



# ANNUAL REPORT **2019**



YOU'RE NOT ALONE

ALONE is a national organisation that supports older people to age at home. We work with all older people, including those who have difficulties with loneliness, ill health, poverty, poor housing or homelessness.

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We support them through these challenges and enable them to access the relevant services to live happily in the community. Our volunteers bring friendship and support to every older person. All our services are quality approved.

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Our Vision is a society where older people are included as valued and empowered members of the community.

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Our Mission is to support older people to age at home, through Support Coordination, Befriending, Housing with Support, and Campaigning.

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## WHAT WE DO



**ALONE's Support Coordination** service entails the coordination of supports and services for the older person who wishes to age at home. We engage with a wide range of local services, including, but not limited to, health and medical, financial, social welfare and housing. Every older person is linked with a designated Support Coordinator, a trained social care professional who acts as an independent agent for the older person in coordinating necessary services. This service offers help to resolve financial and pension difficulties, support engagement with local events and activities, access housing maintenance, grant schemes and adaptations, navigate the healthcare system, enable hospital discharge, access housing and tenancy support, and resolve any other challenges that may arise.

This support also includes providing **technology solutions** for older people to remain at home. Our staff will source, install, monitor and train the older person to use technology devices that they require to support them to age securely in their homes.



**ALONE's Social Prescribing** offers practical support to facilitate active engagement in local social prescription activities via information and organisation of transport. ALONE staff and volunteers can also potentially attend the first day of the activity with the older person where possible and appropriate, and maintain contact to ensure vulnerability hasn't increased.

This service complements our telephone and visitation support services and further reduces feelings of isolation and loneliness, provides assistance to solve everyday problems, and enables older people to feel secure at home. This encourages the older person to be empowered and connected in the long-term. The volunteers and older person are carefully matched based on mutual interests and the preference and needs of the older person.



### **ALONE's Visitation Support & Befriending Service**

provides regular visits to an older person from a volunteer who provides one-to-one companionship and practical support. Volunteers can support with practical tasks and provide information on local activities and relevant initiatives. All volunteers are trained, Garda vetted and receive support from ALONE staff.



### **ALONE's Telephone Support Service**

provides daily or weekly telephone contact to an older person from a volunteer. Volunteers provide companionship and support such as appointment reminders, medication prompts, and information on local activities and relevant initiatives. All volunteers are trained, Garda vetted and receive support from ALONE staff.



**ALONE's Housing** provides a range of housing options for older people, including general needs housing with visiting supports and housing with onsite support. ALONE is an Approved Housing Body registered with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG), a member of the Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH) and has Housing Finance Agency (HFA) accreditation. Our commitment and focus is on the provision of age appropriate lifetime adaptable housing with support nationwide.



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## CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

I am delighted to present the 2019 Annual Report.

I am proud to be in my second year of sitting as Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of ALONE. We have worked honourably over the past two years achieving monumental feats as an organisation, continually developing and improving the governance structure while ensuring the organisations complex and integrated system withstands the demand, as the number of people we support increases.

In 2019, we maintained the Governance Code and met commitments to the Charity and Housing regulators. Our leadership team reported to every board meeting on risk issues, legal issues and all notifiable events. The Board ensured to meet with the leadership team throughout the year to oversee the business plan.

As a Board we have ensured that ALONE independence of actions has been maintained while acting as the guardians of values and culture of ALONE. We have worked alongside subcommittees who over saw and head the executors to account. The Board continued to invest time in the use of technology to advance the ability of older people to age at home and to future proof ALONE.

We reviewed and completed a new and refreshed Trustees Handbook which was further developed and circulated. The accounts are prepared in accordance with SORP standards and reviewed monthly. We ensured all our legal commitments were completed.



ALONE completed a legal review of our compliance of labour law which was completed in addition to our annual bench-marking process. We completed an external review of risk and their management was completed in discussion with all levels of management and staff. Lead and guided by the Board. We conducted a fire audit and once completed, made recommendations which were immediately actioned and completed.

Rotation of Members on subcommittees were completed, work plans were followed and adapted.

ALONE has operated within the Scheme of Incorporation and this is being kept under review to reflect ALONE's circumstances and aspirations.

