



YOU'RE NOT ALONE

2026

Pre-Budget Submission

ALONE's Full Pre-Budget asks to help
Support Older People to Age at Home



WWW.ALONE.IE

About ALONE



ALONE is a national organisation that enables older people to age at home. 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.



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Departments

DEPARTMENT
OF SOCIAL
PROTECTION

DEPARTMENT
OF HOUSING

DEPARTMENT OF
THE
ENVIRONMENT,
CLIMATE AND
COMMUNICATIONS

DEPARTMENT
OF THE
TAOISEACH

DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH

Who ALONE Supports

Older People who need ALONE's support are twice as likely to visit the GP and Seven times as likely to visit A&E compared to national average



59% 59% of older people supported by ALONE in 2024 were aged between 76 and 90 years old

43,982 Older People Supported in 2024



28% 28% increase in newly supported Older People from previous year

21% of Older People did not own their own home* *of 2,673 individuals whos responded to ALONE's Survey



56% There was a 56% increase in the number of individuals aged 86-95 receiving support from ALONE compared to previous year

59% of those Supported in 2024 were female and 41% were male





Were it not for the one-off cost-of-living measures introduced by Government, 45.6% of older people living alone would have been at risk of poverty last year (Central Statistics Office, 2025). Without cost-of-living supports, core welfare rates must be significantly increased, or older people living alone will be particularly at risk.



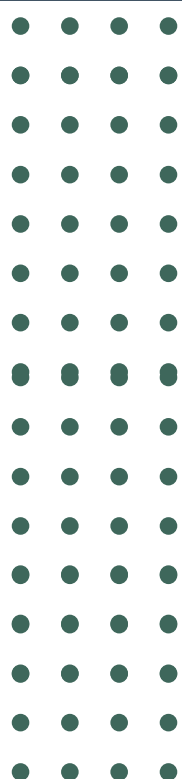
1 in 3 Older People ALONE assess have Financial Difficulties

*ALONE 2024 Impact Assessment

When older people were asked about the rising cost of living, 62% said it had affected their financial situation, with about one in five saying they had been severely affected.

*ALONE Cost of Living Survey 2025

ALONE's Budget asks



Target the most in need.

Are Costed.

Are Evidence based.

Are Driven by the lived experience of older people.

Are Assessed to be affordable.

Department of Social Protection



State Pension

Increase the State Pension by a minimum of €22, 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: €877.8m

Without this measure, poverty levels will inevitably rise as our population ages.

Fuel Allowance

Increase the Fuel Allowance by at least €20 to incorporate support previously provided by once-off payments.

Estimated Cost: €233m

Heating is a health issue for Older People, Utility bills are the main financial concern of those supported by ALONE

Living Alone Allowance

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

Estimated Cost: €130.8m

One in three older people living alone are at risk of poverty.

Telephone Support Allowance

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: €64.7m

We need to ensure that older people are not left behind in an increasingly digital world.

**Simplify the processes for applying for entitlements to
improve accessibility for older people**

Department of Housing



These asks are part of a broader target of 330,000 social housing units required for the overall population, 25% of which should be built to universal design principles.

Social Housing/Housing with Support

Build 1,474 social housing units to facilitate rightsizing for older people (To cater for the 15% of older people open to right-sizing).

Estimated Cost: €426m

This will reduce homelessness in older people in years to come.

1,474 dedicated older person's housing units, to include 103 units of Housing with Support (To cater for the 15% of older people who would be open to moving to supportive housing).

Estimated Cost: €426m

These specialised and supportive housing units are needed to cater for an ageing population.

The link to our fully detailed housing ask is on our website, alone.ie.

Housing Adaptation

We recommend that Government allocate an additional €12.5 million to housing adaptation grants in Budget 2026. This includes funding for grants and additional resources to improve access to and the drawdown of these grants, particularly for those facing financial or administrative barriers.

Estimated Cost: €12.5m

The greatest housing adaptation need among those ALONE supports is for bathroom adaptations; The amount of grants funded today is largely unchanged from the number in 2010.

Department of The Environment, Climate and Communications

Energy Poverty

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

Estimated Cost: €10m

Without adequate energy supports, older people will be forced to cut back on other essentials, such as food.

“Buying the weekly healthy groceries becomes more and more difficult. Can’t afford necessary health supplements, which has impacted my wellbeing. Don’t go out anymore to meet people socially and for activities and don’t invite people anymore to save money. Can’t afford to buy essential and necessary new clothes. Eat or Heat has become reality.”

*ALONE Cost of Living Survey 2025

Older people are 1.8 times more likely to experience energy poverty than the general population

(Tovar Reaños et al, 2023)



over 90% of Older People coming to ALONE in 2024 Indicated issues related to energy credits.

ALONE ECC Report 2024

Department of The Environment, Climate and Communications



Allocate additional funding to SEAI to enable improvements to retrofitting grants for older people, to enhance accessibility, and reduce energy poverty among this cohort, as committed to in the Programme for Government.

