

# ALONE

there when you need us



ANNUAL REPORT 2012

## VALUES

PARTNERSHIP

INNOVATION

DIGNITY AND RESPECT  
FOR THE INDIVIDUAL

TRANSPARENCY

COMPANIONSHIP

NON-JUDGEMENTAL

## VISION STATEMENT

A society where all older people are included as valued and empowered members of the community.

## MISSION STATEMENT

ALONE supports older people in need through a befriending service, long-term housing and crisis support in the community.

## ABOUT ALONE

ALONE is an independent charity that works with older people who are at risk of homelessness, in crisis or socially isolated.

We work with the 1 in 10 of older people who are considered to be vulnerable and at risk of poverty.

ALONE services are based on the belief that every citizen's dignity and human rights should be honoured, regardless of their age or circumstances.

We operate with a ratio of 1 staff member to 18 volunteers. Services are delivered 365 days a year.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Last year, ALONE celebrated its 35th anniversary. When we began, like today, we faced economic challenges, rising fuel prices and budgetary cut-backs. Undeterred, a handful of volunteers saw what had to be done. With passion and generosity they helped marginalised and lonely older people in any way they could.

In 2012, that same spirit inspired more volunteers than ever to work with our small staff team, to bring assistance and friendship to older people in need.

The highlight of the year was the gathering in Glasnevin of staff and volunteers, past and present. Many older people were also there, resident in ALONE homes or visited by our befriending service. We remembered absent friends and paid tribute to those who have gone before us. We continue to honour their memory every day, by maintaining our commitment to those older people who are most in need.

I thank our current staff and volunteers for their tireless efforts and congratulate them on the extraordinary results shown in this report. Sincere thanks is also due to my fellow Board members, for their dedicated hard work on behalf of the organisation.

ALONE remains independent and receives no state funding for its day-to-day services. Thank you to all of our donors, on behalf of the thousands of older people we support. Without your belief in the importance of our work, none of the achievements shown in this report would have been possible.

As long as older people face poverty, homelessness and social isolation, we promise that ALONE will be there to offer help and companionship to those in the greatest need.

Pat Morgan





## CEO'S MESSAGE

In 2012, while state services were cut, some commentators argued that older people were immune to the worst ravages of austerity. In that one year, ALONE received more than 6,000 requests for help from older people who were hungry and cold, suffering ill-health, no longer able to manage by themselves.

Year on year we receive more calls; last year represented an increase of 25% on 2011. Despite the pressures of rising demand, through deployment of volunteers and maximising efficiencies, we responded to every single call for help.

We worked in partnership with other services and professionals to keep older people in their own homes. We upgraded ALONE housing to age-friendly standards. We recruited more volunteers and we expanded our social programme. We alerted the media and public representatives to where basic rights and suffering were being overlooked and offered solutions when we could.

