

ALONE pre-budget submission 2015 calls for pension increase
Vulnerable older people live in constant fear

Dublin, 3rd July 2014 ALONE, the charity that cares for older people in need, is calling on the government to increase the state pension in line with inflation. ALONE also believe that income tax should be applied to all those who can afford it regardless of age. The charity has seen a dramatic rise in demand for their services of the last number of years, with older people increasingly turning to them for help in relation to housing, financial worries, isolation and loneliness.

Sean Moynihan, CEO of ALONE said of the submission, “Public discourse would suggest that since the state pension has not been cut, older people have not been affected by the recession. This does not give a true reflection of the reality facing the most vulnerable older people we work with. Recent budgets have seen a continuous erosion of essential services and benefits for vulnerable older people and there also been an increase in charges and the general cost of living. Currently the lowest state pension is almost €1000 below the poverty threshold – there is a real need for the government to act now to ensure the most vulnerable are protected.”

He continued, “The majority of those who come to use are heavily reliant on welfare to survive and they live in constant fear of any future cuts that may be made. The recent budgets have been challenging for everyone, but particularly so for those who have very little. We believe that an increase to the state pension would allow poorer older people have a basic standard of living. This would allow older people maintain independence, reducing strain on hospital and nursing homes.”

The charity has revealed that calls to ALONE for support and help have increased by 50% over the last 2 years. With the number of people over the age of 65 set to double in the next 25 years, ALONE believes that it is of paramount importance that our current government puts in place precedence for the rights of older people. It is important that choices made in the Department of Social Protection’s budget reflects the values of a society that wishes to protect the rights of our most vulnerable and disadvantaged older population.

ALONE is calling on the government to commit to the following in the budget 2015:

- All cuts should be equality-proofed so that their impact does not fall disproportionately on the most vulnerable.
- Every cut should have a counter-measure to protect those who are most at risk.
- Entitlements should be taxed as income, as an alternative to universal cuts which disproportionately affect those in need.
- Clarity of available entitlements for older people should be made a priority and those entitlements should be given a statutory footing.^{1[1]}
- A social housing policy should be developed which takes into account of the specific needs of an ageing population.
- All budgetary proposals and government policy decisions and procedures should be proofed against the National Goals of the Positive Ageing Strategy.

^{1[1]}As per the recommendation of the Houses of the Oireachtas Seanad Report on the Rights of Older People, March 2012



Helping older people in need

- Cross departmental creative thinking is required to ensure that the most vulnerable people are protected

ALONE can be contacted on (01) 679 1032 for those who have concerns about their own wellbeing, or the wellbeing of a vulnerable older person in the community or visit www.alone.ie

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About ALONE:

Established in 1977, ALONE provides vital supports to the one in ten older people who are in need. The charity provides a volunteer befriending service, campaigning services, a community response service and provides 100 age-friendly homes to older people in need. ALONE receives no state funding for their day to day activities, it is through the donations from members of the public that the organisation can carry out its essential activities.

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