

Suggested cuts will have high cost

ALONE CRITICISES PROPOSALS SUGGESTING CUTS IN HOME HELP FOR OLDER PERSONS

Charity calls on Government not to enforce proposals to the HSE

(To download this statement as a pdf please click here [Suggested Cuts Will Have High Cost](#))

Dublin October 14 2011

ALONE, the charity which provides supports to older persons in need, has criticised the proposals from the Department of Health and Children to the HSE suggesting cuts in home care packages and home help hours in order to effect savings. The charity has called on the Department and the HSE not to proceed with these suggested cuts.

On her first day as Minister of State for Disability, Equality and Mental Health Kathleen Lynch stated that her aim was to ensure “that older people, who have contributed so much to Irish society, can continue to live in their own homes and communities as is their wish”.

In June, on the issue of health cutbacks affecting home carers, the Minister for Health James Reilly said funding had been invested in acute hospital services in recent years without adequate funding being invested in community care. He stressed that resources would have to be moved to community services.

In September Minister Reilly made a speech stating: “Delivering better outcomes for older people will require joined-up thinking between Government departments, agencies of all kinds, the voluntary and the commercial sectors, and older people themselves.”

Seán Moynihan ALONE CEO, commented this morning, “In the light of these excellent aspirations and commitments – which we have always welcomed and continue to support – it is extraordinary to hear that they are considering blanket cuts on home care packages and home help hours, to make a saving of only €10m. These cuts would affect all older people with no regard for their circumstances or level of personal need. This is another example of how care for older people in Ireland continues to develop in a piecemeal manner with no joined-up thinking between public, private, informal, and voluntary settings with the result that those older people who are most in need are forgotten.”

He continued, “The current situation already leaves serious gaps in services for older people. ALONE works with the one in ten of older people who require support, and our resources are fully stretched as a result of a significant increase in demand for services. Our Community Response Service responds to 30 emergency situations involving older people in crisis every month. If

vulnerable older people are not to be cared for in their homes many will inevitably end up on trolleys in acute hospital wards or being moved against their wishes to expensive nursing home beds instead of being cared for where they want to be, in their own homes, through the much lower cost alternative of home care. To cut home help hours for older persons who desperately need this service will result in yet a further substantial strain on nursing homes, and the Fair Deal system.”

Seán Moynihan continued, “As a society we need to ensure that the provision of home care packages and home help hours receive the full support and backing of Government and the HSE. While we’re aware that the upcoming budget will need to include cuts across the board, we strongly object to any consideration of the reduction of home care packages or home help hours for older people – such cuts will prove short-sighted, hugely damaging, and will place an unfeasible weight on the nursing home system.”

For those with concerns about an older persons welfare, ALONE can be contacted on (01) 679 1032.

ENDS

For further information or to arrange for further comment from ALONE, please contact Glenn Hogarty on 087 790 9670

Tags: [Department of Health and Children](#), [HSE](#), [Minister for Health](#)