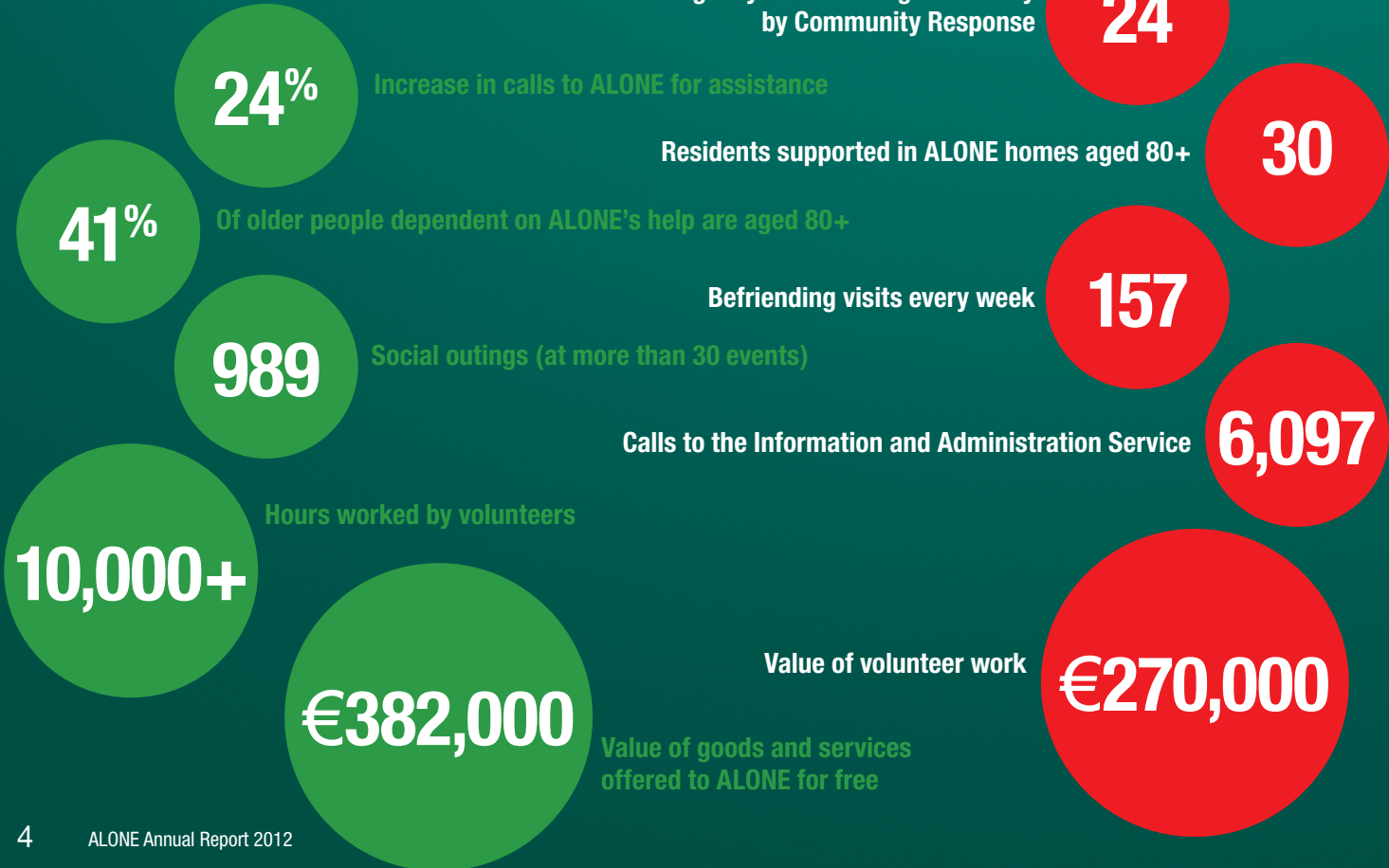
This was our daily work. But we did more. 35 years ago, we were the first Irish charity to focus exclusively on the needs of isolated older people: In 2012, we became the second ever to receive ISO quality certification for our services.

Even if there is, as yet, no statutory requirement to do so, ALONE has shown that it is possible to deliver low cost, high value services for vulnerable older people, to the highest professional standards.

I thank our staff and volunteers for their energy, ideas, belief and hard work. They have met increasing demands with improving services, in hugely challenging times. This report is evidence of our determination to continue to be there for older people in need, despite the difficulties we face, just as we have done for the last 35 years.

Seán Moynihan

## 2012 IN NUMBERS



## CELEBRATING 35 YEARS

We marked our 35th anniversary, with a commemoration ceremony for everybody who worked with ALONE over the years, and the many older people we got to know. The ceremony was held at the recently redesigned 'Millenium Plot'.

In 1988, Dublin's millennium year, ALONE secured a plot from Glasnevin Cemetery, which we have maintained since, for the interment of people who were previously buried in unmarked 'pauper's graves'. These are people of all ages, who pass away tragically, without the means, or family or friends, to grant them dignity in death. Every person buried in the Millennium Plot has their name inscribed on the headstone. From time to time older people who depend upon ALONE services choose the plot as their last resting place. This gives them a sense of security in the final days of their life and they are happy they are being laid to rest among friends.



