

Older Person's Survey

2024 Report



ALONE

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

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ALONE provides and coordinates a range of services to support older people to age safely at home. Our national network of fully trained staff and volunteers are ready to work with individuals across the country. We are committed to our vision of an Ireland where older people can age happily and securely in the comfort of their homes while maintaining strong connections to their local communities.

Feedback from the people we support is vital. It helps us to improve, to adapt to the needs of those we serve, and to ensure we provide the best possible care and support.

Our annual survey is one way that we gather this feedback. This report sets out key findings from the 2024 survey, provides an overview of emerging themes, and outlines the steps that we are taking in response to the feedback we obtained.

This year we sent our survey by phone, e-mail, or post to 3,211 people who were receiving or had recently received support from ALONE.

Those who took part in the survey were asked to answer questions about themselves, what services they had received in ALONE, positive or negative experiences with ALONE, the impact of ALONE support on their lives, recommendations for service improvements or innovations, and support from volunteers. The survey also included a short section with questions on the cost of living, to inform ALONE's pre-Budget submission and to support us in campaigning for supports for older people.

We would like to thank the 413 people who filled in the survey, and the family members, friends, ALONE staff, and volunteers who assisted them. The responses and insights we received are invaluable to us in our mission to better support older people across Ireland.

Overall, the feedback we received this year has been highly positive. Most respondents expressed strong satisfaction with the support we provided, noting that they would recommend ALONE to others and that our services had a meaningful impact on their lives. A high number of people highlighted the positive effects of Visitation Support and Befriending and Telephone Support and Befriending volunteers.

However, some individuals did not have a positive experience with ALONE. We greatly appreciate the honesty of those who shared their challenges and concerns with us. We take this feedback seriously and are committed to addressing these issues to improve our services for everyone moving forward.

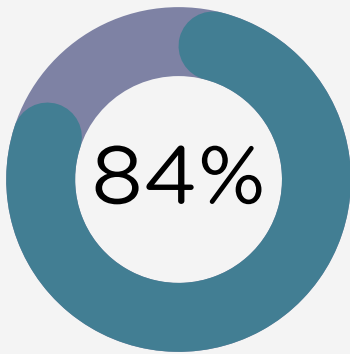
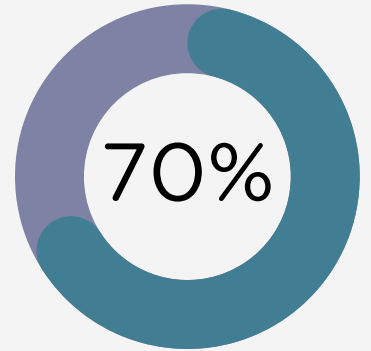


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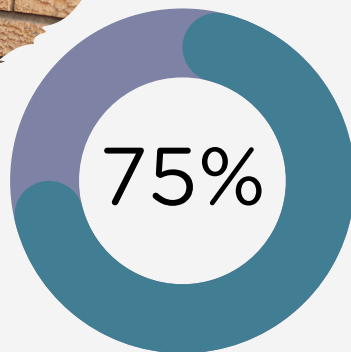
Since first receiving a phone call from my volunteer at ALONE, my world changed completely, I was going through a bad few years of loneliness, but all that changed after speaking with my Angel volunteer. And since that first phone call, I have had phone calls on each Friday morning from different members and it's now something I look forward to each week. Thank you all at ALONE for helping make my life a much better place, as I'm sure ALONE helps many others, Keep up the good work.



70% of older people who took part in the survey said the service met their needs.



84% would recommend ALONE services to a friend (+6% 2023).



Last year, we learned that some older people in our Visitation Support and Befriending service were not receiving a check-in call, and we took steps to address this. This year 75% had received check-in call (+19% 2023).

More than half of respondents said ALONE had made a positive impact in their life.

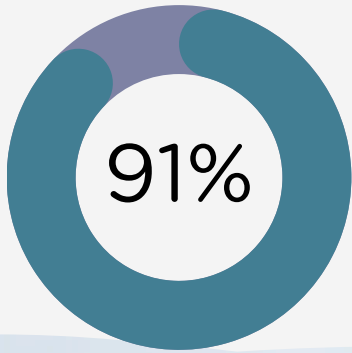
As with last year, the main impacts of getting support were that older people felt less lonely and happier.



What I found that impressed me so much is a comforting voice that helps me to be at peace, ease, joy, happiness, I feel that's what impressed me so much.



My mental health and outlook on life has really improved - I feel happier.