Kind regards  
Joe Sheehy

## CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S MESSAGE



This year we signed off and did an internal launch of our new strategic plan revolutionising aging at home. The plan was developed in consultation with all staff, volunteers and stake holders. The scale of response in this plan reflects the Aging Demographic and the demand and need for our services.

The goals are

- Create a community of organisations that are focused on improved social policies & services for older people throughout Ireland
- Deliver services in a national network of ALONE Service Hubs.
- Provide housing with support solutions directly and in partnership.
- To develop and use the latest technology to integrate multiple services & systems to enhance the quality of life for Older People in their communities
- Live the ALONE Way and develop our organisation.

The plan will test us and we will need all the best of our culture to manage where we will have to adapt and overcome.

This is my third strategic plan. In the first, the call was 'Strength in Unity', we created a clear 10-year vision for ALONE that would be achieved via united and committed organisation. The second one launched in 2014 was entitled 'No one left behind', we started to operate outside of Dublin and the aim was to build the foundation and Hub structures, partnerships and relationships that would allow us to grow and support, more people across the whole country.

This latest plan will see us scale our services, continue to partner and merge, while maintaining the ability to follow the needs of older people.

In the next few years we will continue to innovate with new technology, types of housing and our services will continue to empower older people to maintain their health and wellbeing, stay connected and live their best life.

What we do is difficult as we work in the gaps and we provide what the state does not. We will continue to provide support to others all while trying to change policy.

We help express the challenges, we create and demonstrate the solutions while working with and in a complex environment. We will aim to create multiple streams of income so we can continue to adapt and develop our services and our organisation.

As we write this we are in a situation none of us expected.

ALONE are now supporting over 15,000 older people (October 2020). The number of older people being supported in 2019 was just over 5,000. This is a remarkable 175% increase year-on-year. ALONE have been preparing to accommodate this number of people in the coming years but hadn't envisioned meeting this increase in a matter of months. We have been preparing to cater for this volume of people for almost a decade.

So to all our staff our volunteers, supporters, corporate and all the agencies we work with. This response wouldn't have been possible without you.

Finally, a special mention to the Board for all their skills and guidance they have always been united and focused on the needs of older people.

This has set the tone and the culture for the rest of us.

Warmest regards  
Seán

## OUR KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2019



- We continued planning the demand for our services with an internal launch of a new Strategic and Business Plan for 2019-2023
- We supported 5,410 older people, a 50% increase on 2018
- We increased our number of volunteers to 2,146
- Our focus remained on those most in need and those of advanced age
- We are investing in the structures for ALONE so we continue to grow
- We are expanding our level of co-operation and partnerships with other agencies and signed 10 Memorandum of Understanding documents with other organisations, an example of which is the development of the Telephone Support & Befriending Partnership with Carecall in CHO 9

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN NUMBERS

- We supported 5,410 older people, a 50% increase of 2018.
- 2,146 ALONE volunteers provided support to older people nationwide throughout the year. This is a 59% increase from the previous year.
- We acquired, refurbished and tenanted 15 new ALONE homes.
- Our professional Support Coordination staff provided extra support to 5,005 people experiencing challenges including financial, social, housing, and healthcare difficulties.
- 3,115 older people received support, visits and phone calls from our volunteers in 2019. This was an increase of 1,617 older people on 2018 figures.
- Our Telephone Befriending Volunteers made 97,345 an increase of 50% approx. on 2018, phone calls to 1485 people through the year.
- We are expanding our level of co-operation and partnerships with other agencies and signed 10 Memorandum of Understanding documents with other



organisations, an example of which is the development of the Telephone Support & Befriending Partnership with Carecall in CHO9.

- We supported an estimated 13,200 additional older people indirectly through Befriending Network Ireland.
- Community Fundraising donations increased by 12% year-on-year.
- We housed 34 new tenants.
- We held 190 volunteer training sessions, nearly triple that of 2018.
- In 2019, ALONE trained and recruited 767 volunteers nationwide. This is a 90% increase on 2018.
- Our staff increased from 51 in 2018 to 60 in 2019.
- Volunteers provided 1,128 hours of maintenance ALONE housing.
- We provided 76 people with BConnect home technology to enable them to feel safe and secure at home.
- We received 2,979 calls to our Dublin office directly from older people.





