**IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Tuesday, 17th December 2019**

**New Research by The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (The ASI) and KBC Bank highlights need to support those living with dementia**

* **7 in 10** Irish adults realise that people with dementia require 24/7 care, however just 1 in 4 are aware of the costs involved.
* **71%** of those surveyed agree that businesses could be more focused on assisting customers who have dementia symptoms.
* During this festive season, The ASI urges the public to call or drop in on someone they know who has dementia and to support carers over the Christmas period.

New research assessing the concerns and costs surrounding dementia among Irish people by The ASI and KBC Bank Ireland has found that 7 in 10 Irish adults realise that people with dementia require 24/7 care, however only 27% of respondents know that the cost of dementia care in Ireland is greater than the combined cost of cancer, heart disease and diabetes.

71% of respondents agree that businesses could be more focused on assisting customers who may have dementia symptoms and this is now more relevant with over 55,000 people living with dementia in Ireland.

The research also found that while 3 in 4 adults (74%) surveyed are concerned about dementia, that they are more concerned about the threat of other major illnesses and less than 2 in 10 (15%) of those surveyed currently donate to a dementia charity compared to 39% of people who donate to a cancer charity\*. 68% of adults surveyed either don’t know or don’t believe that dementia is one of the top five causes of death worldwide.

The 55,000 people living with dementia in Ireland are supported by 50,000 family carers in Ireland today and with these numbers on the rise, the ASI’s ‘Caring at Christmas’ factsheet urges people to call in to support and say hello to people living with dementia and their families over the festive period.

***Samantha Taylor, The Alzheimer Society of Ireland’s National Information & Advice Services Manager said:*** *“Based on this research, there is a lack of knowledge of dementia among the general public but there's also a consensus that more support for people with dementia is needed. In general, and in particular over the Christmas period, it's vitally important that people check in on someone who has dementia and their family and asks how they are, if they need anything. Also, if people are lonely, feeling isolated or need some advice or support they can call our helpline, Christmas can feel overwhelming at the best times, we have some practical steps that can help.”*

**Aidan Power, Director of Customer, Brand and Marketing, KBC Bank Ireland said:** *“The Alzheimer's Society Ireland (ASI) has been our chosen charity partner for almost three years. This is an association that we are incredibly proud of as there are 55,000 people in Ireland living with dementia and the number is set to increase. However, the concerns and costs associated with dementia are somewhat unknown when compared to other diseases and conditions, which is why we worked with the ASI to conduct research to shine a light on some of the barriers facing people and families living with dementia.*

*“Creating inclusive and dementia friendly communities can really help people living with the disease remain at home and in their community. Our research found that 71 percent of those surveyed agree that businesses should be more focused on assisting customers who have dementia symptoms, which is why to further support those who are vulnerable in society, staff from our hubs and operations team completed dementia Friendly Training delivered by the ASI. The training has equipped our staff with behaviour and communication techniques and skills to better support customers living with dementia and their families.” added Power.*

The national charity is also creating awareness that people can contact that Alzheimer National Helpline 1800 341 341 if they would like advice or support over Christmas. There is also a Caring at Christmas factsheet for carers which is available for free via [www.alzheimer.ie](http://www.alzheimer.ie)

**KEY FACTS ABOUT DEMENTIA:**

* Dementia is an umbrella term to describe a range of conditions which cause changes and damage to the brain
* The most common form of dementia is Alzheimer’s
* Dementia is not caused by ageing and is not a normal part of the ageing process
* 63% of people with dementia currently live in the community
* In Ireland each year, there are 4,000 new cases of dementia
* The number of people with the condition will double in the next 20 years
* There are approximately 50,000 carers of people with dementia in Ireland

**ALZHEIMER NATIONAL HELPLINE CHRISTMAS OPENING HOURS 2019:**

Monday, 23rd Dec – 10am to 4pm
Tuesday, 24th Dec – closed
Wednesday, 25th Dec – closed
Thursday, 26th Dec – closed
Friday, 27th Dec – 10am to 4pm
Saturday, 28th Dec – closed
Monday, 30th Dec – 10am – 5pm
Tuesday, 31st Dec – 10am – 5pm
Wednesday, 1st Jan – closed

**CARING AT CHRISTMAS**

**Download for free via this link:** <https://alzheimer.ie/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/ASI-Caring-at-Christmas.pdf>

**ENDS**

\**Note to Ed*.: 40,000 people are diagnosed with cancer per year according to a recent report from the Irish Cancer Society.

*How the research was conducted:*The research was conducted by Core Research on behalf of KBC Bank and their charity partner the Alzheimer Society of Ireland (The ASI). A nationally representative online survey of 1,000 people aged 18+yrs. Quotas are put in place on gender, age, region and social class that mirror the results of the latest census. The sample is further controlled with interlocking quotas. This ensures that the findings represent the nations opinions and attitudes, with a margin of error of just over +/-3%.

**For more information contact The Alzheimer Society of Ireland Communications Manager Cormac Cahill on 086 044 1214 or** **cormac.cahill@alzheimer.ie**

*About The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI):*The ASI is the national leader in understanding and providing dementia-specific supports and services. With a national network of over 120 specialist services, 900 staff and 300 volunteers, each year they provide almost 900,000 hours of community-based, dementia-specific care throughout Ireland. For more information see www.alzheimer.ie.

**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/)
*Caring at Christmas:*
Christmas can be a wonderful time for family and friends. At the best of times it can also be overwhelming. When caring for a loved one with dementia, it can easily feel all too much. However, with some planning and some adjustments, this holiday can be enjoyable for everyone. Click here for the ASI Caring at Christmas factsheet.

*KBC Bank Ireland*

KBC Bank Ireland employs over 1,400 people in Ireland and has retail banking hubs in Dublin, Cork, Galway, Limerick, Kildare, Waterford, Wicklow and Kilkenny.