

The logo for 'ALONE' is displayed in white, bold, uppercase letters within a red rounded rectangular box. A white dot is positioned below the letter 'O'.

# ALONE

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

**#OneinSeven**  
**Over65**

2025

Pre-Budget  
**SUBMISSION**

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2025

# PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION

**ALONE**

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

ALONE is a national organisation that enables older people to age at home. We will provide support over 45,000 older people around Ireland this year.

Our work is for all older people and aims to improve physical, emotional and mental wellbeing. We have a National network of staff and volunteers who provide an integrated system of Support Coordination, Practical Supports, Support & Befriending, a variety of Phone Services, Social Prescribing, Housing with Support and Assistive Technology.

We use individualised support plans, to address health, financial benefits and supports, social care, housing, transport and other arising needs using technology and through harnessing other services.

We work to empower the whole sector of community support for older people through our Community Impact Network that provides Training, IT support and resources to other organisations.

## FINANCIAL ISSUES OLDER PEOPLE ARE EXPERIENCING

ALONE supported over 37,000 older in 2023. Of those that we assessed, 30% indicated that they had issues with Finance. Among them, 2 out of 5 people had issues with utilities, 1 in 3 people had issues with benefits, and just under 1 in 5 had issues with entitlements.

Were it not for the once-off cost of living payments, more than one third of older people living alone would have been at risk of poverty in 2023. The once-off payments helped to support older people, and their at-risk-of-poverty rate dropped to 15% (CSO, 2024). The cost-of-living payments must be built into standard welfare payments.

For an older person living alone (aged 70-80), by our calculations, implementing all of these increases would bring their average weekly income (which includes income from the increased maximum rate of state contributory pension, the increased living alone allowance, the increased fuel allowance, the increased telephone support allowance, the household benefits package, and the increased Christmas bonus pension payment) to €369 per week or €19,207 per year, which is over one third of average earnings (as per CSO figures (using EHECS data) from Q1 2024.)

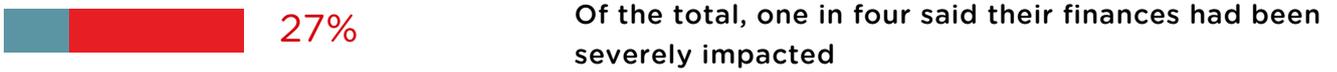
### QUOTE FROM OUR SURVEY

The 12 euro increase in the OAP last year buys one third of a bag of coal. This increase means very little.

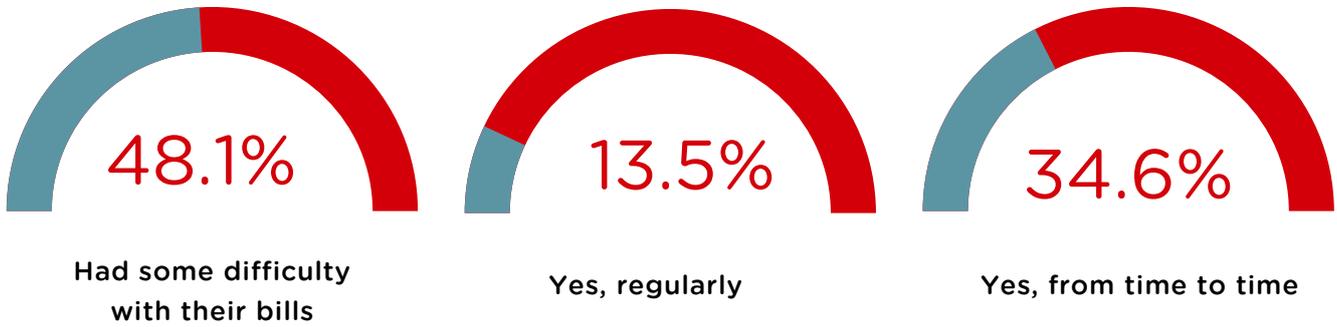
ALONE survey

ALONE recently sent out a survey to its service users, below is a snapshot into how the cost of living has affected them. This survey was taken by 185 older people who are supported by ALONE.

