**IMMEDIATE RELEASE – FRIDAY, 20th SEPTEMBER 2019**

**WORLD’S LARGEST EVER DEMENTIA SURVEY REVEALS THAT INVESTMENT IS DESPERATELY NEEDED IN IRELAND TO FUND SERVICE GAPS AND PROVIDE A MINIMUM STANDARD OF COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**IN IRELAND, ONLY 2.7% OF HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS AND 6.7% OF GENERAL PUBLIC AGREE THAT THERE ARE ADEQUATE COMMUNITY SERVICES – IN STARK CONTRAST TO OTHER COUNTRIES**

The world’s largest dementia study by ***Alzheimer’s Disease International (ADI),*** which consisted of 70,000 people across 155 countries released to coincide with ***World Alzheimer’s Day*** which is tomorrow (Saturday, 21st) has revealed that that investment is needed to urgently fund the service gap by providing a minimum standard of community services in Ireland.

The survey on attitudes to dementia, called ***‘World Alzheimer Report 2019: Attitudes to dementia’***, reveals a startling lack of global knowledge around dementia, with two thirds of people still thinking the disease is a normal part of ageing rather than a neurodegenerative disorder and 95 per cent of participants think they could develop dementia in their lifetime.

In ***Ireland***, only 2.7% of Health Care Professionals and 6.7% of General Public agree that there are adequate community services in stark contrast to other countries. Ireland is highlighted in relation to high levels of concern among the general public that healthcare providers (which includes GPs, Nurses, Psychiatrists, Neurologists) are ignoring people with dementia (57.8% in Ireland), while the average for Europe is much lower at 29.2%.

Country-specific data from 48 countries indicate that ***Ireland is fifth last*** in the General Public section with 6.7% of the General Public in Ireland believing there are adequate community services for people living with dementia and for carers – this is in the bottom 10% of the 48 countries surveyed on this question with the highest being China 77.8%; the lowest is Iran 0%.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  *Agreement that there are adequate community services for people with dementia.* | **Ireland** | **High Income countries** | **Overall** |
| **General Public** | **6.7%** | **37%** | **29%** |
| **Healthcare professional** | **2.7%** | **43%** | **36%** |

However, the vast majority of respondents from the general public also think that people living with dementia can enjoy life (87%) and that there are things we can do to improve the lives of people with dementia (90%). For example, most people think that a person with dementia’s situation is likely to improve with social support (79.3%) and that people with a healthy lifestyle have a lower risk of dementia (64.3%).

The ADI is the international federation of 100 Alzheimer associations and federations around the world. The report reveals the results of the largest attitudes to dementia survey ever undertaken, with responses from almost 70,000 people across 155 countries and territories. Analysis of the study was carried out by the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE).

**Summary of main points from ‘World Alzheimer’s Report 2019: Attitudes to dementia’:**

* 2 in 3 people still think that dementia is a normal part of ageing;
* 62 per cent of healthcare practitioners still think it is a normal part of ageing;
* Every 3 seconds someone in the world develops dementia;
* 95% of the public think they will develop dementia in their lifetime, while 78% are concerned about developing dementia at some point;
* 1 in 4 people think that there is nothing you can do about dementia. Clearly messages on the importance of risk reduction highlighted recently by a WHO report are not getting through to the public;
* Approx 20% of respondents would keep their dementia diagnosis a secret when meeting people;
* Almost 62% of healthcare providers worldwide think that dementia is part of normal aging. The message that dementia is not part of normal aging but a disease, is clearly not getting through to healthcare providers, which is surprising and disconcerting;
* 75% carers globally say they are often stressed by caring responsibilities even whilst expressing positive sentiments about their role and 50% of carers said their health suffered as a result of their caring responsibilities. Carers need more support and respite, a finding that is also borne out in the De-Stress study of Irish carers.

Download the report here: <https://www.alz.co.uk/research/world-report-2019>

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

*“The world’s largest dementia survey which has been published by the Alzheimer’s Disease International offers us a unique insight into the truly global scale of dementia. I am very worried to see that the report reveals that stigma around dementia is preventing people from seeking the information, advice, support and medical help that could dramatically improve their length and quality of life. Also, 75% carers globally say they are often stressed by caring responsibilities even whilst expressing positive sentiments about their role and 50% of carers said their health suffered as a result of their caring responsibilities. Carers clearly need more support and respite, a finding that is also borne out of our De-Stress study of Irish carers from a couple of years ago.*

*“I am struck that only 2.7% of health care professionals and 6.7% of the general public agree that there are adequate community services in Ireland which is in stark contrast to other countries. We are all well aware that 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. I am afraid that this comprehensive survey adds to the growing body of evidence if you consider our service mapping project and dementia strategy mid-term review last year that more community services are urgently needed. Budget 2020 presents the Government with a golden opportunity to start funding 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 on 086 044 1214.

**Notes to the Editor:**

**About World Alzheimer’s Month**

World Alzheimer's Month is the international campaign every September to raise awareness and challenge the stigma that surrounds dementia. September 2019 will mark the 8th World Alzheimer's Month. The campaign was launched in 2012: World Alzheimer's Day is on 21 September each year. For more information, please visit: https://www.alz.co.uk/world-alzheimers-month

**About Alzheimer’s Disease International (ADI)**

ADI is the international federation of 100 Alzheimer associations and federations around the world, in official relations with the World Health Organization. ADI's vision is prevention, care and inclusion today, and cure tomorrow. ADI believes that the key to winning the fight against dementia lies in a unique combination of global solutions and local knowledge. ADI works locally, by empowering Alzheimer associations to promote and offer care and support for persons with dementia and their care partners, while working globally to focus attention on dementia and campaign for policy change. For more information, please visit www.alz.co.uk.

**About The Alzheimer Society of Ireland:**

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 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**