## VOLUNTEERING SUPPORTS

Volunteers are vital to ALONE. Without our frontline volunteers, we would not be able to deliver our services and are vital in ALONE reaching the quality standards we are awarded. Volunteers are involved in all levels of ALONE, from the Board of Trustees, to our vital frontline services including delivering practical supports, visiting their older person and linking them in with social activities in their community. All our volunteers are trained, Garda vetted and supported by professional staff.

**ALONE engaged with over 2,100 volunteers in 2019.** This is a 59% increase from the previous year.

In 2019 ALONE **trained and recruited 767 volunteers** nationwide. This is a 90% increase on 2018.

Volunteer training sessions almost tripled in 2019 with over 190 sessions taking place in comparison to 64 in 2018.

ALONE introduced a **volunteer learning and development framework**. Additional training on topics such as dementia, mental health, advocacy and hearing loss were covered.

ALONE was successful in achieving the **Excellence Standard for Quality in Befriending Award**. This is the highest standard award and shows the commitment and desire to provide the best quality service to volunteers and older people.

ALONE was successful in renewing the **Investing in Volunteers** quality standard.

Our annual **Volunteer Survey** concluded that 92% of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with their experience of ALONE. This was completed by 33% of all volunteers.

Our Volunteer Manager was also a part of the National Advisory Group and Writing Sub-group on the creation of the government's **National Volunteering Strategy**.