Senator David Norris enjoys the company of ALONE ladies, after making a speech to the gathering of older people, staff and volunteers.

**CASE STUDY** - Mick (87) was living an isolated lonely life in damp, cold accommodation with an intrusive landlord. He suffers from chronic breathing difficulties, is on oxygen 24/7 and attends weekly warfarin clinics. Moving to a cozy newly renovated ALONE home brought him closer to his hospital and allowed him to begin using his HSE supplied wheelchair. We advocated successfully for more homecare hours for Mick and he has also been delighted to begin attending social events with his befriending volunteer.

## INFORMATION AND ADMINISTRATION

### 6,097 REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE IN 2012 REPRESENTED A 24% INCREASE ON 2011.

To better manage the ever-increasing volume of calls to ALONE we created the Administration and Information service.

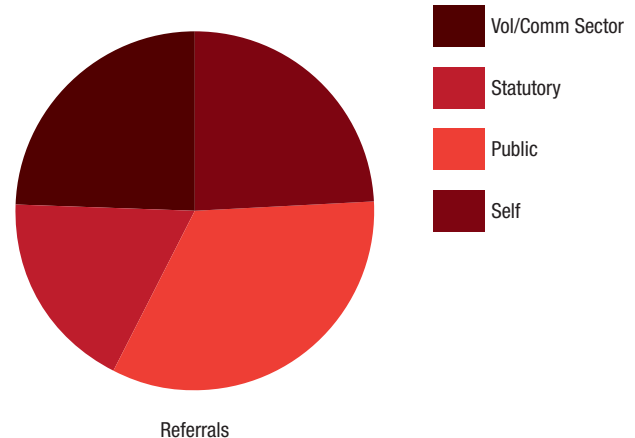
For all enquiries within ALONE's remit, we gave more information from the front desk, redirecting calls according to priority. For other enquiries, we continued to provide relevant information about alternative services and agencies.

One member of staff and a day-time volunteer ensured a speedy, efficient response for everyone who contacted ALONE. The service also provided administrative support for all ALONE services.

An emergency mobile phone on-call service for residents was answered when the office was closed; after hours, on weekends and public holidays.

Referrals to ALONE were fairly evenly spread between older people contacting us themselves and voluntary agencies, statutory services and the public (family, friends, neighbours etc) contacting us for support for older people in need.

**CASE STUDY** - Pete (83) was unable to make it upstairs to his bedroom and was sleeping on a small couch. When we met him, he was exhausted and suffering with shingles. ALONE converted a downstairs room into a bedroom for Pete, who is now comfortable, well and happy where he wants to stay, in his own home.





## VOLUNTEERS

REMAINING TRUE TO THE ETHOS OF ALONE, VOLUNTEERS WERE AT THE HEART OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2012.

Most offered one evening visit a week, through our Befriending Service. Others helped with day-time visits, schools talks, reception, gardening, DIY, driving, and the supply of pendant alarms.

IN 2012, WE RECEIVED 30 VOLUNTEER APPLICATIONS A MONTH.

Volunteers served on the Board and led Project Teams (Events, Summer Holiday, Communications etc). 8 experienced volunteers were trained to act as Mentors to those who were newer.

Two workers came to ALONE through the national internship scheme, JobBridge (for our social programme) and through Tús, the community work placement initiative (maintenance). Three interns came to us from the USA, through the Global Experiences programme. They worked closely with staff in the Supportive Housing and Befriending services.

*By the end of 2012, 2/3 of volunteers had completed the four modules of our in-house core training. There were 87 attendances at other training events offered by ALONE for volunteers.*



