

**“There is strong demand for a *National Befriending Network*” say ALONE**

**13<sup>th</sup> February 2015** ALONE yesterday hosted a hugely successful meeting with organisations from around the country to discuss the setting up of a national network of befriending services for older people. The meeting followed ALONE’s launch of a National Befriending Directory last November.

Sean Moynihan, CEO of ALONE commented, “Charitable groups and organisations from around the country today echoed our own sentiment that there is a need for better services for older people nationwide to combat isolation and loneliness. The meeting confirmed that there is strong interest nationwide in setting up a *Befriending Network* to build collaboration, share learning and set quality standards”.

Moynihan continued, “We hope that this event will be the start of an action plan that will look at tackling the serious issue of isolation and loneliness among older people across the country. We need to look at ways to target those most isolated and hard to reach and for this we need to build strong partnerships and cooperation. The Befriending Service is a model that works because it is cost effective, and represents the community looking after its own”.

ALONE believe that combating loneliness should be viewed as a preventative health measure by the Department of Health as loneliness puts you at higher risk of dementia, cardiovascular disease and decreased immune system responsivity. In Ireland, almost 1 in 3 older people live on their own (29%), and 7-9% of older people suffer from chronic loneliness.

For those who have concerns about their own wellbeing, or the wellbeing of a vulnerable older person in the community, ALONE can be contacted on (01) 679 1032. To make a donation and help aid ALONE’s work visit [www.alone.ie](http://www.alone.ie)