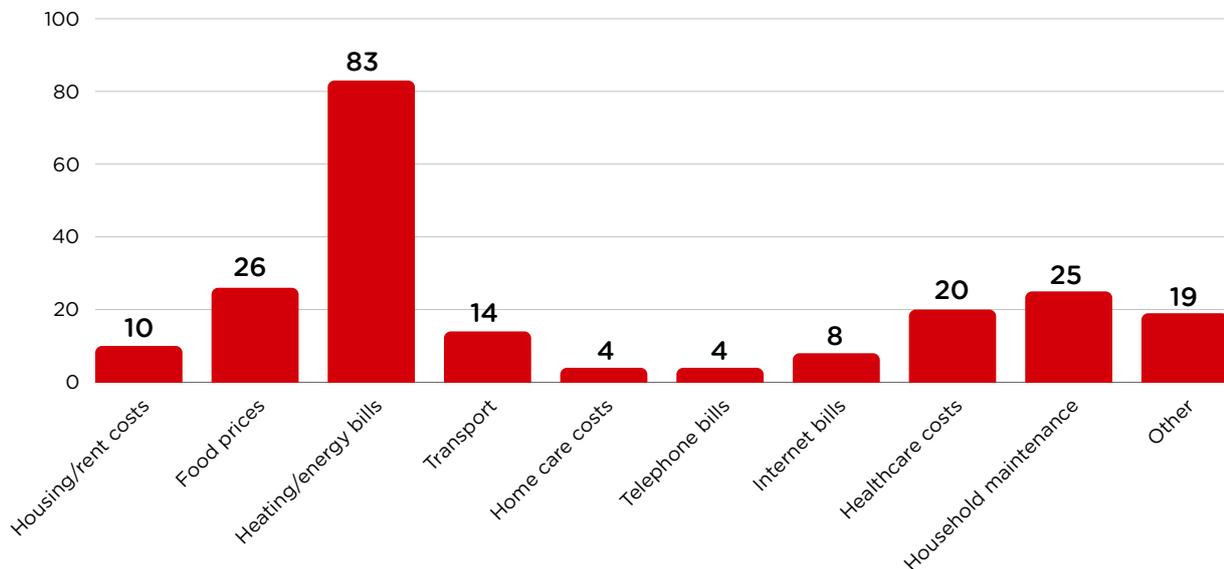
Have your finances been impacted by the increased cost of living?



Do you find it difficult to pay your bills?

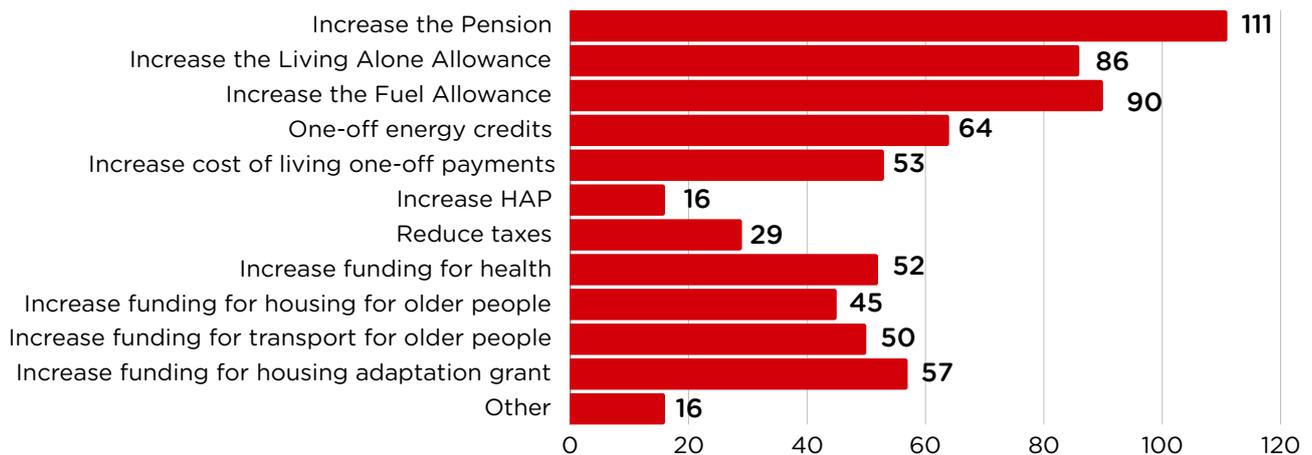


What costs are you most worried about?



## ALONE survey

## What changes in the Budget would help you?



## Comments from participants

**HEATING IN WINTER**

No money left after bills,  
I can't afford to use the electric  
much in the winter.

**PENSION**

It is very difficult to live on widow's  
pension. The cost of groceries and  
heating a home are very hard to meet.

**PENSION**

I'm a state pensioner and in no way has my pension kept pace with the cost of living, every day is a constant struggle, and it is completely necessary to constantly search for everyday better value in every aspect of my life.

**COST OF LIVING**

I live on about 30 euro a week it must be a year since I could have got a week shopping I crave for so many things but can not afford to buy them it's about two and half years ago since I buy anything for myself, there are times I sit and cry what I would give to be able to go shopping and to have the money to do it

ALONE has 5 key asks of the Department of Social Protection for Budget 2025:



### **THE STATE PENSION**

Implement benchmarking of the State Pension, publish the workings developed by the Department relating to benchmarking, and increase the State Pension by at least €18.