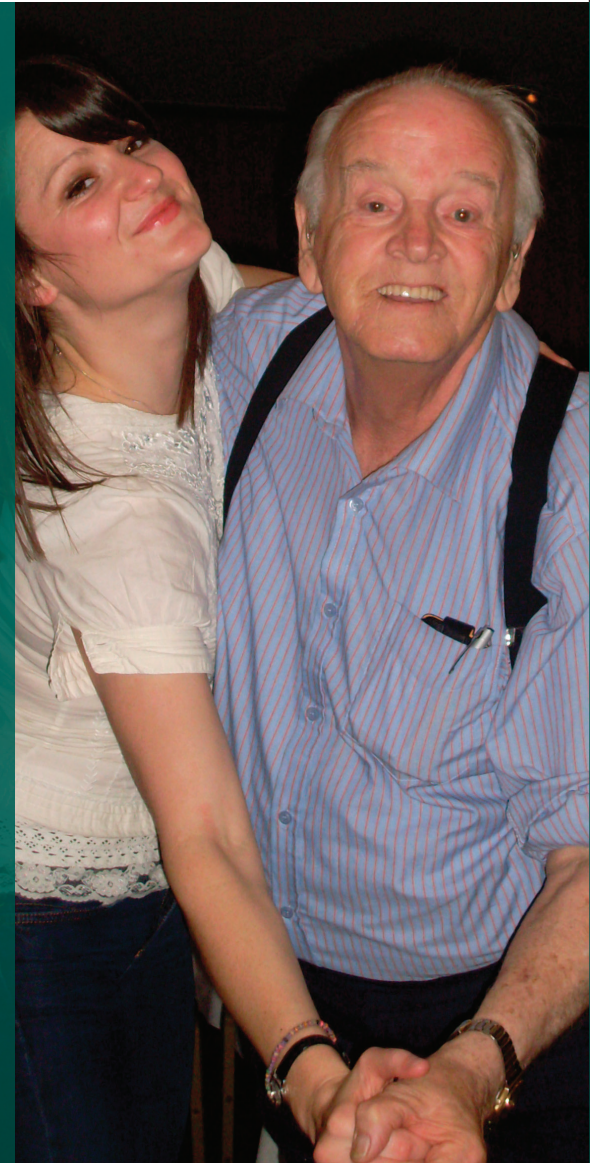
## BEFRIENDING

MORE THAN 8,000 VISITS WERE MADE TO ISOLATED AND LONELY OLDER PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY IN 2012 (156 EVERY WEEK) WITH 19 ADDITIONAL VISITS TO ALONE RESIDENTS.

As well as providing companionship, befriending volunteers and the Volunteer Coordinators often play a crucial role in monitoring the quality of life of the older people they visit.

In 2012, 17 older people we visited were referred to ALONE Community Response, because their living situations had deteriorated to the degree that they needed crisis intervention. Without ALONE volunteers, it is probable that nobody would have been aware of the older person's increasing needs, until something went seriously wrong.

*We researched and increased our range of smaller outings to suit older people who don't wish to attend the ever popular dinner dances. Each of the three dinner dances attracted between 130 and 180 attendees. Among other excursions during 2012 we brought older people to the theatre and on museum visits. 30 people a month attended ALONE cinema club screenings. A new social group at ALONE's housing development in Kilmainham offered Tai-Chi and line dancing.*



