

Elder Abuse Awareness Day 2010

ALONE CALLS ON PUBLIC TO BE VIGILANT WHEN CONFRONTING ELDER ABUSE

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Coinciding with World Elder Abuse Awareness day tomorrow, charity calls for greater awareness of vulnerable older persons who are at risk of abuse

Dublin, June 14th 2010

ALONE, the charity combating isolation and loneliness among older persons, is calling on vulnerable older persons who are being abused to have confidence in reporting their situation. The call comes as numerous events to mark World Elder Abuse Awareness Day take place tomorrow, June 15th. ALONE has initiated a training programme, available to all of its volunteers, specifically targeted at raising awareness of Elder Abuse issues. This training is provided free of charge by the HSE, and ALONE urge all organisations working with vulnerable older persons to provide training to their staff and volunteers. ALONE's volunteers and staff deal with isolated, vulnerable older persons on a daily basis, providing a befriending service, permanent housing for homeless older persons, and practical advice and support where necessary.

“Older persons can occasionally become invisible in the community, and it is extremely easy for people to ignore, or not notice the signs of elder abuse,” commented Sean Moynihan, CEO of ALONE. “Most of the reported cases of elder abuse to the HSE involve a family member – we’re encouraging those older persons who are being abused to have confidence in reporting their situations. Frequently, the person who is perpetrating the abuse is taking advantage of their relationship with the older person. The older person may be reluctant to report the abuse as they are hugely dependent on the person who is abusing them. We recognise that this is a difficult situation for the older person, and we can offer advice in the strictest confidence to anyone who may be in this situation.”

He continued, “We’re concerned that the Elder Abuse Implementation Group appointed by the Government has been disbanded and that there is no clear or structured plan to deal with this pressing issue. We’re aware that there has been progress in terms of dealing with elder abuse in recent years, but are also very aware of numerous instances of abuse as reported by our volunteers to us. On World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, we encourage all organisations who have contact with older persons to avail of the specific training which is available. Those involved in working with children must receive formal childcare training, and we feel strongly that this should also be the case for those dealing with older persons who may be vulnerable or at risk of abuse.”

Over 1,800 cases of elder abuse were reported to the HSE last year, with almost half of these reports being against the children of older persons. Psychological, financial and physical abuse were the most frequent complaints, with neglect also ranking highly. ALONE is committed to combating neglect and isolation among older persons in the community, and does so via a network of dedicated volunteers.

The charity recently mounted a “Forum on Ageing” at the Mansion House in Dublin which was attended by professionals dealing with older persons in the community. The Forum also raised the issue of elder abuse in the context of the general wellbeing of the older community in Ireland.

ALONE was established in 1977 by Dublin Fireman Willie Bermingham, and this year marks the 20th anniversary of his death. The charity has recently relaunched its website. ALONE receives no public funding, it carries out its work wholly as a result of donations from the public.

The charity can be contacted for advice and assistance at (01) 679 1032, where they can provide information on services available to older persons, and practical

support where necessary.

ENDS

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