

January 10th 2014:

ALONE calls on Government to reverse housing grant cutbacks

ALONE has expressed strong concern as reductions to housing grants available to older people take effect.

Sean Moynihan, CEO of ALONE said, “We are particularly concerned about cuts and reduction to services that affect older people with no regard to their circumstances and level of personal need. The outcome of these cuts is that it will make it more difficult for older people, particularly those who are frail, to remain in their own homes. They will need to go into residential care, thus bringing added pressure on the health system.”

The government has expressed the aim that they wish to ensure “that older people, who have contributed so much to Irish society, can continue to live in their own homes and communities as is their wish”.

“ALONE comes in contact with people surviving in very poor housing conditions and many of whom need adaptations so they can remain in their homes. It is vital that housing grants and supports to allow people to age in their own homes remain in place. Again, this is a cost effective way of keeping people out of expensive hospital beds or residential care homes or homeless services. “

“These cuts demonstrate no saving to the State. It is merely a cynical accountancy exercise whereby the saving of €40 million to the Department of the Environment is transferred as a cost to the Department of Health.”

He continued, “Our population is growing older every year. The number of people aged 65 and over is set to increase from a 2006 level of 462,000 to around 1.4 million by 2041. Recent CSO statistics show that between 2001 and 2010 there was a 14% increase in the number of older people living alone rising from 141,500 to 161,600.”

Minister for Health, James Reilly previously said “Delivering better outcomes for older people will require joined-up thinking between Government departments, agencies of all kinds, the voluntary and the commercial sectors, and older people themselves.”

The charity is calling on the Government to reverse cutbacks in housing grants for those most vulnerable in society.

For those with concerns about an older persons welfare, ALONE can be contacted on (01) 679 1032.