### **LIVING ALONE ALLOWANCE**

Increase the Living Alone Allowance by a minimum of €10 and commit to develop an appropriate benchmark for this payment.



### **TELEPHONE SUPPORT ALLOWANCE**

Increase the Telephone Support Allowance by a minimum of €7.50, and rename it to 'Telephone and Internet Support Allowance'.



### **FUEL ALLOWANCE**

Increase the Fuel Allowance by a minimum of €10, in addition to providing appropriate levels of once-off payments.



### **APPLICATION PROCESS**

Simplify the application process for entitlements that make accessing payments easier.

## Implement benchmarking of the State Pension

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- There have been several commitments to benchmark the State Pension, made in the Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025 and the Roadmap for Pensions Reform 2018-2023.
- Implementing pension benchmarking is an opportunity for Government to make a real and long-term impact on the lives of older people today and to lift many of the most exposed out of poverty. As the cost of living continues to increase, older people's incomes must be protected and benchmarked to keep up with inflation.
- Rather than purely poverty prevention, ALONE believe that the State should enable the maintenance of living standards in older age. Payments should also consider the costs that arise with ageing and associated disability.
- Currently the State Pension maximum rate is €277.30. In 2024, the budgeted allocation for pension costs is €10.68bn.
- If the benchmark was implemented this year, the Pension would be required to increase by €36, to €313.41. Implemented over two years, this would require a minimum increase to the pension this year of €18.
- An increase to the State Pension of €18 is estimated to cost an additional €692.1M.

### **ALONE BUDGET ASK**

Increase the State Pension by a minimum of €18, with a commitment to increase by a similar amount in Budget 2026, to implement benchmarking of the pension. The Department must also publish their benchmarking workings as delivered to Cabinet.

**Estimated cost: €692.1 M**

## Living Alone Allowance

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»»» The CSO SILC data shows that older people living alone have the lowest median household disposable income at €19,753.

»»» The Living Alone Allowance currently stands at €22 per week. A €200 cost of living lump sum was provided to those in receipt of the Living Alone Allowance in 2023. The €22 rate is not benchmarked against anything.

»»» The Department's records as of the 31st of March 2024 show that there are 172,584 Living Alone Increases in payment.<sup>1</sup>

»»» ALONE recommend that research is completed to find an appropriate benchmark for the Living Alone Allowance that will enable older people living alone to reach the same standard of living as their counterparts living with a partner or family member. It has been suggested previously that an older person living alone has 80% of the same costs as an older couple, which would indicate a significant increase in the Living Alone Allowance would be required to ensure a similar standard of living.

»»» In the interim, ALONE recommend that the Living Alone Allowance is increased by a minimum of €10, to €32, at an estimated cost of €122.8m.<sup>2</sup>

### **ALONE BUDGET ASK**

Increase the Living Alone Allowance by a minimum of €10, with a commitment to develop an appropriate benchmark for this payment.

**Estimated cost: €122.8 M**

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2024-04-16/479/>

<sup>2</sup> Departmental Data: 29 May 2024: Written answers (KildareStreet.com)

## Telephone Support Allowance

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»»» The Telephone Support Allowance is a highly targeted support to the cohort of people who are in receipt of both the Living Alone Allowance and the Fuel Allowance.

»»» The Telephone Support Allowance is €2.50 per week (€130 per year) and has not been increased since it was introduced in 2018. It replaced the Telephone Allowance, discontinued in 2013, which was €9.50 per month (€114 per year) and provided to a broader cohort as part of the Household Benefits Package.

»»» The TSA does not cover the costs of vital supports such as access to broadband, telephone costs and the Senior Alert Scheme. The cost of internet increasingly adds to the digital divide being experienced by older people. We also believe that this support should be renamed as the Telephone and Internet Support Allowance to reflect its use.

»»» ALONE recommend that the TSA is at minimum increased to €10 per week<sup>3</sup> and it to become expanded to cover broadband costs.

### ALONE BUDGET ASK

Increase the Telephone Support Allowance by a minimum of €7.50, with a commitment to develop an appropriate benchmark for this payment and expand its use for broadband charges.

**Estimated cost: €60.6 M**

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2023-09-11/1008/>

## Fuel Allowance

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▶▶▶ The Fuel Allowance is €33 per week and is paid from the end of September to April for 28 weeks. Over 2022 and 2023, a number of energy credits and additional once-off supports were provided to support people receiving the Fuel Allowance (as well as those not in receipt of this support) with their increasing energy bills. These once off payments were significant in the context of the total fuel allowance payment, which amounts to €924 over 28 weeks.

