

ALONE calls on review of the Fair Deal Scheme as waiting list for nursing home places grows

Department of Health documents reveal more than 2,000 patients will be waiting for a nursing home place by the end of the year

Dublin, 29th July 2013: ALONE, the charity working with older people in need of support, calls for urgent action to be taken in regards to the waiting list for patients awaiting nursing home beds. Department of Health documents reveal that more than 2,000 patients will be waiting for a nursing home place by the end of the year, and the waiting time for allocation to a nursing home place under the Fair Deal scheme is to rise to 17 weeks. There are currently approximately 770 patients on the placement list and the average wait is 6 weeks.

The normal placement of patients in nursing homes under the Nursing Home Support Scheme (known as Fair Deal) was suspended in April because of a crisis in hospital emergency departments as a result of a prolonged flu season.

Seán Moynihan, CEO of ALONE, commented, “There have been no targets to reduce the list of patients waiting for a nursing home place. This is having disastrous affects on families, communities and individuals. Urgent action needs to be taken to reduce this number as the list could double every year. There are hundreds of older people urgently waiting for placement in hospital beds, costing the Government thousands of euro.”

He continues, “The Government must address this issue and look at all alternative care and support options or it will become a national crisis. We work with people who have no families or support systems which leaves them incredibly vulnerable. The solution to this problem is providing a low cost, high value service such as care assistance for people in their homes.”

ALONE service users come from among the one in ten older people who are at risk of poverty. The charity provides assistance to older people in need of support through a volunteer befriending service, a community response service and provides 100 age-friendly 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