## BEFRIENDING AND SUPPORT BY VOLUNTEERS

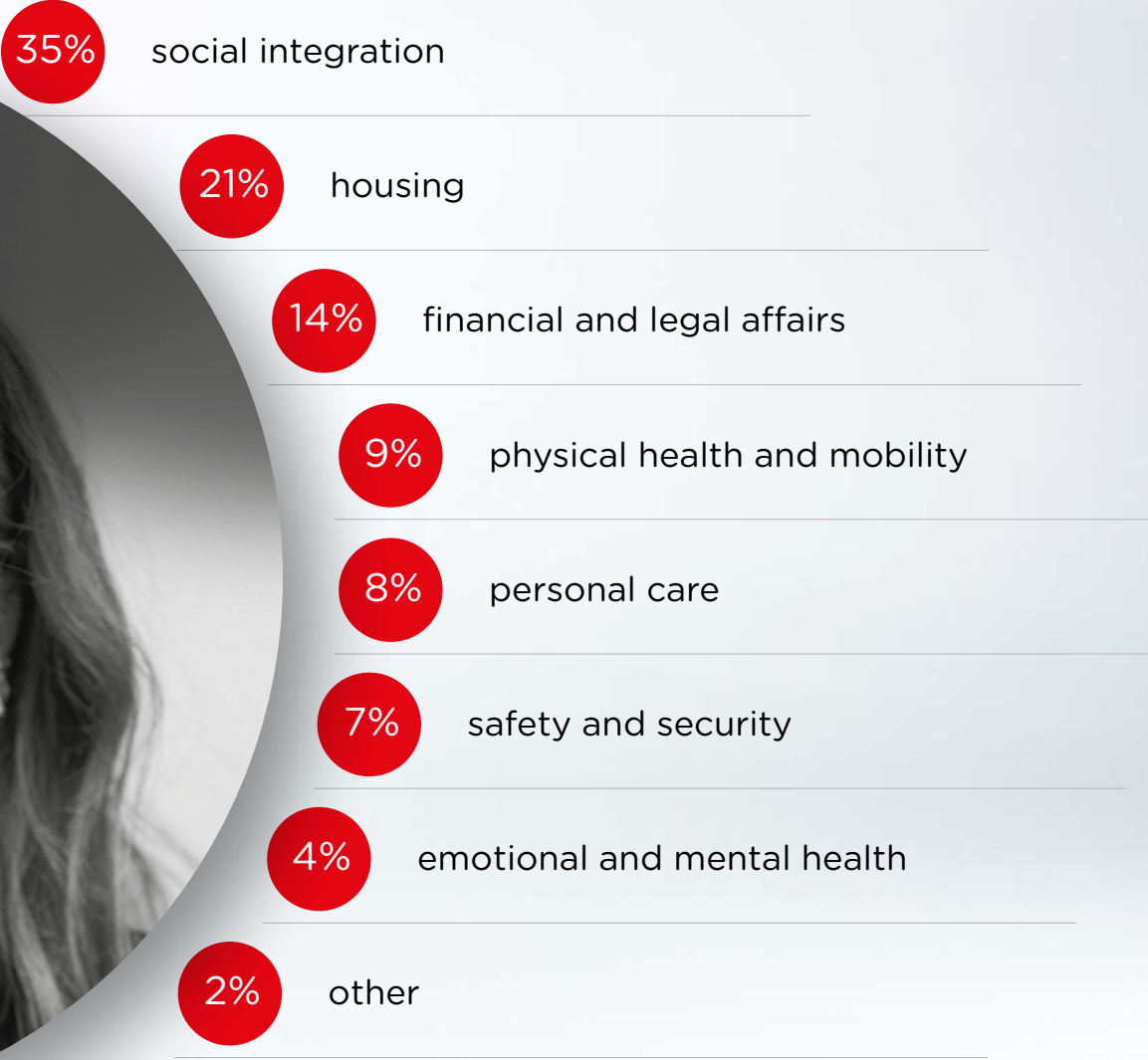
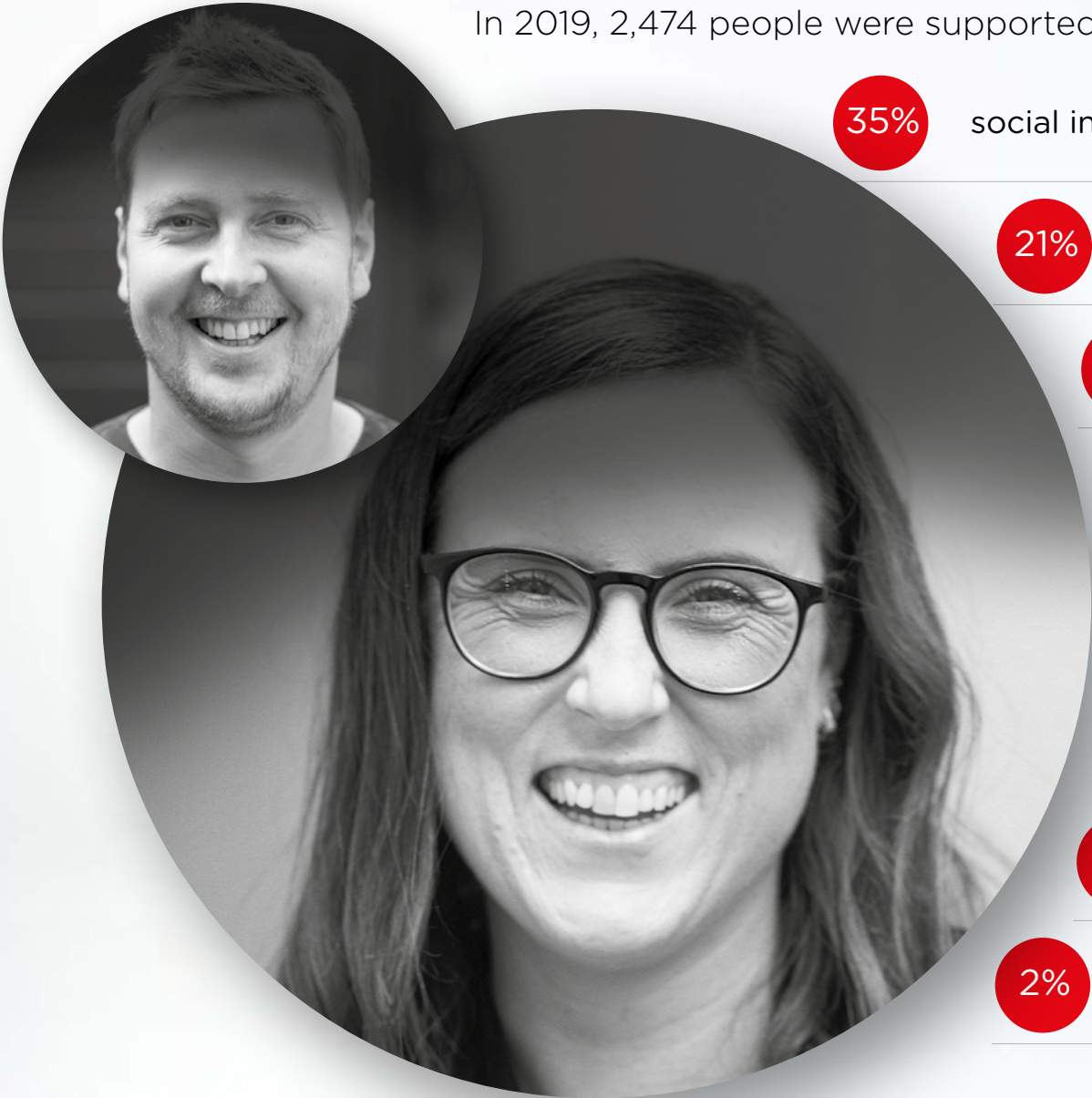


