with Down syndrome and dementia

There are currently 55,000 people with dementia in Ireland. This is expected to rise dramatically to 68,216 by 2021 and 132,828 by 2041¹. Now is the time to begin investing in services and technology that will support people living with dementia and their carers and save money in the long run. These services and supports should be made available to all people with dementia including the 4,000 people under 65.

€6m for dementia home care, moving towards €30m by 2021

The Department of Health acknowledges that home care supports can be a preferred and cost-effective alternative to long-term residential care for some older people. The majority of people with dementia want to live at home, in a familiar environment linked to their communities². Limited funding and access has been provided under the National Dementia Strategy for Intensive Home Care Packages for people with dementia. An additional €6m must be invested in dementia home care in Budget 2018, moving towards €30m by 2021.

This funding must be ring-fenced and there must be equality of access, with Intensive Home Care Packages being made available to people with dementia under the age of 65. To ensure such equality of access, the HSE should be required to report on a quarterly basis the number of people under the age of 65 who are in receipt of an Intensive Home Care Package. **The All-Party Oireachtas Group on Dementia proposes an additional investment of €6m in Budget 2018 to enable the HSE to expand the number of Intensive Home Care Packages. This increased funding should be matched in Budget 2019, Budget 2020 and Budget 2021 to reach at least €30m for dementia home care.**

¹ The Irish National Dementia Strategy (2014) The Department of Health, Dublin

² Meeting Older People's Preference for Care: Policy, But What About Practice?, (2016) IASW, Age Action, ASI and UCD

€1.5m for Dementia Advisers – Link Scheme

On our study trip to Scotland in January we saw first-hand people's entitlement to and the positive impact of the national 'Link Workers' network. Dementia Advisers signpost people to services and provide much needed support, training and information to families and communities. **The All-Party Oireachtas Group on Dementia are calling for 30 Dementia Advisers at a total cost of €1.5m or €50,000 per post in 2018. This increased funding should be matched in Budget 2019 and Budget 2020 to reach 90 Dementia Advisers, one for each primary care network, by mid-2021.**

€1m for Assistive Technology

We warmly welcome the recent allocation of €300,000 for assistive technology libraries by the Department of Health from Dormant Accounts funding. The adoption of assistive technologies will enhance independent living and reduce and delay the need for other supports. New assistive technologies can be leased out, recycled or reused or adaptations can be made to people's homes. These technologies are particularly important for people with dementia living in rural or more isolated areas. **The All-Party Oireachtas Group on Dementia propose an innovation fund of €1m which would provide the encouragement and seed capital for innovators and social enterprises to test, develop and provide ideas to support people with dementia and disabilities.**

€1m for the GP PREPARED Project

GPs are often the first place a person with dementia goes for advice or information. To enable people with dementia to live well in the community GPs need adequate and ongoing training. The GP PREPARED project, currently funded through the National Dementia Strategy, helps ensure early diagnosis of dementia and improves access to local networks of care. The project is co-ordinated by the Department of GPs at UCC³ and led by Kinsale based Dr. Tony Foley. **The All-Party Oireachtas Group on Dementia recommends that this project should be continued and expanded with an investment of €1m in Budget 2018.**

€1m for Regional Centres of Excellence for people with Down syndrome and dementia

People with Down syndrome are at a much higher risk of developing dementia and an estimated 700 people with dementia and Down syndrome live at home with aging parents. Professor Mary McCarron who presented to our group in June estimated that 88% of people with Down syndrome will develop dementia compared to 7% of the general population. At the moment Ireland isn't prepared for the challenge this poses. The National Dementia Strategy recognised that there is a need for special consideration for people with Down syndrome due to the increased risk, and that targeted screening for this population would be useful. **The All-Party Oireachtas Group on Dementia recommends that funding of €1m should be provided to begin establishing Regional Centres of Excellence with trained and experienced staff to complete assessments and to offer advice and support to people with Down syndrome living with dementia and their family members, as well as providing supports to allied healthcare professionals and medical professionals in the region.**

³ See <http://dementiapathways.ie> for more information