**IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Monday, 21st September 2020**

**Alzheimer’s Disease International launches most comprehensive report on dementia-inclusive design to mark World Alzheimer’s Day 2020**

Drastically improved dementia-inclusive design in the built environment is needed across the globe according to a new report from Alzheimer’s Disease International (ADI), of which The Alzheimer Society of Ireland is a member, that has been released today to mark ***World Alzheimer’s Day 2020***.

The ADI is calling on governments and multilateral bodies to recognise dementia as a disability following recommendations from the world’s most comprehensive report into dementia-related design, ***World Alzheimer Report 2020: Design, Dignity, Dementia; dementia-related design and the built environment***.

The report is highlighting the need for dementia to be more distinctly recognised by governments globally as a disability, including as part of national dementia plans, to help to ensure that the ***therapeutic benefits*** of good dementia design are experienced by people living with dementia at home, in residential and day-care facilities, hospitals and public buildings and spaces.

The number of people with dementia in Ireland is expected to more than double from ***64,000*** today to ***150,000*** in 2045. Approximately 152 million people are forecast to be living with dementia by 2050, and it is already the fifth leading cause for death worldwide, yet most countries are woefully behind in terms of making the built environment accessible for those living with dementia.

Designing enabling and inclusive environments requires knowledge and informed choice and is not necessarily an additional cost for new projects and planned upgrades. Through dementia inclusive design we can support people with dementia to remain independent and live with dignity and autonomy for longer. This will not only reduce health and social care costs, but ensure that buildings and environments are sustainable and accessible long into the future.

***Australia***, ***England*** and ***Scotland*** are global leaders in dementia-related design leading the way in translating existing research into practice. Very good examples of dementia design in Ireland are referenced in the report including The Willowview and Meadowview Special Dementia Units (SDU), opened in 2014, in Clonsilla in Dublin 15 the Bon Secours Care Village Expansion in Blackrock, Co Cork.

These are just some of the examples where the cognitive sensory and physical difficulties a person may experience has been taken into consideration for the design.

***Dementia: Understand Together*** a national dementia awareness campaign led by the Health Service Executive in partnership with The Alzheimer’s Society of Ireland and Age Friendly Ireland recently conducted two inclusive design walkability audits from the perspective of a person with dementia, taking the physical, cognitive and sensory difficulties a person may experience into consideration. These audits took place in a community and primary care centre and will inform best practice and a better understanding when designing for the public realm and health centres.

***The Alzheimer Society of Ireland CEO Pat McLoughlin said:*** *“Dementia design provides an opportunity to adapt built environments in the same way that physical disability design has led to great innovation.*

*We need to apply design guidelines and principles for people living with dementia in the same way as design guidelines are provided for people living with a physical disability. In Ireland, with the rising number of people living with dementia, this means that their needs must be considered at the beginning of every building project that is likely to be used by people with dementia. Dementia design should never be an afterthought and can actually enable people to live in their own homes and communities for as long as possible. With the majority of people with dementia living in the community, it is fantastic to see communities such as Athboy are conducting walkability audits and are implementing recommendations from the findings to ensure that the public spaces and buildings are accessible for people with dementia and every member of the community.”*

***Download ADI’s World Alzheimer Report 2020: Design, Dignity, Dementia via www.alz.org***

**ENDS**

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**NOTES TO THE EDITOR**

***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](http://www.alzheimer.ie)

***Alzheimer National Helpline:***

For more information on our supports and services during this challenging time, please contact The Alzheimer Society of Ireland National Helpline where you can now also book in a 1:1 session with a Dementia Nurse or Dementia Adviser. The Helpline is open six days a week Monday to Friday 10am–5pm and Saturday 10am–4pm on 1800 341 341. Email at helpline@alzheimer.ie or via Live Chat at [www.alzheimer.ie](http://www.alzheimer.ie)

***World Alzheimer's Month***

September is World Alzheimer’s Month which is the international campaign every September to raise awareness and challenge the stigma that surrounds dementia. September 2020 will mark the ninth World Alzheimer's Month. The campaign was launched in 2012: World Alzheimer's Day is on 21st September each year. The theme for this year is ***Let’s Talk About Dementia***.

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

ADI is the international federation of 102 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

***Dementia: Understand Together campaign:***

Dementia: Understand Together is a public support, awareness and information campaign led by the HSE, working with the Alzheimer Society of Ireland and Age Friendly Ireland, that aims to inspire people from all sections of society to stand together with the 500,000 Irish people whose families have been affected by dementia. For more information on dementia, and the services and supports available, Freephone 1800 341 341 or visit [www.understandtogether.ie](http://www.understandtogether.ie)

***Design, Dignity, Dementia: World Alzheimer Report*** ***Recommendations:***

* ADI will facilitate discussions on the development and adoption of a common set of design principles that will be used to structure the exploration of designing well for people living with dementia and the formulation of future recommendations.
* A call for more overt and considered inclusion of dementia related design as a non-pharmacological intervention, to be included in national dementia plans, in response to the WHO Global action plan on the public health response to dementia 2017–2025
* ADI, alongside partner Dementia Alliance International, and other advocacy groups, will work to give prominence to the arguments contained in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) for the recognition of dementia as a disability and the consequent need to apply design guidelines for people living with dementia in the same way as design guidelines are provided for people living with a physical disability.
* A call to all educators about the need to include designing for people living with dementia in the curricula of schools of architecture and design.
* Encourage health economists to engage with the field of designing for people living with dementia to clearly establish the cost benefit of investment in dementia related design translating to savings in health and care costs by facilitating people to live in their own homes and their communities for as long as possible
* ADI will encourage governments and academic institutions to engage researchers to translate knowledge on designing for people living with dementia. This knowledge, often gained in high income countries, can support and service development in low- and middle- income countries.
* ADI will encourage National Dementia Associations to better inform themselves about the available knowledge on designing for people living with dementia, consider its relevance to their contexts and priorities, and advocate for relevant knowledge to be implemented by planners, designers, architects, care operators and developers.
* ADI will encourage governments and the international community to proactively engage designers, architects, developers, operators and innovators, in the construction and IT sectors, in designing for people living with dementia.

**ABOUT DEMENTIA**  
• The number of people with dementia in Ireland is expected to more than double from 64,000 today to 150,000 in 2045.\*  
• 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.  
• There are 11,000 new cases of dementia in Ireland each year. That’s at least 30 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*

*\** *Health Atlas, Ireland (2020)*

*\*\*Figure referenced from Pierse, T., O’Shea, E. and Carney P. (2018) Estimates of the prevalence, incidence and severity of dementia in Ireland*