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**PHOTOS**: Photos of the event will be sent to Picture desks by Karen Morgan – (085) 871 7761.

**INTERVIEWS:** A person living with dementia, dementia carers, and The ASI spokespeople all available.

Tuesday, 24th September 2024

All-Party Oireachtas Group on Dementia photoshoot ahead of Budget 2025 outside Leinster House

**All-Party Oireachtas Group on Dementia: Make Community Dementia Supports a Priority in Budget 2025**

**Funding for Dementia Supports Can Be Life-changing and Life-enhancing**

**Rising need and demands for services needed to build on momentum of recent years**

***The All-Party Oireachtas Group on Dementia*** makes a final rallying call ahead of the Government’s Budget 2025 announcement next Tuesday, 1st October to highlight the vital need for increased funding for dementia care services to meet the growing needs of thousands of people.

***Chair*** of the ***All-Party Oireachtas Group on Dementia******Senator Fiona O’Loughlin*** says that continued investment is required for dementia supports and has called for additional State investment to address a rising demand for dementia services in Budget 2025.

In June, ***The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (The ASI)*** called on the Government to invest ***€5.5 million*** in dementia supports and services to address inequity of access across the country. The recommendations are contained in The ASI’s Pre-Budget Submission 2025; ***Equal Dementia Supports, Building on Momentum in 2025.***

The ASI’s submission asks Government to build on the momentum of the past four years with an investment of **€5.5m,** alongside tangible policy solutions to address:

* Ongoing geographical inequity in dementia services and supports (including Day Care, Day Care at Home, Weekend Activity Clubs, Dementia Advisers, Clinical Nurse Specialists in Dementia)
* Financial struggles of family carers
* Mental health needs of people living with dementia and those who care and support them
* A sustainable dementia workforce
* Support for Irish dementia research.

Formed in 2016, the ***All-Party Oireachtas Group on Dementia*** is an important forum for discussion and advocacy on dementia in the Oireachtas. The key role of the group is to build understanding and galvanise cross-party support and consensus for long-term planning and resources for people with dementia and dementia carers. The current Chair is Senator Fiona O’Loughlin and Minister Mary Butler is a former co-Chair.

***Chair of the All-Party Oireachtas Group on Dementia, Senator Fiona O’Loughlin said:***

*“In Budget 2025, it’s important that there is a focus on providing vital dementia supports and services in the community. My colleagues and I on the All-Party Oireachtas Group on Dementia are aware from The Alzheimer Society of Ireland that its services throughout the country, such as Day Care and Day Care at Home, have waiting lists and ongoing capacity challenges. I am ambitious for the lives of people with dementia, and those who care for, and support them. I know that any funding provided for community dementia supports in Budget 2025 will be life-enhancing and life-changing for those impacted by dementia across Ireland.*

*“The vital community dementia-specific supports and services provided by The Alzheimer Society of Ireland are so important. For example, we are aware that the 29 Dementia Advisers provided by the ASI, who are working across Ireland, are consistently in demand. Providing greater access to the Dementia Adviser Service in Budget 2025 will support more people living with dementia and their families to navigate services and supports and receive personalised and timely information about dementia, which has been identified as a significant challenge.”*

***The ASI’s Head of Advocacy, Research and Public Affairs, Cormac Cahill said:***

*“We appreciate the support from this Government, particularly Minister Mary Butler and her continued understanding and funding of much-needed dementia services and the support of the All-Party Oireachtas Group on Dementia. This support has led to considerable improvement in the level of dementia supports in Ireland. However, given the rising need and the immense challenges faced by people impacted by dementia, extra funding in Budget 2025 is required to build on the investment in recent years and help to address these challenges.*

*“In June, one area that we addressed in our Pre-Budget Submission was the urgent need for a Dementia Registry to quantify the number of people diagnosed with dementia in Ireland and where they live. The lack of hard data on the number of people living with dementia in Ireland and where they live makes our estimations just that; estimations on prevalence rather than evidence-based facts. A Dementia Registry is essential for planning equitable and responsive service provision.”*

***Nuala Paley’s*** husband ***Gerry***was diagnosed with young onset Alzheimer's Disease in 2017 at the age of 63, Nuala retired from the Civil Service to become his full-time carer. Gerry and Nuala avail of the innovative ***Day Care at Home*** service and in June, the couple joined the call by The ASI for increased funding to ensure others can access this vital support. Nuala said the situation faced by people living with dementia and those who support and care for them is serious and urgent: “I meet other carers at meetings, and I know how desperate some people feel. The Day Care at Home service has made a huge difference to me and Gerry.”

**Summary of submission details**

In Budget 2025, The ASI is calling on the Irish Government to invest €5.5m to include:

* €1m for Dementia Specific Day Care at Home Services by to bring the service to 250 more families
* €600,000 to expand Day Centres outside of major cities
* €300,000 year on year for Weekend and Activity Clubs for people with Young Onset Dementia
* €1.8m in 22 Clinical Nurse Specialist in Dementia Roles in acute settings
* €608,000 in eight new Dementia Adviser Roles and three new Regional Leads
* €1m in Dementia Research Network Ireland
* €59,000 to support people affected by dementia to participate in quality dementia research.
* €62,000 to develop a framework for a dementia-specific counselling service.

**The organisation is also recommending:**

* Increase the Carers Allowance to €325
* Make the Carers Allowance a Qualifying Payment for the Fuel Allowance
* Rollout a National Dementia Registry to ensure accurate and responsive service planning
* Ensure Pay Parity for Section 39 organisations who provide vital dementia services and standardise rates of pay for critical Home Care Workers

The ASI’s Submission *Equal Dementia Supports, Building on Momentum in 2025* can be downloaded at this link: [Alzheimer.ie](https://alzheimer.ie/creating-change/political-campaigns/equal-dementia-supports-building-on-momentum-in-2025) The campaign can be supported online at #EqualDementiaSupports #Budget2025.

**Further information:**

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**NOTES TO THE EDITOR**

**About The Alzheimer Society of Ireland**

A national non-profit organisation, The Alzheimer Society of Ireland is person-centred, rights-based and grassroots-led, with the voice of the person with dementia and those who care and support at its core.

The National Helpline on 1800 341 341 is open six days a week, Monday to Friday 10am – 5pm & Saturday 10am – 4pm. Email at helpline@alzheimer.ie or via Live Chat at [www.alzheimer.ie](http://www.alzheimer.ie/)

**About Dementia**

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Dementia is an umbrella term used to describe a range of conditions which cause changes and damage to the brain.
4. Dementia is progressive. There is currently no cure. Dementia is not simply a health issue, but a social issue that requires a community response.
5. 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.
6. 1 in 10 people diagnosed with dementia in Ireland are under 65.
7. 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.