▶▶▶ In 2022, two extra payments of €100 and €125 were provided (total support of €225);

▶▶▶ In the 2023 Budget, Fuel Allowance recipients received a once-off payment of €400 and all households received €600, in the form of three energy credits, towards their bills (total support of €1,000);

▶▶▶ In the 2024 Budget, Fuel Allowance recipients received a once-off payment of €300 and all households received €450, in the form of three energy credits, towards their bills (total support of €750).

▶▶▶ Minimum Essential Standard of Living analysis found that compared to 2020, the (MESL) household energy basket has increased by 64.5%, and in addition to that the older single adult with additional heating need demonstrates the greatest levels and depths of energy poverty.<sup>4</sup>

▶▶▶ If the Fuel Allowance were to be increased at the same rate as the cost identified by (MESL), this would require an increase of €21 – 60% of the rate.

### QUOTE FROM OUR SURVEY

Heating my home for the winters ahead of me will be a challenge. My home heating is obtained from solid fuel and it is practically unobtainable to get or buy.

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.budgeting.ie/download/pdf/mesl\\_pre-budget\\_submission\\_2025.pdf](https://www.budgeting.ie/download/pdf/mesl_pre-budget_submission_2025.pdf)

## Fuel Allowance

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▶▶▶ An increase of €10 to the Fuel Allowance would not fully meet the increased need. Despite calls from civil society groups to increase core welfare payments, once-off payments have become a significant part of the Budgetary cycle, the result being that core payments have fallen significantly behind real costs in recent years.

▶▶▶ Government has indicated previously that once-off lump-sum payments enable them to target the timing of the payment to when it is most needed, which is also useful.

▶▶▶ Given this approach, ALONE recommends that **in addition** to any once-off Fuel Allowance payments, which may be lower than in other years, the core rate of Fuel Allowance should be increased by a minimum of €10.<sup>5</sup>

### **ALONE BUDGET ASK**

Increase the Fuel Allowance by a minimum of €10, as well as providing appropriate once-off payments

Estimated cost: €124.8 M

## Simplify the processes for applying for entitlements to enable accessibility for older people.

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One difficulty older people experience is simply accessing their entitlements at all.

The social protection system is not designed with accessibility for older people in mind. In fact, it often throws up barriers to people trying to access support. The range of supports available from the Department of Social Protection and other Departments all require different forms, some have means tests and some don't, the means eligibility varies, some are applicable at different ages, and the applications are sent to many different organisations and Government departments. In addition, supports that appear similar to someone not used to them, often have very different criteria.

This complexity prevents older people from accessing supports they are eligible for. It most severely impacts older people with lower literacy and numeracy skills, including online literacy, as they are now primarily directed to mywelfare.ie for information. It also severely impacts older people living alone, who may not have family members to advocate or support them with these tasks.

Accessing the supports you are entitled to can be an administrative burden to both the older person and to the State, not to mention intermediary organisations such as ALONE which provide significant support in this area.

It is ALONE's view that streamlining of eligibility criteria and reducing the levels of means testing being used across the entitlements available from this Department, would have significant impact on older people's ability to know about and access the supports they are entitled to, while reducing the administrative cost burden.

Simplify the processes for applying for entitlements to enable accessibility for older people.

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## Examples

- ▶▶▶ Household Benefits Package, if you are over 70, you are not means tested and don't have to be getting a pension.
- ▶▶▶ Fuel Allowance, you are means tested. For the Living Alone allowance, you need to be 66 or over.
- ▶▶▶ GP visit card, which is not means tested, is available for people over 70.
- ▶▶▶ Free travel (for those who have access to public transport) is available to people who are over 66.
- ▶▶▶ There are also different ways of applying for each of them, and many different means criteria, some of which assess both income and capital.
- ▶▶▶ All supports require different forms, all have different systems and eligibility criteria, and are sent to many different organisations and Government departments. This makes simply understanding and applying for the relevant entitlements extremely difficult. It is also administratively burdensome, as the older person must answer the same questions repeatedly across different forms.

### ALONE ASK

Develop a streamlined approach for accessing and applying for pension, fuel allowance, Living Alone allowance, the Household Benefits package, Telephone Support Allowance and other entitlements, in accessible formats both online and offline.

Simplifying eligibility criteria (eg age at which one becomes eligible for various entitlements) and administrative requirements across the entitlements available from this Department, as far as possible.

ALONE has 4 key asks of the Department of Health for Budget 2025:

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### **LONELINESS**

Commit funding to developing and implementing the promised action plan to combat Loneliness.



### **HOUSING WITH SUPPORT**

Develop a budget line for funding of services within Housing with Support developments.



### **HOME SUPPORT SERVICE**

Significantly increase funding to home support service.



