



Oifig an Stiúrthóra Cúnta Náisiúnta  
Clár Cúraim Pobail Feabhsaithe &  
Conarthaí Príomhchúraim  
Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte

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Deputy Fergus O'Dowd  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Dublin 2.

16<sup>th</sup> August 2023

**PQ33320/23: To ask the Minister for Health to provide an update on the Programme for Government commitment to develop a plan aimed at tackling loneliness and isolation, particularly among older people, as outlined in the Roadmap for Social Inclusion, across each of the CHO areas since the establishment of the current Government; and if he will make a statement on the matter.**

Dear Deputy O'Dowd,

I refer to your parliamentary question, which was passed to the HSE for response. As outlined in previous correspondence in line with Sláintecare, the Enhanced Community Care Programme (ECC) objective is to deliver increased levels of health care with service delivery reoriented towards general practice, primary care and community-based services. The focus is on implementing an end-to-end care pathway that will care for people at home and over time prevent referrals and admissions to acute hospitals where it is safe and appropriate to do so, and enable a "home first" approach.

The ECC Programme was allocated €240m for the establishment of 96 CHNs, 30 Community Specialist Teams for Older People, 30 Community Specialist Teams for Chronic Disease, national coverage for community intervention teams and the development of a volunteer-type model for CHN's in collaboration with Alone.

An integral component to maintaining people well at home and in their community is collaboration with the ALONE Organisation and there is now full national coverage of the ALONE across the nine Community Healthcare Organisations.

- The HSE works in collaboration with ALONE, an organisation that offer a volunteer type model to support CHN's. Specifically in relation to older people in the Community, including those who are lonely, isolated, frail or ill, homeless, living in poverty, or are facing other difficulties services are being developed in conjunction with ALONE.
- ALONE assists older people with a suite of tailored supports such as practical supports, befriending, phone services, social prescribing and assistive technology to improve physical, emotional and mental wellbeing to enable older people live independently with an improved quality of life (over **24, 791** older people have been supported directly through Alone services from January – June 2023).
- ALONE provides a point of contact for older persons to assist in navigating and accessing a wide range of services including health, social care, and government services both local and national, and in areas provide support to Specialist Teams for Older Persons within the hospital setting.



- ALONE received over **8585** referrals (Jan to June 2023) from a variety of sources such as Hospitals, Primary Care teams, community sources, self-referrals, referrals from family and members of the public.
- ALONE provided **18,000** new interventions this year supporting older people who have difficulties in areas such as housing, isolation and loneliness, finance and legal, physical health, mental health, personal care, technology, safety and security etc.

The HSE continues to engage and work with ALONE, who are reaching a large cohort of older people through their services and helping them live healthy lives at home, and addressing such issues as loneliness and isolation. This is playing an important role in ensuring appropriate use of primary care and hospital services across Ireland.

I hope the above is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G. Crowley', with a horizontal line underneath.

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**Geraldine Crowley,  
Assistant National Director,  
Enhanced Community Care Programme  
& Primary Care Contracts**