

ALONE launch '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

5th October 2015 ALONE have today launched their 'homeless in all but name' campaign, highlighting Ireland's mounting crisis around housing our older people.

ALONE's Annual Report, released today, reveals 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".

Moynihan continued, "ALONE 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. If the government is serious about supporting older people to remain living in the community, 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."

"A large portion of those coming to us for support having been living in the private rental market for many years and now their landlords are increasing the rent making them unable to afford their homes" said Moynihan.

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