



Helping older people in need

Emigration has left older people ALONE this St. Patricks Day

12th March 2014 Dublin, This St. Patricks Day, ALONE, the charity that provides support to older people in need, is highlighting one of the lesser known effects of emigration. ALONE report an increase in the number of older people requiring their services as a direct result of their children and grandchildren emigrating.

Recent Eurostat figures showed that Ireland now has the highest level of emigration in Europe. Latest CSO figures showed that almost 250 people leave Ireland every day – that’s one person every six minutes. Just last week 10,000 Canadian visas were announced for Irish workers aged 18-35 in 2014.

CEO of ALONE, Sean Moynihan said, “The children and grandchildren of Ireland’s older people are emigrating in droves, leaving behind an large huge increase in the number of older people requiring our services because their support systems have disappeared; we have even received calls from the emigrants themselves asking us to check on their older relative.”

He continued, “We will continue to do as much as we can for older people in need but our resources and volunteers can only do so much and we are concerned for the older generation who require assistance”.

One emigrant, Marian, recently got in touch with ALONE as she was concerned for her elderly mother. Marian and her husband felt that they had no other option than to move to Australia in search of employment after Marian’s husband was made redundant, but the move meant leaving Marian’s elderly mother in Ireland without family supports.

Marian explained, “My husband had been out of work since 2007 so we had to move, otherwise we would be back in Ireland in a heartbeat. I feel really helpless being so far away. My mam used to be so active but now with age she doesn't go out as much as she used too and I'm so worried about her being isolated and alone in her house. She has a history of depression and the thoughts of her being lonely, is very difficult.”

Another example is 70 year old Noeleen who lives in north county Dublin. Noeleen was referred to ALONE early last year as her daughter was emigrating from Ireland to live in

Australia and her son had already moved to London. Both were forced to leave the country in search of employment.

Noeleen not sure if her children will ever return home to her in Ireland, speaking of her two young granddaughters in Australia she said, "I miss the two little girls terribly, but they seem to be settling in well". This St Patricks Day Noeleen will send cards to her son and daughter abroad and hopes that she will speak with them over the phone to wish them a 'Happy St. Patrick's Day'. Noeleen said, "It's very hard, but that's the reality".

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 with lifetime tenancies in a supportive environment for older people at risk of homelessness. 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.

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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