Many on the state pension, are effectively locked out of the SEAI scheme without access to the savings and supports to pay up-front costs.

Only $\frac{1}{3}$ of grant funding goes to energy-poor households.

“ALONE helped me with a gas winter payment so i could afford to put the heating on instead of going to bed early with a hot water bottle to stay warm or spending all day in the warmth of a shopping centre till tea time”

Department of The Taoiseach



Commissioner for Older People

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

Estimated Year 1 Cost: €1.2m

The support and oversight of a dedicated commissioner is essential to avoid future issues such as the recurrent nursing home scandals.

What would a Commissioner for Ageing and Older People do?

A Commissioner for Ageing and Older People would safeguard and protect the interests and well-being of ageing and older people in Ireland. Ageing consists of a series of stages throughout a life-long process which begins at birth – it does not end at retirement or when you reach your 65th birthday.

The process of ageing is not discriminatory; it affects all people regardless of gender, ethnicity, race, beliefs, abilities or context. We must recognise the contributions of older people to our society, as well as economically and financially. We need to plan for our future to provide a stable environment in which Irish people can live well and age well. We want to provide the best quality of life throughout every person's entire life cycle.

Department of Health



Enhanced Community Care

Fully fund the Enhanced Community Care to ensure full implementation for all that need it.

Fully fund the provision of care in Housing with Support

Fund provision of care in Housing with Support for older adults in the Inchicore Pathfinder Project.

Estimated Year 1 Cost: €1.3m

The Housing with Support model hinges on the provision of care which gives older people the safety and security to age behind their own front door.

Fund digital training for older people to support ageing at home

Fund organisations such as ALONE to provide digital enablement training to support older people to access virtual health appointments.

Estimated Cost: €720,000

Loneliness and Isolation

Develop and resource a national action plan aimed at tackling loneliness and isolation¹ revive the pilot community funded loneliness scheme.

Estimated Cost: €4m

Loneliness, a defining issue of our time, costs the state hundreds of millions of euros. The impacts on society are even deeper – a national action plan will ease the hidden pain of countless citizens.

Department of Health



Home Support

Increase funding for home support services (€328.4m) and allocate funding to support the development and implementation of the Statutory Home Support Scheme. (€3m).

Estimated Cost: €331.4m

Delivering on the commitment outlined in Sláintecare.

Increase the number of GP practice teams across the state

Increase the number of GP practice teams across the state, at a cost of an additional €100m annually from 2026.

Estimated Cost: €100m

The current shortage of GP practice teams is leading to delays and A&E overcrowding.

Invest in community-based rehabilitation and respite care

Government should invest €50 million in expanding rehabilitation and respite care within Community Nursing Facilities. This is a critical first step toward meeting demand over the next five years.

Estimated Cost: €50m

Nutrition

Increase funding for the national Meals on Wheels network, we recommend that €10m be invested in 2026. We recommend that Government develop and implement a multi-annual sustainable streamlined funding model for Meals on Wheels services, guaranteeing quality of meals and service.

Estimated Cost: €10m

ALONE's ECCC Report for 2024 showed a 35% increase in the number of older people concerned about nutrition.

Department of Health



Malnutrition

Development of a Healthy Ireland public awareness campaign on nutritional information, building on the recent Healthy Eating Resources, aimed at older adults, at a cost of €250,000.

Estimated Cost: €250,000

In 2024, ALONE saw a 34% increase in individuals approaching us with concerns around nutrition.

Mental Healthcare

With limited mental health services currently available for older people, expand acute mental healthcare capacity for older adults.

Estimated Cost: €25.6m

Required to align with the targets for acute beds and staffing in the Expert Group on Mental Health Policy's A Vision for Change Document.

Fall Prevention

We recommend that Government provide funding of €1.7m for the HSE to begin the roll out of Falls Management Exercise Programme exercise programmes.

Estimated Cost: €1.7m

82% of trauma injuries in older people are due to falls, with falls-related injuries projected to cost the state over €2bn by 2030.

Assistive Technology

We recommend that the Community Funded Schemes budget be increased by €5m to pilot the delivery of digital assistive technology to some 12,500 people. delivery of assistive technology – such as fall alarms and mobile health apps.

Estimated Cost: €5m

Department of Health



Day Care Access

Government should provide integrated funding for transport as a key component of day care services. To improve access to day care for older people across Ireland, we recommend an annual investment of €20m in transport funding to day care centres.

In addition, Government should develop and implement a model for day care services for older adults in Ireland, improving quality of access. This model should ensure access to high-quality care, meaningful social engagement, support with daily living activities and maximising the health impacts.

Estimated Cost: €20m

**While Ireland's population is
ageing, the expected number
of healthy life years at 65 has
decreased from 13.6 years in
2019 to 11.6 years in 2022
(CSO, 2024)**



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Thank you for taking the time to read
this Pre-Budget Submission

ALONE's full Pre-Budget Submission will be available to view on
www.alone.ie