- In 2019 we provided Visitation Befriending to **2,488 people**
- ALONE volunteers visit older people who may be lonely or isolated, or may just want some extra social contact in their week. Volunteers provide companionship and support to the older person and ALONE's professional support staff **are on hand** to provide the older person with further support as and when required
- Our Telephone Support service provides **advice, information and friendship** to older people
- Our Support and Befriending volunteers grew from 142 in 2018 to 166 in 2019, an **increase of 17% approximately on 2018**, making 66,142 calls throughout the year and providing companionship and support to 1,485 people - an **increase of 125% approximately on 2018**

# SUPPORT COORDINATION

In 2018, ALONE Support Coordination Services supported 1,479 people.

In 2019, 2,474 people were supported through ALONE's Coordinated Support.



## HOUSING WITH SUPPORT

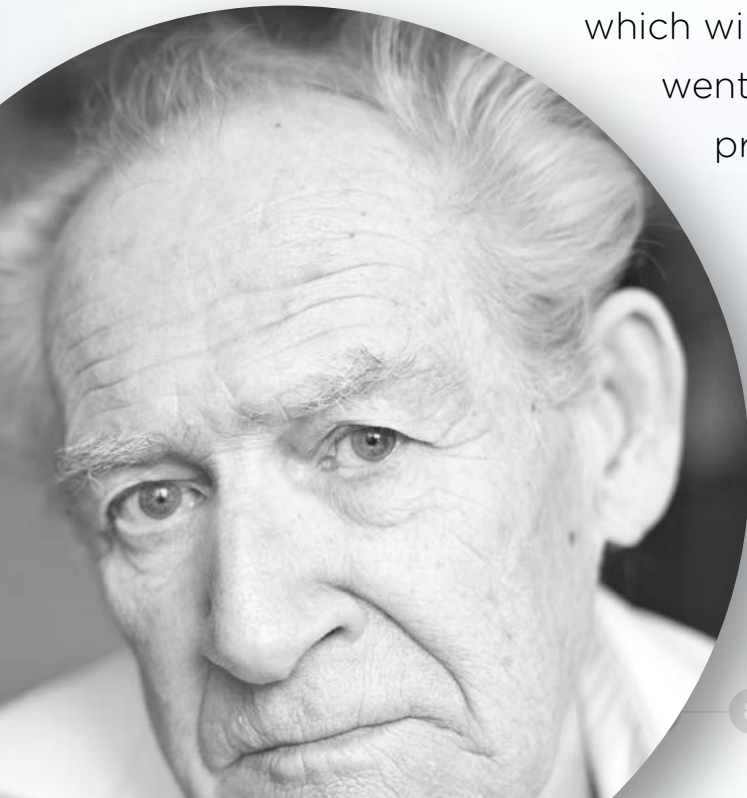
In 2019 we continued to provide and develop our housing and to provide long-term, secure tenancies. In 2019 we had 34 new tenants and a 98% occupancy level in our housing.



In 2019 we completed the refurbishment of 14 existing ALONE homes for older people throughout the Dublin region. These projects were managed internally and often completed with the assistance of volunteers who, as ever, add great value to the work of ALONE.



