

ALONE express frustration over government decision to push out the deadline for nursing home closures and upgrades until 2021

9th November 2015, Dublin ALONE has today expressed frustration over the government's decision to push out the deadline for nursing homes closures and upgrades to 2021.

CEO of ALONE, Sean Moynihan said, "This government has largely ignored the warnings and failed to adequately invest in our public nursing homes. In September there was an announcement of €450 million in the government capital spend in nursing homes, however now it is being reported as €300 million. Even with this investment it won't be enough to tackle the challenges of 2021 when we will have 240,000 additional over 65's compared with when the problems was first identified in 2009".

"It took the Fair Deal Review three years to be published, another eighteen months for a plan to be developed and now the implementation of the upgrades is being pushed out to 2021, twelve years later. This investment needs to be fast-tracked as a matter of urgency", said Moynihan.

Moynihan continued, "ALONE are also concerned about the over reliance on private nursing homes. Our public nursing homes are a cornerstone of our health system. There is a danger that we are moving to a more and more privatised system. We cannot be wholly reliant on the private sector for the care of our most vulnerable people".

Moynihan continued, "Enda Kenny previously stated that he wanted to make Ireland a great country to grow old in, so far he has failed to invest in this notion. We need to plan for the future and invest in alternatives. Of late, we have been hearing from vulnerable older persons that it is virtually impossible to get home help at the moment. This is not good enough, home help hours are vital to keep people active in their communities for a fraction of the cost of nursing home care. Investment in primary health care is desperately needed to stop the current problem from running out of control".