

Removal of Junior Ministry for Older People

STATEMENT FROM ALONE ON REMOVAL OF JUNIOR MINISTRY FOR OLDER PEOPLE

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Thursday March 10th 2011

ALONE, the charity which combats loneliness and isolation among older persons, has criticised the new Government's decision not to retain a Junior Minister for Older Persons. The Minister of State positions were announced by the new Government earlier today. In his acceptance speech as Taoiseach yesterday Enda Kenny reasserted his vision that by 2016 Ireland should be the best country in the world in which to do business, the best place to raise a family and the best place on earth where people would age with dignity.

Seán Moynihan, CEO of ALONE, said "We are extremely disappointed that a Minister for Older People was not retained by the new Government, particularly in light of Enda Kenny's recent comment that he envisioned Ireland as the 'best place on earth where people would age with dignity'. We have serious concerns for the voice of older persons at Ministerial level, and call on the Government, and Taoiseach Enda Kenny, to clarify where responsibility for older persons lies at Ministerial level. We are repeating our call for the publication of the National Positive Ageing Strategy, and we are requesting that the Government identify which Minister will be responsible for the implementation of this Strategy. It is vital for us, our service users, and concerned vulnerable older people across the country that uncertainty in this regard is removed as a matter of urgency."

He continued, "We at ALONE had not only expected the retention of a Minister for Older People, but we had also anticipated that this role would be filled by a TD who would bring some strong experience and an emphasis to the position. We're calling on Enda Kenny to make good on his promise to ensure that Ireland will be the best place on earth where people would age with dignity, and to entrust responsibility for this vision with an appropriate Minister as a priority."

ENDS

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