



Newsletter  
Autumn  
2013

**ALONE**  
there when you need us

## Campaigning

### ***ALONE urges Government to support older people in need, not condemn them to a life of poverty***

As 2014 Budget looms, ALONE calls on the Government to care for older people in need instead of sentencing them to further cuts, distress and in some cases, destitution.

Seán Moynihan, CEO of ALONE warns: "The cumulative effect of the past five budgets is really taking its toll on the 1 in 10

older people most at risk. Now is the time for the Government to realise it is their duty to stand up for those most vulnerable in our society."

Studies show that older people living in Ireland today face more hardship than they did 20 years ago.

'Elizabeth,' who uses ALONE's services, is 67 years old and is living on the state pension in a DCC housing complex. Over the last two years, her rent has increased by 25% and cuts in the Household Benefits Package have meant that her phone and gas bills have increased by 100% and 42%, respectively. Elizabeth is also an acute diabetic and the new prescription charge means that she has to pay an additional €28 per month extra.

"Elizabeth's story is typical of those we come across on a weekly basis," says Seán. "Some of the older people we work with are left making very tough decisions - do I buy fuel or do I eat?"

"ALONE recognises that there are difficult choices to be made at this time and we believe that the choices we make should reflect the values of a society which wishes to protect the rights of the vulnerable."

For those who have concerns about their own wellbeing, or the wellbeing of a vulnerable older person, ALONE can be contacted on (01) 679 1032.

visit  
[www.alone.ie](http://www.alone.ie)  
for more  
information

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**ALONE provides vital support to the one in ten older people at risk. ALONE receives no government funding and our essential activities are funded by donations from the public.**





*ALONE provides assistance to older people in need of support with our Community Response Service. Older people in need of support can contact ALONE on (01) 679 1032*

## Community Response Service

### *HIDDEN LIVES: older people living in horrific circumstances*

During the summer, ALONE Community Response received an urgent call from a central heating engineer who had been called to a house for standard testing. The couple who owned the property were in their 80s and were living in truly awful conditions.

Their house had not been updated in 40 years and had only an outdoor toilet, which didn't flush properly. They had no fridge, no hot water, had dangerous wiring throughout the house, and the back of the kitchen extension was falling down.

The contractor got a few friends together and they did a great job of tidying up the house as best they could. They fixed a broken back wall and put in a new window, door and floor. They also painted and sealed the house against the weather.

The contractor rang ALONE as he knew about our history of working with older people in need. ALONE's Community Response team visited the couple to inspect the property for themselves. They arranged for the wiring to be replaced, a new shower and indoor toilet to be installed, and a new kitchen to be fitted, all for a very reasonable price.

As the couple had existed in this poor condition for so long, they were very anxious about change and spending some of their savings. However, they were absolutely delighted with the finished work and are happy to be living in a comfortable home, with a much better quality of life.

## Seamus Heaney Tribute

It is with great sadness that we learned of the sudden death of Seamus Heaney.

In 2010, Mr. Heaney was awarded the Willie Bermingham Medal alongside Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland and UN High Commissioner.

Each year, the Irish Gerontological Society presents the Willie Bermingham Medal to honour eminent Irish people who have contributed

enormously, both here and abroad, to raising awareness about vulnerable older people living alone.

Seamus touched so many people with his inspiring poetry and wonderful personality – he will be sadly missed by many.

*Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam*



*For more news and information about the work of ALONE, visit [www.alone.ie](http://www.alone.ie)*





Please  
Support  
**ALONE**  
Today



## Housing

### *ALONE provides homes for 2 older people in need*

This Autumn, the ALONE Housing team have been busy allocating 2 new homes to older people in need. With over 50 applicants for the two houses, Kevin White, ALONE's Housing Officer, says: "I have been struck by the sheer amount of older people who urgently need housing."

Despite not actively advertising our Housing Service, ALONE receives a sizeable number of applications for accommodation. "Approximately two-thirds are outside referrals including social workers, Focus Ireland, or Dublin City

Homeless Services," says Kevin. "The other third are self-referrals." The majority of our applicants suffer from poor health – either physical or mental – or have mobility issues. Many have also suffered elder abuse.

