**IMMEDIATE RELEASE – MONDAY, 14th OCTOBER 2019**

**NEW ALZHEIMER SOCIETY OF IRELAND AMBASSADOR GREG O’SHEA ENCOURAGING PUBLIC TO RALLY BEHIND MEMORY RIBBON FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN**

***\*Pictures from Photocall attached; issued to all photo desks; more available on request***

Love Island winner and professional rugby 7’s player Greg O’Shea is encouraging members of the public to support The Alzheimer Society of Ireland’s annual nationwide Flag Day collection Alzheimer’s Memory Ribbon which is taking part in every county in Ireland on Thursday, November 21st.

The new ambassador for The Alzheimer Society of Ireland is backing the campaign which asks the public to share treasured memories of their loved ones affected by dementia while donating to this worthy cause. Dementia is something which is close to the Limerick native’s heart after his nana passed away with the condition only recently.

By sharing a memory and donating €3 to the charity, members of the public can give a gift that will change lives as every donation made will go directly towards providing vital services to people living with dementia and the loving families who support them.

The Love Island Winner is encouraging members of the public to get involved and there are two ways to do this: buy a Memory Ribbon pin from one of our staff members or volunteers around the country on Thursday, November 21st or become a volunteer for an hour on the day. All of the details are on [www.alzheimer.ie](http://www.alzheimer.ie)

***The Alzheimer Society of Ireland Ambassador Greg O’Shea said:***

*“I’m delighted to be showing my support for Alzheimer’s Memory Ribbon fundraising campaign on Thursday, November 21st which will help thousands of families living with dementia in Ireland. Members of the public are being asked to share a memory and donate €3 to the Alzheimer’s Memory Ribbon campaign. People will be giving a gift that will change lives as every €3 donated will go directly towards providing vital services to people living with dementia and the loving families who support them. Alzheimer’s is something that is very close to my heart. This November, I'll be remembering my nana who had Dementia and passed away only recently. Dementia has a major impact on our society; it’s one of our biggest health challenges. 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 forties and fifties. Please support Alzheimer’s Memory Ribbon and help to raise much-needed funds to support people with dementia around the country. People can volunteer on the day or buy a Memory Ribbon on Thursday, November 21st. All of the details are on www.alzheimer.ie”*

**For more information, please contact ASI Communications Manager, Cormac Cahill on 086 044 1214 or** **cormac.cahill@alzheimer.ie**

**Notes to the Editor:**

**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.**
 **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 progressive. There is currently no cure. Dementia is not simply a health issue but a social issue that requires a community response.
* 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.
* 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.
* 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.

Figures referenced to Cahill, S. & Pierce, M. (2013) *The Prevalence of Dementia in Ireland*