

ALONE URGES GOVERNMENT TO PROTECT MOST VULNERABLE IN SOCIETY IN PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION

Call comes on International Day of Older Persons

Dublin, October 1st 2012 ALONE, the charity which provides support and services for older people in need, has called on the Government to protect the most vulnerable in society, including the one in ten older people in Ireland who are at risk of poverty, in Budget 2012. This call came in a pre-budget submission to Minister Joan Burton, and coincides with International Day of Older Persons.

The United Nations' (UN) International Day of Older Persons is celebrated annually on October 1 to recognise the contributions of older persons and to examine issues that affect their lives. "We at ALONE consistently champion the inclusion of older people as valued members of society. On International Day of Older Persons we want to raise awareness of the contribution that older people make to society, and how important it is to empower older people," commented Seán Moynihan, CEO of ALONE.

He continued, "We're taking this opportunity, in a year that celebrates Solidarity between generations, to highlight our pre-budget submission to the Government where we make the call that protecting the most vulnerable in society must be a priority in Budget 2012. We must support older people in need the same as must support families or children in need."

In their detailed pre-budget submission to Minister Joan Burton, the charity made a number of calls, including:

- To protect most vulnerable in society
- To maintain current level of state pension
- To maintain living alone allowance and rent supplement
- To maintain free travel scheme

The charity also called on Government to consider long term implications of cuts. "We are urging Minister Burton and the Government not to be short-sighted when it comes to protecting vulnerable older people who are already among the most marginalised in society. As the economic landscape continues to remain extremely challenging, it is important that decisions being made now do not lead to greater problems in the future. The health and wellbeing of many older people depends on pension entitlements and allowances. Budgetary adjustments should not be made at any cost, particularly the cost of the wellbeing of those in need," Moynihan concluded.

ALONE service users come from among the one in ten older people who are at risk of poverty. The charity provides a volunteer befriending service to 200 older people, an emergency response service dealing with 30 crisis interventions monthly, and offers 100 homes with lifetime tenancies in a supportive environment for older people at risk of homelessness.

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

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