In general, there has been a shocking increase in demand for housing for older people who are suffering in accommodation unsuitable for their needs. There are currently over 800 older people on the DCC housing waiting list and it is a sad indictment that in 2013 many vulnerable older people are still suffering the indignity of living in sub-standard accommodation

As well as providing warm, comfortable age-friendly homes, our ALONE Housing Support workers link our residents with support services in the community to enable them to remain living independently for as long as possible.

### *Recent ALONE Dinner Dance a huge success*

Over 100 older people and 40 volunteers attended the recent ALONE Dinner Dance in the Red Cow Moran Hotel on Saturday, 14th September. One of our new guests described his first ALONE Dinner Dance: 'Our table of 10 were all strangers at the start of the

evening, but by the end, we were all like old friends. The ALONE volunteers were wonderful - smiling every second of the night and the entertainment was second to none.' Thanks to all our dedicated volunteers for making it such a fun and successful night out!



*Pamela and Anne enjoying the Dinner Dance*

*ALONE provides assistance to older people in need with a Permanent Housing Provision. Older people in need of support can contact ALONE on (01) 679 1032*



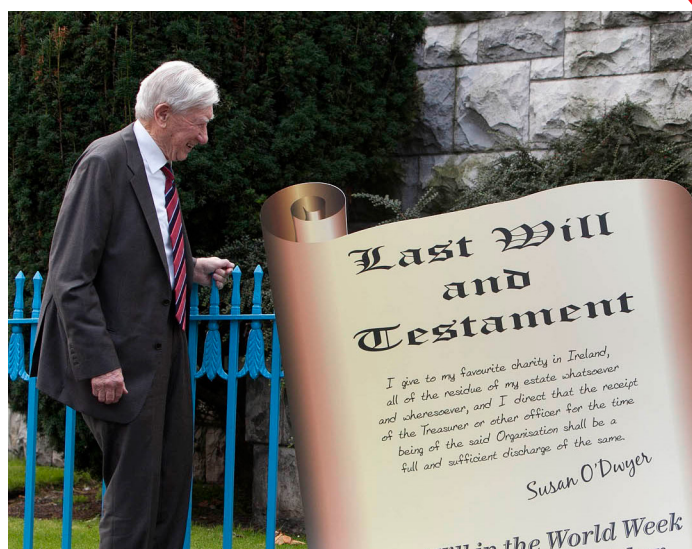
## Befriending / Fundraising

### *Best Will in the World Week - Your opportunity to help ALONE*

Legacies are a very important source of income to ALONE and this year we will be taking part in Best Will in the World Week, which runs from the 21st-25th October.

During this week, participating solicitors around the country will offer a will consultation to write or amend your existing will for just €50. By leaving a legacy to ALONE, you will make a lasting difference to vulnerable older people in the community. Visit [www.bestwill.ie](http://www.bestwill.ie) for more info.

Pictured is Mr. David Bell (91) the oldest practising solicitor in Ireland



### *Christmas Cards*

It's hard to believe, but Christmas is fast approaching. We will be offering ALONE Christmas cards for sale again this year. If you would like to buy some, or, perhaps, sell them on our behalf, please get in touch! We have two designs available and it costs €7.99 for a pack of 10. €5 from the sale of each pack will go directly to benefit older people in need this Christmas.

### *Fundraising - Thank You*

We'd like to say a massive thank you to all the staff in Heaton's head office who raised a fantastic €10,000 for ALONE through a sample sale recently.

We really appreciate the efforts of all the team who made this very generous donation possible.

### *Dates for your diary*

Volunteer Social  
- **Friday 8th November**

Christmas Dinner Dance  
- **Sunday 1st December**

*If you have any questions regarding any of the above events, please contact us on (01) 6791032 or at [enquiries@alone.ie](mailto:enquiries@alone.ie).*

## Volunteer

Are you interested in volunteering with ALONE? If you would like to donate some of your time, or if you have a particular skill that you feel would be of benefit to the organisation, then please contact us on (01) 6791032.

*ALONE provides assistance to older people in need of support through its Befriending Service. Older people in need of support can contact ALONE on (01) 679 1032*

## Enquire

If you or an older person you know needs our help and would like to enquire about our Befriending, Community Support or Housing Services, please call us on (01) 6791032.