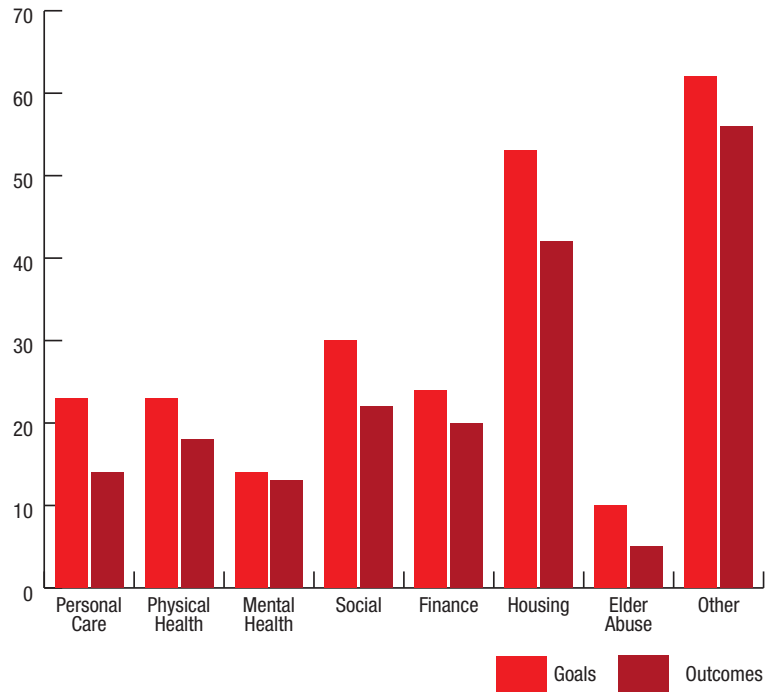
# COMMUNITY RESPONSE

AS WELL AS MANAGING A CASELOAD OF 24 EMERGENCY CASES A MONTH, COMMUNITY RESPONSE CARRIED OUT 155 'SHORT INTERVENTIONS' IN SITUATIONS WHERE OLDER PEOPLE WERE IN URGENT NEED OF ADVOCACY OR ADVICE.

Short interventions involve home visits, phone calls and correspondence where the crisis is straightforward and can be resolved without a detailed assessment or support plan.

Our emergency cases involve older people who have complex needs, facing physical and mental ill-health, disability, addiction, poverty and unfit accommodation.

**CASE STUDY** - Mick (78) faced eviction and homelessness. He had signed his flat over to his daughter who then defaulted on a mortgage, so the property was taken over by a receiver. ALONE introduced Mick to an elder abuse social worker and advocated for him to be housed by Dublin City Council. Mick is currently pursuing legal action to reclaim his home and ALONE remains in contact.



## SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

OF THE CALLS RECEIVED BY ALONE IN 2012, TWICE AS MANY RELATED TO HOUSING AS ANY OTHER ISSUE, WHEN OLDER PEOPLE WERE HOMELESS OR IN UNFIT LIVING CONDITIONS.

*In 2012, 89 older people were housed and supported in ALONE homes but we had 15 to 20 suitable applicants for every vacancy. More than 30% of residents come to ALONE from homeless services.*

The older person is involved with every aspect of the support that they receive, which is flexible. In 2012 staff held 200 reviews of plans to ensure that we were aware of each person's current needs and how they wished to be supported. Reviews often involved other services, medical professionals, family or friends.

### 330 MAINTENANCE CALLS

6 EMERGENCY (2%); 167 URGENT (51%); 157 ROUTINE (48%).

*Maintenance staff and volunteers worked through the year on scheduled preventative maintenance and improvements to our homes, in line with ALONE's age-friendly standards. Five homes were totally refurbished.*

**CASE STUDY** - James (74) became homeless following mental health problems. He lived in a hostel for a year before coming to his ALONE home. He now feels safe again and has slowly begun to build his confidence through attending our social programme, encouraged and supported by his befriending volunteer.

## CAMPAIGNS

*JC Decaux continued to support our outdoor advertising campaign allowing us to run a new nationwide billboard campaign, highlighting our work to combat the social isolation of older people.*

We campaigned for the rights of older people, highlighting issues such as fuel poverty, public health service cut backs and the urgent need for legislation on standards in the home care sector. ALONE's comments were regularly quoted by national news media and our CEO was a regular interviewee on national and local television and radio.

RTÉ1's hugely popular magazine programme Nationwide featured our 35th anniversary. Celebrities Miriam O'Callaghan and Brendan Courtney lent their support in 2012, obtaining valuable exposure for our work and messages.

We increased circulation of our Newsletter to 1,300. Facebook attracted a 40% increase in people who liked our page to 1,400. We used Twitter to maximise exposure for our campaign messages. The website was updated at least once a week and 51 people a day visited [alone.ie](http://alone.ie), with 18,560 unique visitors and 67,750 page views. We added videos to our YouTube channel, including innovative short films describing our services which were made by interns and also featured on our website.



Miriam O'Callaghan launches our 'Share the Christmas Spirit' Christmas Campaign.



