**IMMEDIATE RELEASE – THURSDAY, 21st NOVEMBER 2019**

**HEAVY RAIN HAS DIRE IMPACT ON ALZHEIMER’S MEMORY RIBBON STREET COLLECTION – MEMBERS OF PUBLIC URGED TO PLEASE TEXT TO DONATE INSTEAD**

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

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland’s (ASI) annual nationwide Flag Day collection Alzheimer’s Memory Ribbon was badly affected by poor weather conditions and heavy rain throughout the country today (Thursday, November 21st) with collections down an anticipated 50% in some areas.

Today, our staff and volunteers are selling Memory Ribbons for €3 in cities, towns and villages across Ireland, but poor weather conditions has meant that fundraising for vital dementia-specific services for the 55,000 people living dementia in Ireland has been hurt badly.

Members of the public are now being advised to use the Text to Donate facility instead – text Memory to 50300 to donate €4.

The ASI is the national leader in advocating for and providing dementia-specific supports and services. The ASI has a service in every county in Ireland. The ASI only receives approx 58% funding from the HSE and needs to fundraise approx €3.3million every year just to keep our services going. That’s why fundraising campaigns such as Memory Ribbon are so important to the charity.

**Memory Ribbon – How people can still get involved:**

* Buy a Memory Ribbon for €3 from our online shop
* Make an online donation at [www.alzheimer.ie](http://www.alzheimer.ie)
* Text Memory to 50300 to donate €4

***The Alzheimer Society of Ireland’s CEO Pat McLoughlin said:***

*“Today is our biggest fundraising flag day - however, heavy and persistent rain has had a dire impact on street collections in particular with collections down as anticipated 50% in some areas. I’m afraid this is going to have a detrimental effect on our fundraising efforts that we badly need just to keep out services going. To ensure our services can keep running, people should please Text to Donate – text Memory to 50300 to donate €4. We are so grateful to the general public for the amazing support we have received today all over the country – people have been so generous.*

*“Dementia has a devastating impact on families. Services like home care, day care and support groups help thousands of people to cope. However, we under-funded and the demand for services is increasing all the time, so fundraising campaigns like today are so important to us. Every donation will go directly to help fund vital services, like our 51 day care centres around the country which provide specialist care for people with dementia or our home care service which provides trained dementia care workers for people in their own homes.”*

**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*