### **MENTAL HEALTH**

Adequately fund, support and enable older people to access mental health supports

## Commit funding to developing and implementing the promised action plan to combat loneliness

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General health issues are the top reasons people look for support from ALONE and, of these, loneliness is the main category. Last year, two thirds of older people who accessed our services experienced loneliness or social isolation some or all the time. Almost one in ten of the people who came to ALONE due to experiencing loneliness said they had not been out socially in over a year.

Recent EU research has shown that Ireland has the highest levels of loneliness in the EU - 20% of us feel lonely most or all of the time.

Despite a commitment in the Programme for Government to address loneliness, loneliness has not been allocated to a Unit within the Department of Health; nor has it received specific funding, and the committed-to action plan does not appear to have been started.

In addition, the Government has committed to developing an action plan in various policy documents including the Roadmap for Social Inclusion, and the Healthy Ireland Strategic Plan.

Along with our colleagues in the Loneliness Taskforce, ALONE is calling for €5 million in funding in Budget 2025 for development of the action plan, a public campaign, support for organisations combating loneliness, and research, among other recommended actions.

### **ALONE BUDGET ASK**

Allocate specific funding to the development and implementation of an action plan to combat loneliness, as has been committed to in numerous Government strategies

**Estimated cost: €5 M**

## Develop a budget line for funding of services within Housing with Support developments

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»»» The Health Service Capacity Review states: “Changes in demographics and non-demographic (wellness, technology advancements etc.) mean that new models of care are not only possible, but necessary.”

»»» ALONE and partners are developing the Demonstrator Project for Housing with Support in Inchicore, Dublin 8, which will be tenanted by the end of 2024. This project has been developed alongside the Departments of Housing and Health, the HSE, Dublin City Council, and other stakeholders.

»»» A key element of the demonstrator project is that it must be replicable both by the organisations involved and by other organisations. **Wider roll-out requires a clear budget heading for funding the annual operation of these types of projects.**

»»» The supports within Housing with Support will be funded by the HSE for the demonstrator project but a budget line must be developed so that others can develop these projects. ALONE have estimated that €2,328,852 is the cost of a 50-unit HwS scheme per year, which accounts for provision of building and a year of operations.

»»» The report by the Housing Agency, 'Thinking Ahead: The Financial Benefits of Investing in Supported Housing for Older People' found that: “The [financial] benefits primarily accrue due to Supported Housing, either by directly **replacing more expensive nursing home beds or delaying the need for an older person to access nursing home care**”.

### ALONE BUDGET ASK

Develop a budget line and allocate specific funding to the provision of supports within Housing with Support developments

## Significantly increase funding to the home support service

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▶▶▶ Funding for the Home Support Scheme has increased significantly in recent years, which has been welcomed by ALONE. Funding for home support was €443 million in 2019. By 2023, funding for the home support service had increased to €723m.

▶▶▶ However, funding for home support in 2024 increased by just €2.8m, which was to meet inflationary pressures.<sup>6</sup> The delivery targets were 22 million hours, to 54,100 people. These targets were lower than those originally set for 2023.

▶▶▶ In addition, the ESRI estimated that demand could increase to almost 42 million hours under a statutory scheme.

▶▶▶ As of May 2024, 5,671 people were on the waiting list for home support, including 1,348 in Cork and Kerry.

▶▶▶ The Home Care Coalition has calculated based on previous Budget allocations that an increase in demand of 31.8% (ESRI scenario) would require a further €231m, bringing the total to €956.8 million. A further uplift of 10% for inflation, higher pay, travel, would increase this by a further €95m, bringing the total to €1.053bn.

▶▶▶ We must see clear commitments to both increased hours of support being provided, and increased funding for the service, in this year's Budget.

### **ALONE BUDGET ASK**

Increase funding to the Home Support Service to take into account unmet need, and population projections

**Estimated cost: €1.053 M (Budget increase of €326m)**

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/question/2023-11-09/304/>

## Adequately fund, support and enable older people to access mental health supports

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While the ageing of our population is being noted in relation to services like home support and nursing home care, this does not appear to have been considered in the context of our mental health services.

Mental health difficulties among older people are under-recognised both by the medical profession and by older people themselves. TILDA research has shown that 78% of older adults who have evidence of depression, and 85% who have evidence of anxiety, do not have a doctor's diagnosis.

Nearly 2,500 people assessed by ALONE in 2023 indicated that they had issues with their mental health. Of the 556 people assessed in Q4 2023, just 41% (n=230) had attended a GP, nurse, or medical practitioner. Of those, 72% were prescribed medication of which nearly 1 in 10 said they forgot to take it.