## QUALITY SERVICES LEAD THE WAY

In February ALONE was awarded ISO 9001:2008 international quality certification. We are the second charity in Ireland ever to gain this prestigious international award, and the first in our sector. Staff worked hard to develop a comprehensive manual of procedures, forms and information management systems, which passed an independent audit by EQA (European Quality Assurance). Our quality system shows where and how we can improve services to ensure that older people get the very best from us.

**CASE STUDY** - Kevin lived in a caravan with his brother before being housed by Dublin City Council. He suffered from a blood disorder and depression and after being housed was diagnosed with stomach and prostate cancer, for which he is receiving treatment. Two volunteers visit him in hospital and the ALONE volunteer coordinator checks in with them and his home help to keep up-to-date on Kevin's support needs.



## FUNDRAISING

ALONE FACED TOUGH FINANCIAL CHALLENGES IN 2012. THANKS TO THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF HUNDREDS OF INDIVIDUALS, COMPANIES, VOLUNTEERS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS WE WERE ABLE TO OFFER A SERVICE TO EVERY OLDER PERSON THAT CONTACTED US FOR HELP.



### CORPORATE SUPPORT

Support from companies is growing steadily and now accounts for nearly 25% of our total voluntary income.

Dublin Bus supported our annual Christmas campaign by donating free space on buses across November and December. Unilever donated over 500 household hampers which were distributed to older people in the lead up to Christmas. Brown Brothers Harriman chose ALONE as charity partner and have raised over €10,000 to date.

Several companies including IKEA, Dunnes Stores and Diageo supported ALONE through staff charity committees, product and voucher donations and employee fundraising.

### INDIVIDUAL AND REGULAR DONATIONS

Hundreds of individuals made once off or regular donations to ALONE throughout the year and we are so grateful for this support. Together, this amounted to 25% of our total income received.

**13 legacy donations during the year equalled 45% of our total income.**

A team of wonderful women took part in the Flora Women's Mini Marathon in aid of ALONE. Several other individuals took part in various races at home and abroad.

Over €8,000 was raised by ALONE volunteers through a cabaret and a yoga and dance event.

## ACTION PLAN ITEMS 2012

### → INITIATED AND ONGOING

### ✓ COMPLETED

- Develop a system of ongoing consultation with service users
- ✓ Create a development plan for Abbey field site
- ✓ Develop a service model for housing provision and development
- ✓ Renovate four houses to comply with ALONE's age-friendly standards
- ✓ Achieve a quality standard and plan to integrate quality systems into all areas of ALONE
- Focus on creating and maintaining a positive culture within ALONE
- Develop an accessible library of information on issues and services available
- ✓ Define our communication and campaigning service and strategy, with targets and goals
- ✓ Host a landmark event to celebrate our 35th Anniversary
- ✓ Develop procedures and materials for marketing, fundraising and to maximise income
- Place as much of the archive as possible on the web site
- ✓ Further integrate volunteers in the operations of our services
- Commence a process to computerise our information systems
- ✓ Provide staff with the opportunity to cross departmental roles

