



YOU'RE NOT ALONE



2024

A PROGRAMME TO  
TRANSFORM AGEING  
AT HOME IN IRELAND

[www.alone.ie](http://www.alone.ie)



# Message From Our CEO



**Seán Moynihan**  
CEO of ALONE



## Reality of Ageing

It's to be celebrated that we are living longer, and it's been proven that the increase in our older population will bring many benefits to the Irish economy in the coming years. But we urgently need to invest in the policies and infrastructure that will create a society where ageing at home is comfortable, enjoyable and better for your health.

We have identified these policies through our work with older people across Ireland and by examining international best practice.

Ireland has one of the fastest-ageing populations in the EU.

That makes older people the fastest-growing population group in the country.

We need the next Government to prioritise planning and delivering for our ageing population or risk a significant fall in living standards among this growing strand of the population. We believe in an Ireland where older people can age happily and securely at home and are strongly connected to their local communities.

To achieve this for older people today and into the future, we're telling parties and candidates that their manifestos need to include the commitments outlined in this document.

## Age Stat

# 5 in 8

Our population is set to grow by 800,000 over the next 15 years; five out of every eight of these adults will be 65 or older.

# In order of priority



Establish a Commissioner for Older People to work across Government to ensure policy implementation for our ageing population.

Benchmark the State Pension and other benefits to ensure older people's incomes keep pace with the increasing cost of living, particularly for older people living alone.

Develop, fund and execute a strategy to combat loneliness in Ireland.

Identify and plan for the broad spectrum of housing needs of older people; develop targets and measure delivery of housing for older people as part of Housing for All.

Reduce energy poverty among older people by reforming SEAI grants to ensure a just transition that includes Older People and reduces energy poverty

Improve access and funding to the range of community health and social care services provided to older people to support their wellbeing, particularly mental health, home support and day care services.

Implement legislation that will safeguard all against abuse.

01.

# Commissioner for Older People



## ALONE Supports in 2023

ALONE supported over 38,000 Older People to age at home in 2023.

### Supports

# 86%

What we are most proud of as an organisation is the fact that we were able to deliver 86% of the supports people requested from us in 2023, and 78% of those within 3 weeks.

ALONE annual report 2023

To establish a Commissioner for older people to work across Government to ensure policy implementation for our ageing population, with core tasks to include overseeing legislation, policy formation and future planning informed by the voice and lived experience of Older People in Ireland.

### Our Ask:

We recommend Government provide for the creation of a Commissioner for Ageing and Older People with funding of a €1.2m in the initial year, followed by €3.9 million per annum in subsequent years.

(ALONE/SJI 2024)

02.

## Housing

To develop targets and measure delivery of a spectrum of housing options for older people in line with the needs of the population.

### Our Asks

- 123,000 smaller housing units as part of overall housing stock by 2040.
- Minimum of 25% of all new social housing builds to be developed to Universal Design standards.
- Allocate additional €287m from surplus windfall revenues to build 1,640 Universal Design social housing units in 2025.
- Set targets of 17,215 social housing units, 5,656 co-housing/retirement village units, 1,721 Housing with Support units by 2040
- Target €260m investment in Housing Adaptation Grants by 2040 (annual increase of €11.2m in funding to 2040)



03.

## Pensions & Income



One in five older people are living in poverty today, and older people living alone are particularly at risk. This has nearly doubled in a year.

CSO-SILC 2023

To benchmark the State Pension and other benefits to ensure older people's incomes keep pace with the increasing cost of living, particularly for older people living alone. From January 2025, the top rate of the contributory pension (€289.30 per week) places recipients €28.70 below the poverty line of €318 per week.

## Our Asks:

Put in place relevant legislation for formally introducing the Benchmarking of the State Pension as committed to in the Roadmap to Social Inclusion 2020-2025 (which had a target of Budget 2021 for its implementation).

In the interim, increase the State Pension to meet the amount set out by minimum benchmarking, at 34% of average weekly earnings.

04.

## Energy Poverty

Almost one-third of Older People seeking support from ALONE report financial issues, with 40% of those reporting difficulties paying utilities like gas and electricity.

ALONE ECC Q2 2024 report



To reduce energy poverty among older people by reforming SEAI grants and ensuring a Just Transition that includes older people.

### Our Asks:

Incorporate supports from the Warmth and Wellbeing pilot scheme into the SEAI grants and improve access to the grants for older people.

Extend the Fuel Allowance season from 28 to 35 weeks, from the beginning of September to the beginning of May and increase the amount from €33 per week to €53 per week.

Deliver on the €10 million of supports committed to in the Energy Poverty Action Plan.

Increase consumer support by training frontline, NGO and community staff on energy poverty, following the example set by STEP in the EU.

05.

# Loneliness

To develop, fund and execute a strategy to combat loneliness for Ireland.

## Our Asks

### Action, Awareness, Solutions and Knowledge

- Commit a Government Department to loneliness responsible for delivering the following actions.
- Develop a national action plan aimed at addressing loneliness across the life course, taking into consideration the need for a 'whole-of-government' approach.
- Establish a €5 million Loneliness Fund to ensure that investment is made in the interventions that are proven to reduce loneliness,
- Develop a nationwide public awareness campaign that highlights loneliness and social isolation, which portrays a diverse range of populations and directs people to relevant supports
- Commission research to explore the wellbeing, health and work productivity cost of loneliness in Ireland.

**6 in 10**

6 in 10 people contacting ALONE report being lonely, 2 in 3 are living alone.

ALONE ECC Q2 report



06.

## Community Health Services

The survey revealed that depression is prevalent within this cohort, with one third exhibiting symptoms of mild to moderate levels .

Those living with a chronic illness were significantly more likely to experience depression with over 51% scoring in the mild or moderate range.

AWARE Mental Health Survey 2024



To improve access and funding to the range of community health and social care services provided to older people to support their wellbeing, particularly mental health, home support and day care services.

### Our Asks:

Triple the number of acute mental health beds available for people aged 65+.

Specific mental health policy, evidence-based programmes and research for older people should be committed to, funded, and implemented as part of Sharing the Vision.

Expand investment in Enhanced Community Care, with €100m for the further expansion of the ECC Programme and rollout of Community Health Networks to alleviate pressure on acute services.

€50m in Community Nursing Facilities and rehabilitation beds.

07.

## Safeguarding, Elder Abuse and Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act



27 people assessed by ALONE in Q2 2024 indicated they were at risk of abuse. About 56% felt at risk of Financial Abuse, while 33.3% felt at risk of Emotional Abuse. In addition, 14.8% were at risk of Self-Neglect and 7.4% were at risk of Physical Abuse

ALONE ECC Q2 2024 report

To implement legislation that will safeguard all against abuse.

## Our Asks:

Progress safeguarding legislation in the health and social care sector.

Sufficiently fund and support the implementation of the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Act



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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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