

Christmas Campaign Launch 2011

ALONE LAUNCH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CAMPAIGN “SOME OF US NEED A HAND” ENCOURAGING PUBLIC TO SUPPORT THEIR WORK DURING THE WINTER MONTHS

The campaign was launched in Dublin today with over 20 older persons who use ALONE’s services, and volunteers working with the charity

(To download this statement as a pdf please click here [Christmas Campaign Launch 2011](#).)

November 30th 2011

ALONE is encouraging members of the public to support its Christmas campaign this December, “Some of us need a hand”. The charity, which supports vulnerable older persons in the community, asks that the public support their work during the winter months, and check on older neighbours or family members who may be in need of assistance. The campaign was launched today in Dublin at a giant hand sculpture to tie in with the title of the campaign, “Some of us need a hand” – this title refers to the one in ten older people in the community who are in need of assistance. ALONE works on the ground with over 330 people every week to provide them with supports.

During the Christmas period ALONE volunteers will distribute food hampers to 500 older people in need. They will also be out on Christmas day bringing hot Christmas dinners to older people on their own. The ALONE Christmas social dinner dance will be attended by 180 older people.

ALONE provides a crucial befriending service to older people who are isolated, along with providing permanent housing to over 90 older people who were either homeless or at risk of homelessness. The most vital area of service provision during the winter months is the Community Response service, which deals with emergency calls for assistance. This crisis support service helps older people in need deal with issues relating to health, housing conditions, loneliness, disability and financial problems. The number of calls received by the charity during the month of September 2011 showed an huge 82% increase on September 2010. Seán Moynihan, CEO of ALONE, anticipates that as the current trend continues there will prove to be a 100% increase by the year’s end on the same time last year. (The latter half of 2010 saw requests for assistance rise by 50%).

Moynihan commented; “We very much hope that the public will get behind our campaign and support our work over Christmas, and the winter months. We are asking people to spend some time supporting someone in their community who might be at risk of isolation. The number of calls we received during the extreme winter conditions last year was overwhelming, and we found older people in severely distressing conditions. Our aim is to ensure that we respond to every call for assistance swiftly, but as the number of calls

increases, we find it more and more difficult to do so. We always find our resources stretched to the maximum each winter therefore the support of the public is critical to us.”

Moynihan reminded the public that “More often than not, we find that simple company over a cup of tea can be most beneficial. But with severe winter weather becoming the norm in Ireland, we are witnessing huge increases year on year in the number of calls for assistance which we receive. The help of the community at large will assist us greatly in providing vital support to as many older people as possible, as we always find our resources stretched to the maximum each year.

Anne, an 86 year old woman who benefits from the services of ALONE, said that “I live on my own and I often find it difficult to get around, particularly in winter. It’s always a struggle for me to make sure that I keep the house warm, and it can get lonely sometimes, so I always really look forward to when my ALONE volunteer arrives each week, we spend a couple of hours talking about how I got on during the week, and she fills me in on what she’s been doing, and checks that everything is ok with my health, and with the house. It’s my favourite time of the week, it always gives me a lift.”

ALONE has a small, dedicated staff who work on the ground daily with older people. It receives no Government funding, it is solely funded from donations from companies and members of the public. The charity has 150 volunteers, each of whom have been trained specifically for their work with ALONE.

ENDS For further information, please contact Glenn Hogarty, Limelight Communications, 087 790 9670