Research on the mental health experiences of older people 65+ with a nationally representative sample, published by Aware and supported by ALONE found that:

- One third (34 per cent) had mild to moderate levels of depression.
- Two fifths (41 per cent) had mild to moderate anxiety.
- 14 per cent considered ending their lives in the last 12 months.
- Those living with a chronic illness were more likely to experience depression, anxiety and loneliness.
- In addition, 34 per cent said they would not feel okay about themselves if they decided to seek help for mental health difficulties, and 1 in 10 (11 per cent) admitted they would be ashamed to have a mental health difficulty.

### **ALONE BUDGET ASK**

Increase funding specifically to:

Specific mental health policy, evidence-based programmes and research for older people must be committed to, funded, and implemented as part of Sharing the Vision. These should be developed in collaboration with experts and stakeholders working with older people.

Establish a specialist group under NIMC for Sharing the Vision actions relating to older people's mental health. This remains under review pending an update of progress later this year. We call for this specialist group to be established under Sharing the Vision as a priority.

As a member of Mental Health Reform, ALONE echo MHR's calls to commit 10% of the health budget to mental health. In addition, we echo MHR's call on the Department for accessible, transparent and inclusive messaging and clarity in Budget documents relating to funding for mental health.

### **QUOTES FROM OUR SURVEY**

Too ill no energy to go through it all.

It's just a bit of a struggle when overheads are high like paying carers for their time.

ALONE has 2 key asks of the Department of Housing for Budget 2025:

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### **HOUSING ADAPTATION GRANTS**

Significantly increase funding to the suite of Housing Adaptation Grants



### **DEVELOP A NEW FUNDING MECHANISM TO ENABLE DEVELOPMENT OF HOUSING WITH SUPPORT**

Increase development, investment in and evaluation of promising housing models, inclusive of supports, particularly via AHBs. Develop a new funding mechanism to make this possible.

### **QUOTES FROM OUR SURVEY**

Finding someone affordable to do household repairs and maintenance is difficult eg. cleaning gutters, repair shed roof etc.

I have less money because of house maintenance. This year: sink changed. Had to get new shower unit, new loo.

We can't afford the rents that are being asked for properties and homelessness is a distinct possibility for us.

## Significantly increase funding to the suite of Housing Adaptation Grants

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Some 13,000 housing grants for older people and people with disabilities have been funded for 2024. However, this is lower than the 13,588 grants that were funded in 2010. Since then, the population aged 65+ has increased from 515,100 people to 806,300 people.

If the number of grants funded were to be equivalent to the number in 2010 per head of population aged 65+, this would require a total of 21,265 grants to be funded.

Based on the cost per grant in 2023, to deliver this increase would require total Exchequer funding of €116.87m (not including the contribution required from the Local Authority), a significant increase of more than €41m from the €75.28m allocated in 2024. This estimate does not account for several key elements, including the increased cost of works since 2010; but further data relating to waiting lists and unmet demand is urgently required if accurate funding estimates are to be made.

The impact of the shortfall in funding for these grants is severe. Delays in accessing the grants prevents timely hospital discharge for older people; it prevents them from ageing comfortably at home and being able to access basic necessities like an accessible shower. Older people supported by ALONE have at times had to wait more than a year to access a grant. Others have sadly passed away while still awaiting a grant.

### **ALONE BUDGET ASK**

Increase funding to the suite of housing grants for older people and people with a disability: The Housing Adaptation Grant; the Mobility Aid grant; the Housing Aid for Older Persons grant to deliver more than 21,000 grants in 2025.

Additionally, increase funding to account for the increased cost of construction and increased grant limits.

Increase development, investment in and evaluation of promising housing models, inclusive of supports, particularly via AHBs. Develop a new funding mechanism to make this possible.

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»»» The Health Service Capacity Review 2018 identified the need to increase the quantum of nursing home beds from 30,000 community beds in 2016 to 41,900-43,000 beds (lower and upper range) by 2031. As of end 2022 there were approx. 31,800 private, public and voluntary nursing home beds. This would mean an increase of at least 10,250 nursing home beds from now.

»»» To meet projected demand, we need to develop more than 1,200 nursing home beds per year - and/or we need to invest in alternative supportive housing options.

»»» ALONE and Circle VHA are developing the Demonstrator Project for Housing with Support in Inchicore, Dublin 8, which will be tenanted by the end of 2024. This project has been developed alongside the Departments of Housing and Health, the HSE, Dublin City Council, and other stakeholders.

»»» ALONE have projected national demand for Housing with Supports in Ireland at 4,340 units. The capital cost of the Demonstrator Project in Inchicore is roughly €15 million, for delivery of 52 units.