ALONE acquired Jamestown Court in 2019 which comprises 50 older housing units which will be refurbished in phases. The first phase of Jamestown Court went on site in 2019 and upon completion this €2 million project will provide 12 high-quality, one-bedroom housing units for the existing tenants of Jamestown Court. The majority of existing tenants in Jamestown Court transferred from Dublin City Council tenancies to ALONE tenancies. Sixteen existing tenants transferred from Dublin City Council tenancies to ALONE tenancies.



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ALONE's BConnect service connects organisations and individuals with the knowledge, training and technology they need to support people to live independently at home. We support other agencies through computerisation, training and partnership, and our assistive technology provides older people with security and support to self-manage and share information on health and well-being with family and health professionals.

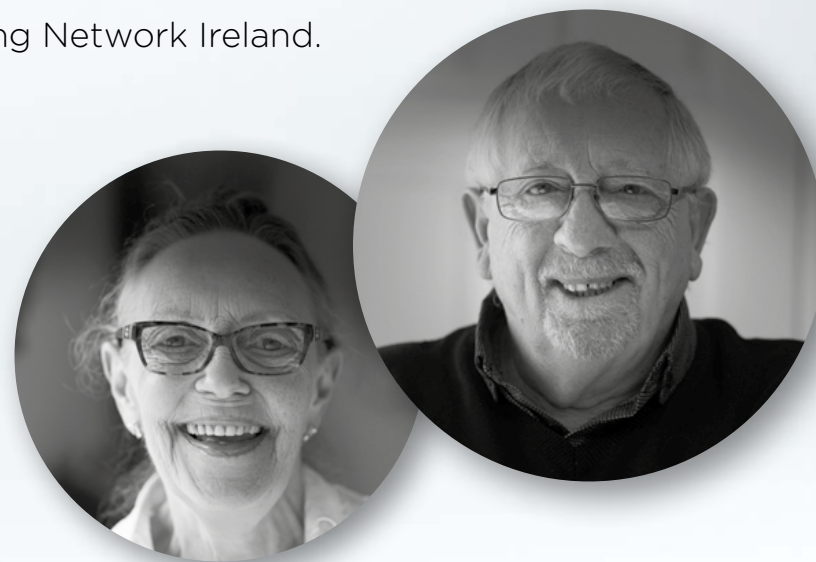
### Support to other organisations in 2019

- We provided training to 30 organisations (Management Information System & Befriending Network Ireland) and supported 14 organisations to start a service.
- We held 12 regional shared learning sessions.
- We computerised an additional 3 organisations.
- We held our annual BNI seminar with the theme of 'Developing a Sustainable Community Sector' in May.

In 2019, BConnect was awarded growth funding from Social Innovation Fund Ireland (SIFI) and Dormant Accounts funding from the Department of Rural and Community Development for further expansion and development of BConnect.

We installed 76 homes with BHome and BWell, our assistive technology for older people.

ALONE continues to coordinate Befriending Network Ireland (BNI). We increased membership of BNI from 56 to 63 organisations. ALONE supports an estimated 13,200 additional older people indirectly through Befriending Network Ireland.



We continued our work with the Age Alliance and the Home Care Coalition and co-founded the Loneliness Taskforce with former Senator Keith Swanick.



We submitted pre-budget submissions to the Department of Social Protection and collaborated with Age Action and Active Retirement Ireland on a lobbying day with Ministers and TDs.



Our corporate partnership with JC Decaux provided significant free outdoor advertising for a national billboard campaign, 'When Friendship Comes Knocking', created by creative agency Bonfire.

The campaign drew widespread attention to ALONE's impact.



## COMMUNICATIONS AND HUMAN RESOURCES

### Communications

- Secured over €1.8 million (1,804,716) worth of media coverage in 2019
- Issued 50 press releases resulting in 592 articles in print and online about ALONE
- Completed 140 media requests for radio and television
- ALONE's Twitter account gained 927,800 impressions



### Human Resources

- ALONE staff numbers increased significantly in 2019. Staff increased from 51 at the end of 2018 to 60 at the end of December 2019.
- We further developed the HR system to allow accurate recording and reporting on staffing, training, absenteeism, overtime / TOIL and report monthly on key HR metrics.
- We outlined a set of competencies for each staff group with specific training modules to support the development of the competencies and are in the process of rolling out these training modules
- We introduced a Flexible Working Arrangement.
- We further developed a Compensation Framework and mapped to The Wheel to support more accurate benchmarking.
- We created content on a range of non-technical skills and shared them with staff through different media.
- We introduced staff who didn't qualify for employer contribution to the PRSA scheme and they are making employee contributions.
- We created a HR reference guide to capture institutional HR knowledge.