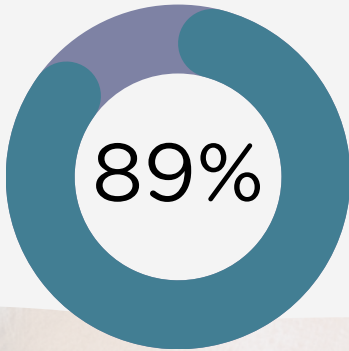
91% (+1% 2023) felt their Visitation Support and Befriending volunteer had positively impacted their life.

“

Living in the country after the passing of my wife and undergoing treatment I was very weak and lonely, the visits of my now friend... has been extremely beneficial and helped me make the transition from despair to being able to get out into the community... has made a huge difference to my life for which I am so grateful.

“

A friendly face and a good laugh while having a cuppa and not being judged. It is just lovely to have something to look forward to once a week.



89% (+4% 2023) felt Telephone Support and Befriending calls had a positive impact on their lives.

“

My woe's, worries, and happy events are listened to, commented on and advised if applicable. I truly feel I have made a friend.

“

I look forward to Wednesday, my call day. It feels like waiting for my 'lucky bag', if you remember those bags of mystery sweets. Don't know what will be in it, but it's likely to be good.

Many older people felt the main benefit of getting support from ALONE was having a regular contact with helpful staff and volunteers to help reduce isolation.

“

Sometimes even when surrounded by others I feel very alone I really look forward to my phone call each week it's very cheerful and lifts me up and everyone is really nice.

“

I feel grateful getting my call on a Monday at least someone knows I'm alive.

A key factor in people's satisfaction with ALONE services was the authentic nature of ALONE's staff and volunteers, who ensure that people feel listened to and cared for.

“

The commitment of the staff, always willing to help while not judging me.

“

The people I speak with are very genuine and caring.

“

Nice to hear someone kind and caring on the phone, someone to listen to me.

Improving Communication from ALONE



Some older people told us that they stopped hearing from ALONE staff or volunteers. There was a breakdown in communication, no follow-up, they didn't get the support they wanted, or the service they were receiving ended.

A few older people mentioned a volunteer who had not returned to them or expressed dissatisfaction with a volunteer.



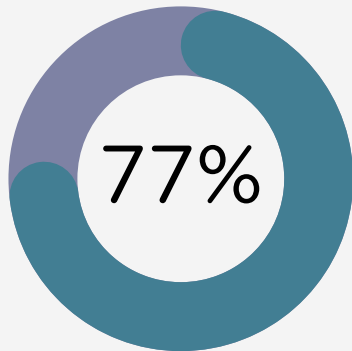
How we are Responding

Focusing on increasing the number of volunteers to deliver check-in calls for older people.

Introducing measures to make sure older people are clear about how to raise a concern about a volunteer or notify ALONE if volunteer stops visiting/calling; for example, we will be producing a leaflet with contact details for our support and referral line.

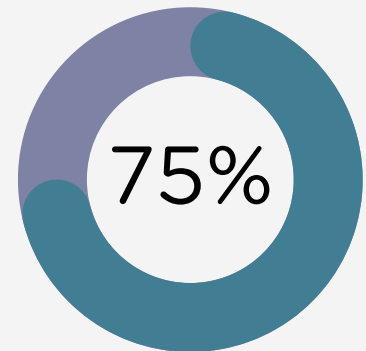


Increased demand for ALONE Support and Befriending Services



77% of older people were satisfied with wait time to the Visitation Support and Befriending service. (↓3% 2023).

75% of older people were satisfied with wait time to the Telephone Support and Befriending service. (↓10% 2023).



As more people need support, the wait times for both visits and phone calls get longer, which makes people less happy with how long they have to wait.

How we are Responding

To address this, we will be continuing to employ strategies to increase the number of volunteers for our support and befriending services and review efficiency of matching process.



Lack of Awareness of ALONE Services



Many older people commented they were unaware of the full range of services provided by ALONE - a few people commented that they had only become aware during the survey of some of the services offered.

A small number of people wanted more face-to-face contact with ALONE staff.

How we are Responding

- Highlighting the range of services ALONE offers by including more details in advertisements.
- Making sure staff and volunteers inform older people about the available services during assessments.
- Increasing in-person assessments to better understand the challenges older people face and to share information about services more effectively.


We extend our gratitude to everyone who took part in this survey. Your dedication and insights allow us improve our service with all the people we work with.


Thank you from everyone at ALONE for being a crucial part of our mission.



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Thank you for taking the time to read this report. If you have any questions or would like to discuss our findings further, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

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