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**11 counties unable to open or have no dementia day care service**

**Hundreds of people with dementia unable to return to day care service**

**Covid-19 pandemic tips underfunded dementia services into major crisis**

There are difficulties in ***11 counties*** across the country – affecting hundreds of people and their family carers – that are unable to open or have no day service unless funding is secured in ***Budget 2022***.

Together with a number of recommendations, The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI) today called for an investment of ***€15m*** in ***Budget 2022***in their submission ***‘Dementia: The Continuing Crisis’*** to address the counties that are experiencing difficulties in day care.

***The ASI CEO Pat McLoughlin*** said that there are centres in nine counties that are no longer suitable due to adaptations required under Covid-19 restrictions and two counties that have no day care service and capital funding of €15m is required to address this.

The ASI made the call today at the launch of its Pre-Budget Submission 2022, which also highlighted further challenges that the ***Covid-19 pandemic*** has placed on dementia services following years of under investment.

*“The need for funding to address capacity challenges in dementia day services is urgent and very serious. Further to the centres that cannot reopen, the capacity of the reopened centres is reduced by one third due to new Covid-19 compliant guidelines. A further increase of €3m in funding is required to address this.”*

The ASI provides ***82%*** of all dementia-specific day care services across the country. Prior to the pandemic it ran ***47 Day Centres*** servicing approximately ***1,100 people***, with a ***waiting list of 400***. The budget submission sets out an overall requirement of ***€29m*** for dementia services.

The 11 counties which are unable or have no day care service are: ***Co Cavan***; ***Co Galway***; ***Co. Cork***; ***Co. Kildare***; ***Dublin North / South****;* ***Co. Roscommon***; ***Co. Meath***; ***Co Mayo***; ***Co. Westmeath***; ***Co. Leitrim****; and* ***Co. Wexford****.*

The impact of not having access to Day Centres is stark on people who live with dementia. ***Family carer Denise Monahan***, who is a carer for her dad, Seamus, who has Alzheimer’s, highlighted the lived reality of these difficulties.

*“The last 18 months have proved very challenging for my Dad and for us as a family. During this whole pandemic period, my Dad’s world has completely shrunk. He used to be the life and soul of his Day Centre which he loved so much and now he just wants to stay in the house all the time.*

*“The closure of the centre was a huge loss. My biggest worry has been realised as his deterioration has been so sharp that even if the centre was able to reopen its doors, he wouldn’t be able to go. He has lost his ability to converse and to reminisce because he has been without his connection with people.*

*“We as a family played by the rules in terms of cocooning and shielding him, but now we’ve paid the price. The Day Centre was our security blanket – without it, we were always going to be in freefall and now he’ll never go back. It just shows how much these centres mean to people – they really are the centre of our worlds and I wouldn’t like to see any other family go through this.*

*“The Government must listen, once more, to family carers and people with dementia and I would urge investment in day care services, so that more centres can reopen as soon as possible.”*

***The ASI CEO Pat McLoughlin*** called on the Government to fully recognise this crisis and allocate funding in next month’s budget.

*“Since coming into office, Minister Mary Butler has shown an understanding of the challenges faced and has engaged with these issues. However, there has been no capital investment in dementia day care by successive Governments. Covid-19 has not so much created this crisis, but exposed years of under investment that must now be addressed. There is no county in the country that meets the minimum recommended standards for dementia supports.”*

***The full submission includes a call investment broken into the following areas:***

* ***€18m*** in Community Day Services
* ***€2.3m*** in Family Carer Support packages
* ***€1m*** in Younger Onset Dementia supports
* ***€6m*** in Home Care Supports
* ***€1.5m*** in Dementia Research
* ***€500k*** in Prevention through Dementia Inclusive Communities.

The ***enormous challenges*** being faced by the family carers of people living with dementia was highlighted in The ASI report launched during the summer. The research ***Caring and Coping with dementia during Covid-19*** found family carers to be at breaking point – with their mental and physical wellbeing seriously affected.

Findings included: 81% of respondents were concerned about decline in the person with dementia and 54% of family carers reported a decline in their mental health, and 40% a decline in their physical health

The ASI’s ***Pre-Budget Submission 2022*** can be downloaded at [www.alzheimer.ie](http://www.alzheimer.ie)

**More information:**

Ronan Cavanagh, Cavanagh Communications: (086) 317 9731 / ronan@cavanaghcommunications.ie

**NOTES TO THE EDITOR**

**The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI)**

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland is the leading dementia specific service provider in Ireland. The Alzheimer Society of Ireland works across the country in the heart of local communities providing dementia specific services and supports and advocating for the rights and needs of all people living with dementia and their carers. Our vision is an Ireland where people on the journey of dementia are valued and supported. A national non-profit organisation, The Alzheimer Society of Ireland advocates, empowers and champions the rights of people living with dementia and their communities to quality support and services.

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland National Helpline is open Monday to Friday 10am–5pm and Saturday 10am–4pm at 1800 341 341. The public can also email helpline@alzheimer.ie, or use Live Chat at [www.alzheimer.ie](http://www.alzheimer.ie)

**ABOUT DEMENTIA**

* There are 64,000 people with dementia in Ireland and the number of people with the condition will more than double in the next 25 years to over 150,000 by 2045.\*
* 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.\*\*
* 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.
* 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 Pierce, T., O’Shea, E. and Carney P. (2018) Estimates of the prevalence, incidence and severity of dementia in Ireland.*