»»» As recommended in the independent evaluation of the demonstrator project by the Housing Agency, “a dedicated cross-departmental capital funding scheme needs to be put in place that recognises the additional costs of Universal and Ageing-in Place Design and that makes provision to cover the additional costs of the communal spaces required for a Housing with Support model. This new funding stream should be flexible enough to allow financial contributions from private sources and to facilitate a mix of tenant types.”

### ALONE BUDGET ASK

Provide for capital and build costs for increased units of Housing with Support in 2025 via new funding mechanism

ALONE has 1 key ask of the Department of the Taoiseach for Budget 2025:

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### **COMMISSIONER FOR OLDER PEOPLE**

Develop and fund the position of Commissioner for Older People.

## Develop and fund the position of Commissioner for Older People

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As a member of the Age Alliance, ALONE is calling for the development of the role of Commissioner for Older People. We believe that now is the time for the introduction of a strategic position of Commissioner at Government level to prepare for our ageing population and respond to their needs, and are advocating specifically for this role to be introduced.

What is missing is an independent champion at national level, to ensure and advocate for the mainstreaming of ageing across Government strategies and plans.

Almost every Government strategy and action plan, whether it is relating to health, transport, housing, the environment, or connectivity, must be considered in the context of our ageing population and the ageing demographic they will serve.

In Northern Ireland, funding of £1.4 million for the Commissioner for Older People was allocated in 2023; in Wales, the position was allocated just under £1.6 million in funding. We believe therefore that this could be a relatively cost-effective measure.

### **ALONE BUDGET ASK**

Commit similar funding to the development and implementation of the role of Commissioner for Older People

ALONE has 1 key ask of the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications for Budget 2025:

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### **ENERGY POVERTY**

Deliver the €10m fund to support people experiencing energy poverty, committed to in the previous Action Plan to Combat Energy Poverty

### **QUOTES FROM OUR SURVEY**

Have serious heart and lung problems and feel the cold to a great extent and have to spend a fortune on gas and that's only for bedroom and toilet. Cannot turn on radiator in front room so live in my bedroom

I have to buy a lot of coal turf and logs for winter. I worry if my fridge breaks down how will I manage

## Deliver the €10m fund to support people experiencing energy poverty, committed to in the previous Action Plan to Combat Energy Poverty

▶▶▶ The Action Plan to Combat Energy Poverty stated that a €10 million fund would be established “as an additional safeguard measure for those who may not be able to access other emergency financial supports, and to help ensure no one has to go without heat or light this winter”.

▶▶▶ While the energy credits provided were welcome, 49% of older people use oil heating. Calls received by ALONE indicated that some older people were unable to pay to get their oil tank filled. This often meant supporting the older person to engage with their Community Welfare Office and additional needs payments.

▶▶▶ **ALONE recommend that a €10m emergency energy poverty fund is developed, and uses existing NGO infrastructure, to ensure that those most at risk can access timely support.**

ALONE and other organisations with links to energy companies already have processes and assessments in place to enable service users to access energy credits with various energy companies. An emergency energy poverty fund, funded by DECC and distributed using NGO infrastructure, could support those who use oil and solid fuel to access fuel in emergencies.

**This could take place on a pilot basis in Year 1, with scope for continuation if successful.**

▶▶▶ **This also provides an opportunity, in line with the Department’s work to ensure a Just Transition, for NGOs to couple this with support to access SEAI grants or relevant support to switch to alternative fuel, and to offer targeted information and materials for people who rely on oil, solid fuels and turf for home heating.**

### ALONE BUDGET ASK

Establish emergency energy poverty fund using existing NGO infrastructure to ensure that those most at risk of energy poverty can access timely support.

Estimated cost: €10 M

# LONELINESS

## WHAT ALONE IS SEEING

In 2023 we saw an upward trend of older people experiencing depression and anxiety when linked with isolation.

### EUROPEAN COMMISSION SURVEY

20%

Loneliness is more prevalent in Ireland than any other EU country, with over 20% of respondents in Ireland reporting feeling lonely.

58% of those we assessed in 2023 experienced loneliness

58%

### WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION (WHO)

WHO has declared loneliness a 'pressing health threat', and has launched a new commission to foster social connection as a priority in all countries

5,334 older people assessed received a direct loneliness intervention

5,334

# HOUSING

## WHAT ALONE IS SEEING

32% of older people we assessed experienced an issue with Housing, with Housing adaptations emerging as the most prevalent concern.

