**IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Friday, 25th September 2020**

**Budget 2021: €20m investment needed in infrastructure, home care and community supports to address sharp deterioration in health of people affected by dementia**

***\*Pictures and graphics attached***

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI) **in its 2021 Pre-Budget Submission** has today called on the Government for an urgent investment of ***€20 million*** in infrastructure, home care and community supports for people affected by dementia. This is needed to address the sharp deterioration in health of both people dementia and their family carers caused by the ***COVID-19 pandemic***.

The ASI’s Pre-Budget Submission 2021, ***Dementia: The Forgotten Crisis*** outlines the detrimental impact of COVID-19 on people affected by dementia and the continued absence of vital services and the growing gap between need and delivery which is now more critical than ever. Budget 2021 must start to close this widening service gap.

Recent research from The ASI has shown that during the COVID-19 crisis, ***86%*** of family carers were concerned about a decline in their loved one with dementia, while ***61%*** of family carers believe their own mental health has been negatively impacted. People with dementia and their family carers are ***worried***, ***stressed*** and ***fearful*** due to the ***continued closure*** of key face-to-face community services such as day care centres.

**The ASI is calling for the following in Budget 2021:**

* ***€10 million – Urgent Infrastructure Support***

To refurbish and rebuild dementia specific day centres to enable them to re-open in the immediate term and to expand services into the future

* ***€6 million – Dementia Home Care Supports***

To provide home care that is dementia appropriate and can meet growing demand

* ***€589k – Additional Dementia Advisers***

To continue to develop a nationwide Dementia Adviser service

* ***€2.31 million –Dementia Key Workers***

To provide a care pathway for each person with dementia

* ***€768k –Dementia Inclusive Community Coordinators***

To support the further development of a dementia inclusive Ireland

Over 60 people (30 TDs and Senators) attended our ***Virtual Launch – Live Webinar: ‘Dementia: The Forgotten Crisis’*** on Friday, September 25th to find out more about the crisis that people affected by dementia are currently facing.

***Watch the Webinar and read full document on www.alzheimer.ie***

***Speakers included:***

* ***Kevin Quaid***, Person living with Lewy Body Dementia and member of the Irish Dementia Working Group;
* ***Pat McLoughlin***, CEO The Alzheimer Society of Ireland;
* ***Denise Monahan***, Family Carer and member of the Dementia Carers Campaign Network;
* ***Professor Suzanne Cahill,*** Trinity College Dublin & Honorary Professor in Dementia Care at the Centre for Economic and Social Research on Dementia, NUI, Galway.

Full-time family carer ***Denise Monahan*** (56) from Tallaght in Dublin believes that it is crucial that the Government now provide the critical investment needed to reopen dementia-specific services such as day care. Denise’s father, Seamus Cunningham (82), was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s eight years ago and has attended The ASI’s Rose Cottage day care centre in Dublin since his diagnosis.

***Full-time carer Denise Monahan said:*** *“The lockdown has proved very challenging for my dad and for us as a family. He had no concept of the word virus and so could not understand why he could not go out. Dad is a sociable man and it caused him great confusion, not seeing friends, neighbours and family. I am worried about the impact it will have on him – he is so used to cocooning now, he just wants to stay in the house. The closure of the day centre was a huge loss and now he does not really remember Rose Cottage. The worry for me now, the longer this goes on, is that he might not want to go back at all. Rose Cottage was our security blanket – without it, we are in freefall. The Government must listen to us this year, as family carers we must be heard. Urgent investment is needed, day care must reopen the sooner the better.”*

***The Alzheimer Society of Ireland CEO Pat McLoughlin said:*** *“We know that this will be a Budget like no other. Covid-19 is having a detrimental impact on people living with dementia and their families. Never before will the investment we are calling for be more needed. Without extra funding we simply will not be able to reopen all of our vital day care services that people desperately need and our society will have no ability to develop dementia-specific services to plan for and meet growing need. We must get our Government to listen. Our research findings show that living in lockdown has taken an enormous toll on the wellbeing and mental health of family carers, a toll that has intensified as COVID-19 restrictions on dementia-specific services have continued despite others lifting.”*

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

**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)

**ABOUT DEMENTIA**

* There are almost 64,000 people with dementia in Ireland and for every one person with dementia three others are directly affected;
* During the COVID-19 crisis, 86% of family carers were concerned about a decline in the person with dementia, while 61% of carers believe their own mental health has declined;
* Most people with dementia live at home (63%);
* No county in Ireland provides people with even a minimum standard of dementia community services and supports;
* The number of people with dementia will rise to 113,000 within the next twenty years
* 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;
* 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*

*\*Figure referenced from Alzheimer Europe (2020)* *Dementia in Europe Yearbook 2019 ‘Estimating the prevalence of dementia in Europe’*

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