

ALONE launches Christmas Campaign – Compassion alone is not always enough

November 25th 2013:

ALONE launch Christmas campaign today in Dublin with TV3's Lisa Cannon on board to support

ALONE is highlighting CSO figures which show that nearly **10% of people aged over 65 are at risk of poverty** and is calling on members of the public to support their Christmas campaign, "Compassion ALONE is not always enough".

We are asking everyone to share the Christmas spirit by taking the time to visit older people who live alone or by donating to ALONE, as many are older people are **heavily reliant on benefits to keep above the poverty line** and **120,000 older people live alone across the country.**

Seán Moynihan, CEO of ALONE, commented, "For most people, during Christmas they are surrounded by loved ones, a fire and food but for some older people it can be a very difficult time where they are left isolated and cold during the holiday season. We are strongly urging the public to think of older people who might be isolated and alone in their community, and to take the time to visit and check on levels of heating and food. Even just a quick drop in for a cup tea or bring out their bins, these very small gestures can really make all the difference to an older person who is isolated and living alone."

Sean continued, "We really hope that the public will support our campaign and our work over Christmas and the winter months. Lisa Cannon has very generously come to lend her support and to help get the message that 'compassion alone is not enough'.

Lisa Cannon commented, "I am delighted to help ALONE launch the Christmas campaign this year. ALONE's resources are stretched even further during the Christmas and winter months, so it is incredibly important to support older people living alone in your community or by donating to ALONE."

ALONE volunteers and supporters realise that compassion alone is not enough and are taking action again this year by distributing food hampers to over 500 older people in need. On Christmas Day, the volunteers will also bring hot Christmas dinners to older people living on their own. The ALONE Christmas social dinner dance, a vital social outlet for service users, will be attended by over 150 older people.

Based on the success of last year, ALONE Christmas cards will be on sale to the public again. These cards, produced and designed in Ireland, are available for purchase online or from the ALONE offices for €7.99 for a pack of 10. Proceeds from the sale of these cards go directly to benefit older people in need.

ALONE provides a crucial befriending service to older people who are isolated, along with providing permanent housing to almost 100 older people. The most vital area of service provision during the winter months is the Community Response service, which deals with emergency calls for assistance.

ALONE has a small, dedicated staff who work on the ground daily with older people. We receive no Government funding and are solely funded by donations from companies and members of the public. We have 150 volunteers, many of whom will be working during the Christmas period. We can be contacted via www.alone.ie or on (01) 679 1032. If you would like to donate to ALONE please text ALONE to 50300 to donate €4. 100% of your donation will go to help older people in need