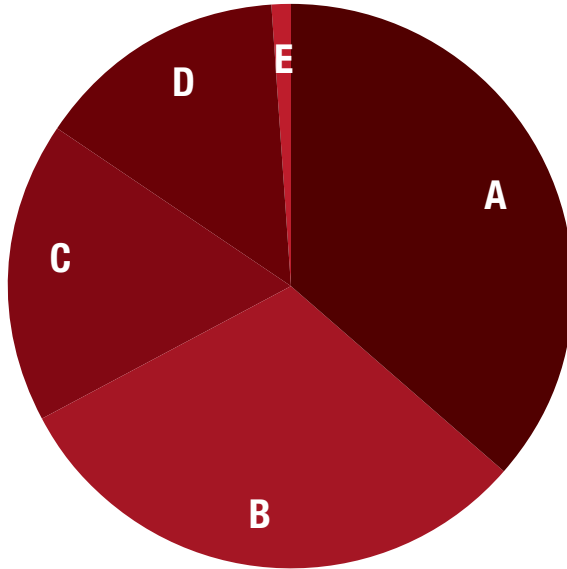


- ✓ Introduce annual check-in by mentors with visitees and peer support of volunteers
- ✓ Hold regular quality meetings to review and update procedures
- ✓ Enter all documents and procedures onto an on-line quality system
- ✓ Begin quarterly internal quality audits
- ✓ Develop a comprehensive overview of the culture of ALONE; staff and volunteers
- ✓ Begin peer supervision for staff to make development and positivity everyone's responsibility
- ✓ Hold improved volunteer social events
- ✓ Develop an integrated communications strategy and plan
- ✓ Link volunteers with services, projects and specific initiatives
- ✓ Connect with organisations who supply volunteers and interns and with statutory jobs programmes
- ✓ Implement a system for collection and reporting of service and organisational statistics
- ✓ Foster contacts with Ministers in relevant departments for our work
- ✓ Define specialist roles for staff
- ✓ Improve events programme and deliver a greater variety of smaller social events
- ✓ Develop the administration department into an Information and Administration service
- ✓ Community Response service to do assessment for all services and supply the Housing Officer

## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

For 35 years, the essential work of ALONE has depended on the support of a generous public and members of the business community. Despite the economic downturn, donors have continued that support and our services have been able to do more when more help was required.

*We know that donors want to make sure that donations directly help as many older people as possible, so our objective over the next few years is to match staff costs with income from property and investments. In 2012, staff secured €382,000 worth of goods and services (equal to 86% of staffing costs), to improve the lives of vulnerable older people.*



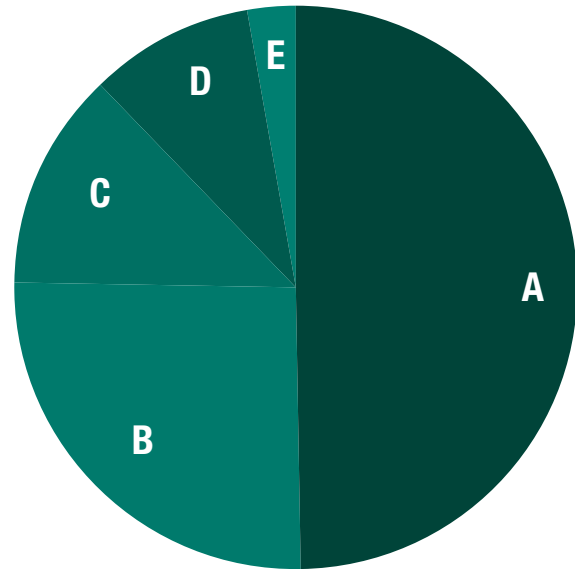
### ALONE 2012 INCOME

- A Donations
- B Legacies
- C Rent
- D Investment Income
- E Court Fines Income

INCOME	2012
General Donations	210,435
Corporate Donations	172,232
Legacies	324,263
Rent	181,117
Investment Income	152,047
Court Fines Income	10,295
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>1,050,389</b>

## ALONE 2012 EXPENDITURE

- A** Staffing
- B** Service-Related
- C** Office & Administration
- D** Campaigning & Communications
- E** Fees/ memberships



<b>EXPENDITURE (operating)</b>	<b>2012</b>
Staffing	446,009
Volunteer Activity	52,380
Transport	4,094
Office & Administration	110,809
Property Insurance	16,800
Property Repairs & Maintenance	103,299
Provisions	708
Campaigning & Communications	84,660
Fees / Memberships	24,366
<b>Total</b>	<b>843,127</b>
Capital Expenditure	156,000
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>999,127</b>

ALONE was the first charity in Ireland devoted to older people in need.

Today, our continuing spirit of volunteerism and an emphasis on partnership keeps us connected to the communities from which we come.

This link has brought us far and is a source for optimism, as we look to the tasks and challenges ahead.

Always inspired by the older people who benefit from our services and faced with an ageing population in challenging times, ALONE will continue to break new ground.

Thank you, to our friends who, for 35 years, have trusted us to use our resources wisely and responsibly, to relieve distress and support the independence of older people in need.

I believe that this report shows that ALONE has earned this trust and takes it with great seriousness. I promise that we will continue to do so.

Seán Moynihan



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