

IMMEDIATE RELEASE – WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9th 2019

FUNDING FOR 10 MORE DEMENTIA ADVISERS IN BUDGET 2020 FIRST STEP IN DEALING WITH INADEQUATE AND GLARING GAPS IN DEMENTIA SERVICES ACROSS IRELAND AFTER YEARS OF NEGLECT

The Government's decision to provide funding for 10 more **Dementia Advisers** in Budget 2020 has been welcomed by The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI) as a first step in dealing with the inadequate and glaring gaps in services and supports that have been identified across the country. This follows years of **neglect** of people with dementia in recent Budget Day announcements.

The ASI also welcomes the one million additional home care hours which will be provided in 2020 as home care was another key ask of our Pre-Budget campaign. This will help support people with dementia to live at home in an environment that is familiar to them and where the majority of people with dementia want to be.

This announcement is acknowledgment that there is finally some understanding at Government level of the **harsh realities** faced by ordinary people up and down the country; people with dementia and their family carers are currently being left to put up with dementia service and supports black holes across Ireland.

Dementia Advisers was a key ask of our **Pre-Budget Submission 2020 campaign** as they support people and their families with information, advice and signposting throughout their dementia journey. There are only nine Dementia Advisers covering 11 counties yet demand is increasing fuelled by a growth in awareness due to the HSE's Understand Together campaign. The recruitment of 10 extra Dementia Advisers means that families in every county should now have access to this essential service.

The ASI has worked tirelessly with our grassroots supporters in the build-up to Budget 2020 to get the Minister for Health Simon Harris and the Government to understand the scale of the dementia crisis. This resulted in well over **6,000 letters** being sent to TDs across the country urging them to pledge their support to lobby for investment in dementia care. We are glad to see this support has not been ignored today. 55,000 people with dementia and a further nearly 200,000 family members really need support and commitment to invest in this issue. Today's announcement is a positive start.

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland CEO, Pat McLoughlin said:

"People with dementia and their family carers have been ignored in the Budget for years, so this announcement is first positive step in the Government taking the dementia services crisis more seriously. We feel that the given the challenge that dementia presents to Irish society, the condition should form an integral part of the overall health budget and should be considered and reflected in overall health considerations for the coming year.

"We have been calling for more Dementia Advisers for years and it was a key ask in our Budget 2020 Submission. Much more is needed to support those living with dementia and their carers. Dementia Advisers



work with people with dementia, their families and carers to provide a highly responsive and individualised information and signposting service. They are a key community support for people.

“The sad reality is that this country is still nowhere near being in a position to support people with dementia and their carers; in recent Budget Day announcements they have been forgotten and ignored. I hope that this investment ends the cycle of neglect and begins a new cycle of adequately supporting people with dementia and their families.”

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 ASI's Pre-Budget Submission 2020:

Still Asking: People with dementia and their carers are still asking the Government why no county in Ireland has even a minimum standard of supports and services. The time to provide funding is now.}

Still Waiting: People with dementia and their carers are still waiting for equitable and fair access to the supports and services that they desperately need. The time for action is now.

Still Struggling: People with dementia and their carers are still struggling on a daily basis, sometimes silently and painfully, due to the lack of services and supports. The time to end this struggle is now.

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