

## **ALONE respond to Minister Burton's proposed increase to Christmas Bonus**

*"An increase to the Christmas Bonus does not outweigh the harm that has been done in recent years"*

**14th September 2015, Dublin** ALONE has today responded to Minister Joan Burton's proposal that the Christmas Bonus will rise to €115 this year.

CEO of ALONE, Sean Moynihan said, "We welcome the proposed increase to the Christmas Bonus and see it as a positive step towards restoring adequate supports for older people. However, we have not forgotten the extent of cuts that older people have been subject to by this Government, an increase to the Christmas Bonus constitutes the equivalent of €1 per week and does not outweigh the harm that has been done in recent years. Older people are still struggling under the harsh weight of cuts to Government supports and the high increases to living costs."

Moynihan continued, "We have been calling on the government to increase the state pension by implementing the triple lock model which has proven successful in the UK and elsewhere. The triple lock model of pension increases means that, once every year the state pension is raised in accordance with either the growth in average earnings, the Consumer Price Index (CPI), or by 2.5%."

Hardships ensured by older people under this administration include; property tax, introduction of water charges, motor tax increases, VAT increases, failure to increase welfare payments and fuel payments in line with inflation, cuts to home help hours with 1.67 million less home help hours delivered in 2014 than in 2009 and the complete removal of the bereavement grant and reduction of the hearing aid grant.