

ALONE reach 1000 signatures in 'homeless in all but name' Campaign 2015

ALONE ask the government to designate a portion of all social housing units for use by older people

11th November 2015 ALONE have gathered the support of 1,000 people for their 'homeless in all but name' campaign, highlighting Ireland's mounting crisis around housing our older people.

ALONE's Annual Report, revealed that over 50% of all calls received by ALONE in 2014, were directly related to homelessness or housing. The number of older people coming to ALONE in need of housing increased by 90% in 2014.

Sean Moynihan, CEO of ALONE said, "All of our services focus on supporting older people to age at home, however, in recent times, the number one issue that people have been presenting with is housing. Whether they are homeless, living in emergency accommodation, living in unsuitable or unsafe housing - housing is a critical issue for the people that we work with. It's great to have so much public support for this campaign".

Moynihan continued, "We are asking the government to plan effectively for the housing needs of our ageing population, as a nation, we need to do better by our older people. The private rental market is simply not suitable for older people as many will have support needs as they age, we need to plan for suitable housing with supports. There should be a detailed housing strategy for our ageing population with the number social housing units ring-fenced, mirroring the population in each council area."

ALONE are in contact with older persons affected by the housing crisis on a daily basis. To highlight the issues they face, ALONE have released the stories of three older persons who struggle with homelessness. These are the stories of Charles, Saoirse and Juliette, older persons whose housing needs are not being addressed by the government.

Charles

Charles is 67 and has been living with his brother for 15 years ever since his marriage broke down. The house is overcrowded as there are 4 other adults in the house. Charles does not have a good relation with his brother and has to leave the house every morning before nine and is not allowed back until the evening time. Due to the tense atmosphere in the house and the strain on his family relationships. He currently suffers from health issues due to the stress of his living arrangements.

Saoirse

Saoirse is 77 and has recently returned back to Ireland after living away for some years. She was working abroad until she became ill and had to return to Ireland. Her health has since deteriorated; Saoirse has many health issues, resulting in depression and stress. Saoirse now rents privately but she cannot afford the rent and has been given notice to leave by the end of 2015. Saoirse does not know where she can go and knows that she won't be able to find affordable accommodation. Despite feeling vulnerable and lonely Saoirse remains determined to help her situation.

ALONE have found that most older people who become homeless in the current market, have little or no chance of securing private rented accommodation. Factors that impede older people in finding accommodation include; a lack of suitable accommodation for single people, inability to compete in the private rental market, the bias of landlords against older people and dramatic cuts in grants that allowed older people carry out essential maintenance work on their homes.

Moynihan concluded, “We ask the government to designate a portion of all social housing units for use by older people. We need to have a system that supports older people, and allows them to pay a fair rent for accommodation that is suitable to their needs. We are failing any older person who is living in shared emergency accommodation, or who can only afford a third floor apartment despite their mobility difficulties. These are not isolated occurrences and we need to act now”.

To support the campaign, sign the online petition at: www.ipetitions.com/petition/alone-homeless-in-all-but-name

For more information visit www.alone.ie