## FUNDRAISING

- The Fundraising Team organised ALONE's first ever Sporting Challenge event 'You'll never Abseil ALONE' in Croke Park. This half day event was a great success, proved very popular with Corporate teams, received substantial media coverage and generated over €30,000 in donations on the day.
- Fundraising developed a strong relationship with new corporate partner Standard Life in 2019, with the partnership continuing into 2020. Other organisations partnered with ALONE in 2019, supporting ALONE from a Corporate Social Responsibility perspective.
- Community fundraising donations increased by 12% year-on-year.
- The kindness and generosity of ALONE's supporters continued, with individuals lending their support to two successful mailing campaigns, all of which continued to help ALONE provide vital support to older people.
  - From the launch of the Christmas campaign to year end, €78,117 in individual/general donations was received. This is a 52% increase on individual/general donations received during the same period in 2018.

All in all, targets were achieved and the team hosted many different types of events and campaigns and implemented new fundraising initiatives in 2019, all to be further developed in 2020.





## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

### ALONE has five key sources of funding, which have seen the following changes:

1. Rental Income increased by 18% against 2018 income.
2. Fundraising income increased by 17% year on year.
3. After an extraordinary levels of Legacy donations in 2018, Legacy in 2019 decreased by 72% in line with 2017 levels.
4. The value of our investment portfolio increased by €205,000 in 2019 – a 11% increase year on year.
5. Funding from various statutory bodies for 2019 amounted to 33% of total income.

#### INCOME CHART

General donations	302,612
Non-cash donation	143,023
Corporate donations	517,138
Legacies	226,605
Grants - stats	207,217
DCC grant amort	159,217
Statutory income	866,848
Rent	865,327
Investment income	247,925
Other income	55,139
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>3,591,051</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	
Governance costs	225,057
Cost of generating funds	125,746
Support costs	258,640
Direct charitable expenditure	2,867,611
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>3,477,054</b>
<b>Net Income/Expenditure</b>	<b>113,997</b>

## ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE

### Regulation, Standards and Codes

ALONE is registered with The Charities Regulator (Registered Charity Number 20020057).

We made our annual return to The Charities Regulator on 31/10/19.

ALONE complies with the Governance Code for Community and Voluntary Organisations.

ALONE's Board of Trustees reviewed and signed the Governance Code in April 2018

We are triple-locked members of the Charities Institute Ireland and comply with the Guiding Principles of Fundraising they have set out.

We have published our full annual audited financial accounts and reports, which comply with the Statement of Recommended Practice for Financial Reporting (SORP) standard.

ALONE complies with The Lobbying Act 2015

ALONE complies with the Safety, Health and Welfare Act 1989 and 2005.

ALONE is compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

ALONE was successful in achieving the **ISO9001:2015 Quality Standard**.

ALONE was successful in achieving the **Excellence Standard for Quality in Befriending Award**.

This is the highest standard award and shows the commitment and desire to provide the best quality service to volunteers and older people.

ALONE was successful in renewing the **Investing in Volunteers** quality standard.

We are an Approved Housing Body (Tier 2).

We comply with the Voluntary Code for Approved Housing Bodies, as regulated by the Housing Regulator.

We are a member of the Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH).

### Board of Trustees

Mr. Joe Sheehy (Chairperson)

Mr. Eddie Matthews (Vice Chairperson)

Mrs. Eimear Cahalin (Treasurer)

Ms. Annette Gavigan (Secretary)

Mr. Ed Sibley

Mr. Ciaran Donegan

Mr. Kevin McConville (Honorary Member)

Mr. Mark Mulqueen

Ms. Siobhan Hamilton

Mr. Pat Morgan

Mr. Michael Hodgins

Mr. Jeremy Chapman

Ms. Sarah McDonnell





YOU'RE NOT ALONE

**ALONE**

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Available to download from [www.alone.ie](http://www.alone.ie)



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