

# Nationwide Billboard Campaign

Charity's awareness campaign will continue throughout the year

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Dublin, March 25th 2011

ALONE, the Dublin-based charity, has launched a high-profile, striking billboard campaign to raise awareness of the vital services that they provide for vulnerable older people. ALONE's billboard campaign was designed in order to further make the public aware of the crucial range of services which the charity makes available to those most in need, and it also coincided with the Government announcement of new Junior Ministerial roles, where a Minister for Older People was not retained.

The high-impact billboard, produced and designed internally within the organisation, highlights the core messages of the charity. The focus of the billboard is to draw attention to the fact that not all older people are vulnerable, and that ALONE works proactively with the 10% of older people who require some assistance. The billboard reads: "Most of us enjoy our old age. Some of us need a hand." This is followed by a description of their services: "Supporting, befriending, and providing homes for older people." ALONE provides permanent housing for almost 100 older people at several locations across Dublin, and plans to build more housing as the need arises.

Commented Seán Moynihan, CEO of ALONE, "The purpose of the billboards is really to draw attention to the needs of older people who need support, and to remind them, and the general public, that we are here to help and provide assistance. With the loss of a Minister for Older People in the new Government, we feel it's very important to continue to make people aware of our existence, and to give them comfort in the knowledge that we are available to assist those in need. Our volunteers and support staff workers continuously encounter or are referred to cases of isolation and loneliness, and to older people at risk of homelessness. We know that the current economic climate has seriously impacted on the welfare of those on the fringes of society, including certain older people, and this has strengthened our resolve to tackle these problems and provide support where possible. We always encourage, as is one of our founding principles, members of the public to ensure that they are conscientious within their community, and assisting older people in need within their locality when they can."

The billboard campaign is being supported by JC Decaux, and will continue to run throughout the year intermittently, with a focus on dates where key events for older people are taking place during the year. While ALONE are Dublin based, the campaign will be nationwide, as the core messages of ALONE are applicable in all areas.

Marking the launch of the billboard campaign were Kevin White, a Community Response Worker with ALONE, and Shay Fitzpatrick, a long time resident in housing provided by ALONE. The charity has over 130 volunteers who work with older people on a daily basis, and ensures that all volunteers are appropriately trained and Garda-vetted. With calls to the charity continuing to rise every month, as the demand for services increases consistently, Seán Moynihan says “We have taken on new volunteers recently, and have also employed new staff members in order to assist us to provide a professional service to those who need it most. With each week we see a growing number of calls requesting help. While our resources are fully stretched, it was necessary for us to increase our staffing levels, which still remain small, to ensure that we were reaching all those in need.”

ALONE is encouraging anyone in need of assistance to contact them directly, and also encouraging the public in general to contact them should they have concerns about the welfare of an older person in their community, or a family member or friend who may be isolated or lonely. ALONE recently distributed €200,000 on behalf of Bord Gáis to older people who were having difficulty paying increased energy bills due to the weather conditions over the winter period.

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