

## **ALONE celebrates 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary with announcement of awarding of ISO quality certification**

*Second charity in the country, and only older persons charity to be awarded quality certification*

**Dublin March 15<sup>th</sup> 2012** ALONE, the charity which provides support to older persons in need, celebrates its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2012 and today announced that it is the first charity in the sector, and only the second in the country, to receive ISO 9001:2008 international quality certification. This is an internationally recognised certification which supports the efforts of organisations to deliver excellent service and customer satisfaction and creates trust in those who use products or services which have the certification. The announcement comes as ALONE celebrates its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary, with plans for a variety of activities and events throughout the year to mark this milestone.

ALONE has had a commitment to maintaining a consistent quality of service for marginalised older people since the charity was set up by Dublin Fireman Willie Bermingham in 1977, and has worked consistently to extend these services in recent years. The ALONE Befriending Service ensures weekly visits for 200 older people who would otherwise be isolated, while ALONE Housing provides maintained homes for life, with dedicated staff support, for 100 older people who would otherwise face homelessness. The charity's Community Response Service carries out 30 emergency interventions every month for older people in crisis.

"Our 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary gives us the opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the older people who use our services," commented Seán Moynihan, CEO of ALONE. "We've grown significantly as an organisation since 1977, and we intend to continue to develop and enhance our services for those who need them most. The 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary is not just about remembering our past and our significant achievements. It is also about how we see the future for the organisation and how we deliver our services, and how we can prepare ourselves for the inevitable continuing surge in demand from older people in need."

ALONE believes that all services for the vulnerable, marginalised, or those at risk, should be guaranteed by quality standards, and has applauded the introduction of standards in recent months into care services for older people through HIQA. The charity believes that the awarding of this quality certification will assure older people who are in contact with ALONE that quality services are being provided, and that it will also assure the public that donations are being well spent. In addition to quality systems for service delivery ALONE ensures that all of its volunteers are trained and Garda-vetted.

Seán Moynihan continued, "We at ALONE are proud to have reached the milestone of our 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary – this is a testament to the work of our volunteers, without whom we wouldn't be able to carry out our crucial work. The awarding of this ISO quality certification to ALONE shows, in a very practical way, that we are one

hundred percent committed to providing an excellent service to the older people in need of support who use our services.”

“We’re very honoured to be the only older persons charity in Ireland to have been awarded such a certification, and we very much hope that others will follow suit. We originally applied for this certification to ensure that we’re living up to our own values, and it’s particularly timely that we should be awarded it in our 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. In the absence of a charity regulator, we felt this was the best way to demonstrate our commitment to excellence, transparency, and innovation, all at the core of our ethos.”

To be awarded this standard, ALONE worked with a quality auditor to ensure that all processes of the charity's services were covered by procedures and checks to measure success. The auditor, certified by EQA, assessed the system and judged that ALONE was ISO compliant. The quality certificate is awarded by EQA which is part of a global network of certification bodies which can award the ISO 9001:2008 (Quality Management System) certification. Awards are made on the basis of an organisation having a quality management system in place. This system incorporates an organisational commitment to quality in policy and a comprehensive system of procedures, forms and management of information to support this commitment.

ALONE plan to schedule a variety of events throughout the year to celebrate their 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary, including schools presentations to make schoolchildren aware of the work of the charity, and other community fundraising initiatives. Older people who may be in need of assistance can contact ALONE on (01) 679 1032.

**ENDS**