

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Budget 2014 - Not all older people are equal

ALONE are highlighting the need to protect the 20% of older people who are at risk of poverty

Dublin, 12th October ALONE, the charity that cares for older people in need is calling on the government to protect the 1 in 5 older people who are at risk of poverty or living in deprivation.

CEO of ALONE, Sean Moynihan says, "There can be a misconception that all older people are financially secure, and that they have more money than most. However, in ALONE we work with the one in five older people who are at risk of poverty or suffering from deprivation on a day to day basis and it is this 20% that we ask the government to protect in the budget".

ALONE says that the majority of the older people they work with worked all of their lives, contributed to the economy and yet now, these are the people who are being forgotten when they are most in need.

Moynihan continued, "There has been talk of bringing back the Christmas bonus in one form or another, but our view would be that poverty happens year round, not just at Christmas. If the government are looking to positively aide older people, particularly the 20% most in need, then they need to take a more targeted approach".

ALONE recognise that the pension has not been cut in recent years, however the there have been multiple cuts to services and benefits for older people as well as new and increased charges. The 'living alone allowance' has not been increased since 1996 and remains at €7.70, this is not reflective of the level of inflation over the past 18 years. The consistent erosion over the last number of years has had a devastating effect on the most vulnerable in society.

Moynihan continued, "A particular concern of ours, is the prescription charges that now stands at €2.50 per item, this is a real issue for older people that we work with, some of whom are now cutting back on their medication as they cannot afford it. We are calling on the government to abolish this charge to ensure that older people don't have to pick and choose which medication they take, which can have serious consequences for their immediate and long-term health."

ALONE can be contacted on (01) 679 1032 for those who have concerns about their own wellbeing, or the wellbeing of a vulnerable older person in the community or visit www.alone.ie

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Established in 1977, ALONE is an independent charity that works with the 1 in 5 older people who are homeless, socially isolated, living in deprivation or in crisis. We provide Supportive Housing, Befriending, Community Response and Campaigning services to hundreds of older people every week. We receive no Government funding for our day-to-day activities so we rely solely on the generosity of the public to continue our work. ALONE's services are quality approved and are delivered 365 days a year.

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