

## **Government urged to invest €9 million in dementia supports, services and research to tackle inequity across Ireland** **(<https://www.activelink.ie/node/116423>)**

### **Investing in dementia services will help alleviate pressure on residential care**

#### **Major increases in demand for dementia services and supports**

#### **Research investment can improve quality of life for people impacted by dementia**

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (The ASI) is calling on the Government to invest **€9 million** in dementia supports and services to address major inequity of access across the country.

The ASI is calling on Government to improve equity of access for people living with dementia and family carers through investment in community day care services, dementia-specific home care, counselling for people with dementia and family carers and dementia research.

The recommendations are contained in The ASI's Pre-Budget Submission 2026 *Building on the Potential of the Programme for Government: A stepping stone to a more dementia-inclusive Ireland in Budget 2026* which was launched at Buswell's Hotel in Dublin.

There are 64,000 people with dementia in Ireland, and this is forecast to more than double to 150,000 by 2050. There are 11,000 new cases of dementia in Ireland each year and anyone can get dementia – including people in their 30s/40s/50s.

The submission asks Government to build on the potential of the Programme for Government, which outlines dementia priorities for the coming five years, with an investment of **€9m** to address rising demand for:

- Dementia-Specific Day Care Centres
- Dementia-Specific Day Care at Home
- Dementia Advisers
- Counselling Support for People Impacted by Dementia
- Home Support Hours for People Living with Dementia
- A Research Dementia Fund.

#### **The ASI's CEO Andy Heffernan said:**

*"Our Pre-Budget Submission 2026 looks to address the growing need for dementia supports and services. There was a 55% increase in day care at home hours from 2023 to 2024 and a 24% increase in Day Care attendances. Our services also recorded a 20% increase in social supports attendances in 2024. Demand continues to outpace this growth, and many core ASI services have growing waiting lists.*

*"A key service is home care for people living with dementia. Action is required to address the workforce challenges in home care including training, career pathways, recruitment, retention and the structural barriers to reimbursement of travel expenses particularly in rural areas.*

*"Investing in dementia-specific day care, both in day centres and at home, will help alleviate pressure on residential care services. These services provide care in the community and can help a significant portion of people who need care, and in a dementia-specific manner."*

#### **Highlighting this point Dementia Carers Campaign Network (DCCN) member Muriel Moore said:**

*"People going through a dementia or Alzheimer's diagnosis experience a lot of change, which can be really challenging not just for the individual themselves but their families too. Home care provides stability and certainty and enables people living with dementia to feel comfortable and at ease in an environment familiar to them.*

*"Home care is a vital support for carers and families too, providing respite and social interaction that can make a hugely positive difference to people's lives. The benefits of home care truly cannot be overestimated."*

## **The ASI Learning and Development Quality, Innovation and Growth Manager Dr. Fergus Timmons highlighted the importance of government investment in counselling and support services.**

*"From our experience, we know that family carers of people living with dementia are often not prepared for their new role. They see the symptoms of dementia getting gradually more serious, and they have to adapt to huge changes in the relationship they have with the person living with dementia. All of this contributes to stress, strain and carer burden. Many simply cannot cope."*

*"In our research, 71% of family carers and 84% of people with dementia told us they would avail of counselling services if provided. This is a huge need and would be a very welcome addition to the services and supports already offered by ASI."*

## **Andy Heffernan also highlighted other areas for further progress.**

*"I am encouraged by the Minister for Older People Kieran O'Donnell and his ambition to progress the Statutory Home Care Scheme. This is very important to people with dementia."*

*"We welcome that there will be recurring funding of €300k funding for Young Onset Early-stage dementia services and Cognitive Stimulation Therapy in 2026. This cohort has difficulty in accessing age-appropriate services given day centres are generally tailored to the needs of older people."*

*"I also welcome the announcement by Minister O'Donnell to commence implementation of the National Dementia Registry, a platform the ASI has been lobbying for in recent years. Now funding must be secured in Budget 2026 to ensure the next steps can be taken to progress its implementation together with funding to maintain the momentum of the roll out of the Model of Care provisions such as Memory Assessment Support Services across the country."*

*"Furthermore, dementia research accounts for less than 1.5% of total health research output, underscoring the urgent need for secure continued investment."*

## **Kevin Cullen, who lives with Alzheimer's Disease and is a member of the Dementia Research Advisory Team (DRAT) said:**

*"Alzheimer's Disease is an incurable, life limiting disease and when diagnosed aged 63, I knew I had to contribute to research in whatever way I can. There have been no new effective treatments for 20 years; the latest disease modifying drugs (though not for everyone) give hope for the future."*

*"It is essential that we invest in research into more effective care and treatments, reduce health and social care costs in the future and most importantly, improve the quality of life for people with dementia, their care givers, and families."*

## **Summary of submission details**

The ASI is urging the Government to invest **€9m** in dementia in Budget 2026 as per the following breakdown:

- **€320,000** Development of Four New One-Day Dementia-Specific Day Care Centres
- **€160,000** Expand Capacity in Four Existing Day Care Services
- **€500,000** Dementia-Specific for Day Care at Home (16.5k+ hours)
- **€609,520** Dementia Advisers
- **€62,000** Dementia-Specific Counselling Services
- **€7,300,000** Dementia-Specific Home Support (220,000 hours)
- **€50,000** Research Dementia Fund
- **€59,000** Improve Access Opportunities to Participate in Dementia Research.

The ASI's Submission *A Stepping Stone to a More Dementia-Inclusive Ireland – Building on the Potential of the Programme for Government in Budget 2026* can be **downloaded at this link** (<https://alzheimer.ie/creating-change/political-campaigns/a-stepping-stone-to-a-more-dementia-inclusive-ireland-building-on-the-potential-of-the-programme-for-government-in-budget-2026>). The campaign can be tracked supported online at #DementiaInclusiveIreland.

## Further information

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### Region

Nationwide

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