32%

## CENSUS DATA 2022

17% of households aged 65+ have housing costs - such as a loan/mortgage, rent in the private sector, or social housing rent

17%

Housing interventions accounted for highest number of interventions for ALONE

8,726

There has been an 83% increase in older renters since the last Census

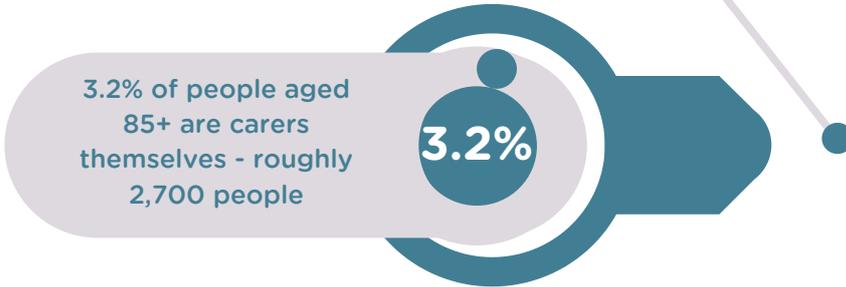
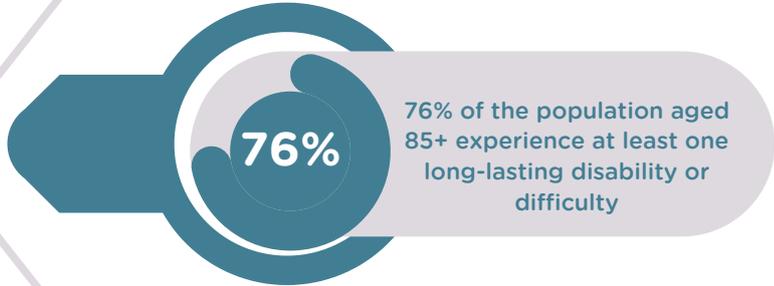
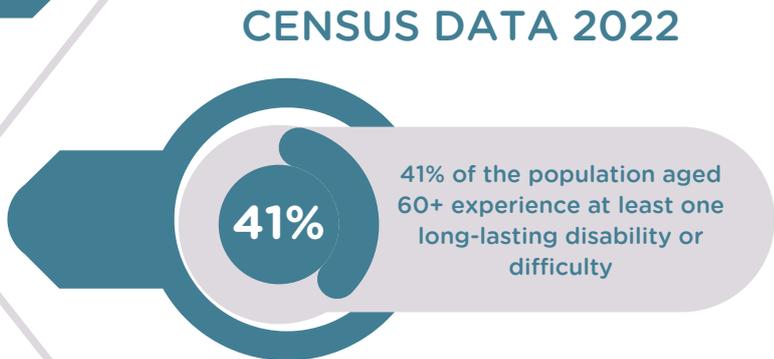
83%

A 2021 release by the CSO showed that close to half (49.5%) of tenants who are 65 or over are spending more than 35% of their disposable income on rent.



# HOME SUPPORT

## WHAT ALONE IS SEEING



# HEALTH

## WHAT ALONE IS SEEING

ECC ANNUAL REPORT 2023

48% experienced physical health issues, with falls a concern for most older people followed by memory issues

48%

## CENSUS DATA 2022

Rates of fair, bad or very bad health increase with age. Around 20% of people in their 60s rate their health as fair or worse, compared to 46% of people aged 85+.

32% experienced an issue with mobility, with mobility aids and fixtures being the main concerns for older people across the year

32%

Research published by Aware and supported by ALONE showed that one third of older people were experiencing mild-moderate levels of depression, and 14% considered ending their lives in the last 12 months.

In total, 2,405 people assessed by ALONE in 2023 indicated that they had issues with their mental health\*

26%

\*OF THE 9,148 PEOPLE WHO RECEIVED A PERSONALISED NEEDS ASSESSMENT FROM ALONE

# ENERGY POVERTY

## WHAT ALONE IS SEEING

ECC ANNUAL REPORT 2023

30% experienced finance issues, with utilities and benefits the main concern, reflecting the impact of increasing energy prices on older people

30%

ALONE - DECC WINTER CAMPAIGN STATUS REPORT

Older people are particularly at risk of energy poverty for reasons including low income, high expenditure on fuel/heating, higher reliance on oil/solid fuels for heating, and energy-inefficient/low BER-rated homes. Households in rural locations are also more likely to be energy-poor.

Winter Fuel Allowance was the most prevalent issue for older people experiencing issues with benefits

57%

ESRI working paper, May 2023

Households with a person aged 65+ are 1.8 times more likely to fall into fuel poverty than households with only people aged below 65

31% of older people required support with the Household Benefits Package

31%

The logo for ALONE, featuring the word "ALONE" in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The letter "O" is stylized as a red circle with a white dot in the center. The text is set against a red rounded rectangular background. Below the text is a thin white horizontal line with a small white dot at its right end.

# ALONE

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

2025

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Pre-Budget  
**SUBMISSION**

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