

ALONE, the charity which supports older people in need of assistance, has welcomed today's recommendations of the Seanad Committee in relation to bolstering the rights of older people.

Seán Moynihan, CEO commented "We welcome the recommendations by the Seanad Committee to increase the rights of older people in Ireland. As the Committee Chairman points out, in the next three decades, the number of people in Ireland over 65 is expected to double. ALONE believes that it is vital that the government not only improve current systems and supports but also takes a strategic approach for preparing for the future and anticipating the challenges that lie ahead.

The report recommends clarity for older people in relation to entitlements available to them, and we have found on a daily basis in recent times that older people in need of assistance are not being communicated with appropriately – a key example would be in relation to the Household Charge. Many older people on the fringes of society do not have access to the internet, and were therefore struggling with how to sign up for the Charge, or the direct debits. In fact, nearly three quarters (74pc) of all Irish people aged between 65 and 74 have never used the Internet, according to a survey from service provider UPC, released two days ago. We feel any movement on clarity in this regard would be very welcome.

He continued, "We are also keen to see the implementation of the recommendation on the HSE's performance information system carrying out an audit of all community care services for older people. Another recommendation of particular note is that the Health Act 2007 be amended to ensure that national quality standards are applied to private companies providing home-care packages. ALONE was recently the second charity in Ireland and the first in this sector to be awarded ISO international quality certification, and we're very anxious to see regulations in place for providers of services to older persons."

He concluded, "We very much hope to see Government taking these recommendations on board as a matter of urgency, and call on them to review these recommendations immediately with a view to implementing them."

Older people who are in need of assistance or support can contact ALONE on (01) 679 1032.