

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ALONE express concern following Government reshuffle
Social protection name change removes 'older people'

Dublin, 15th July 2014 ALONE, the charity that cares for older people in need, has today expressed concern regarding the change of title for Minister of State, Kathleen Lynch. Earlier today An Taoiseach Enda Kenny announced that Kathleen Lynch would return to her position as Minister of State at the Department of Health with Special Responsibility for Primary Care, Mental Health and Disability. Prior to today's announcement the Minister of State's title was, "Minister of State at the Department of Health with Special Responsibility for Disability, Older People, Equality & Mental Health".

At the weekend Taoiseach Enda Kenny stated "It is by returning our country to full employment that we can best reach our goal of making Ireland the best small country in the world in which to do business, raise a family and grow old with dignity and respect." Following today's Ministerial title change, ALONE are calling into question the credibility of this statement.

Sean Moynihan, CEO of ALONE said of the change, "We are extremely concerned about the change of title for Minister Kathleen Lynch. The removal of 'older people' from the Ministerial title strongly suggests a shift in priorities within the current Government. In Ireland, we have a dramatically aging population, the number of people over the age of 65 is increasing by 20,000 every year; in such a climate the government should be prioritising the needs of older people and strategically planning for the future instead of removing them from sight."

He continued, "We have serious concerns for the voice of older persons at Ministerial level, and call on the Government, and Taoiseach Enda Kenny, to explain where the responsibility for 'older people' now lies since it is not in the Ministers title. It is vital for us, the older people we work with and concerned vulnerable older people across the country that uncertainty in this regard is removed as a matter of urgency."

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

ENDS

About ALONE:

Established in 1977, ALONE provides vital supports to the one in ten older people who are in need. The charity provides a volunteer befriending service, campaigning services, a community response service and provides 100 age-friendly homes to older people in need. ALONE receives no state funding for their day to day activities, it is through the donations from members of the public that the organisation can carry out its essential activities.

For more information contact:

Roisin Furlong, Limelight Communications, roisin.furlong@limelight.ie, 01 668 0600

Kathryn Byrne, Limelight Communications, kathryn.byrne@limelight.ie 01 668 0600, 085 233 6033