





## Summary Review of Activities – 2006

2006 marked another busy and successful year for The Alzheimer Society of Ireland (ASI). This year was the 100th anniversary of the naming of Alzheimer's disease by the German neurologist Alois Alzheimer, providing an opportunity to reflect on where we have progressed to on understanding and responding to the condition in the last 100 years.

Embarking on a new three year strategic plan entitled 'Dementia Matters', ASI set about working on implementing its vision of wanting a world where those who live with dementia have all they need to live happy and fulfilling lives. The three strategic priorities set out in the plan reflect the ongoing growth and development of the organisation. They focus on the provision of services to meet the needs of people with dementia and their families, investing in the organisation's human capital and providing information, creating awareness and addressing stigma.

This report provides a summary overview and highlights of our work in 2006 under the three strategic priorities. The work of the Society is achieved through the dedication and commitment of so many people within the organisation as well as the commitment and support of our partners, funders and donors.

## Provision of Services

Operating in six regions, the Society in 2006 continued to work to expand the services provided to people with dementia and their carers including *day care, home respite, overnight respite, support groups, social clubs, advocacy and counselling services*. The Society re-aligned the regional structure to reflect the changes in the Health Service Executive.

In the **Southern region**, which now includes Waterford, ASI moved into a new purpose built day care centre, which also operates as the base for the home care service and the regional office. The home care services in Cork and Kerry continued expansion and additional funding was secured for the respite service in north Cork. A proposal for a new day care centre with a social housing element was drawn up for Tralee.



An exiting development in the **Eastern region** was the turning of the sod of the new state of the art day and respite centre in Blackrock, Co. Dublin which will also house the national office. Two new services emerged in the region this year. A new pilot advocacy service commenced operation in north Dublin funded by Citizens Information Board (formerly Comhairle) and three social clubs were set up for people with dementia and their partners to provide opportunities for socialising with support. New premises were opened for the day care services in Raheny and Wicklow, the former moved across the road to St. Joseph's, the latter from Avoca to Rathdrum.

In the **West and North West region**, a new day care service commenced in Castlebar, Co. Mayo and a new branch premises was opened by President Mary McAleese in Donegal town. In Sligo, work progressed on the social housing project.

In the **South East and Midlands region**, the home care packages enabled a significant increase in home care services to people in the midland counties. A new family support group was established in Portlaoise and a series of public awareness events ensured that dementia received a high profile. In the South East, there continues to be serious waiting lists for services and to alleviate this situation, ASI opened a new day care service in Enniscorthy.

In the **Mid West region**, the refurbishment of Waterman's Lodge in Killaloe continued. As a former hotel, the building requires extensive changes to enable it to operate as a day and holiday respite centre. A new branch emerged in North Tipperary, based in Nenagh.

In the **Midlands and North East region**, services continued to grow with increases in the day care services and provision of an enhanced transport service for clients in the Cavan /Monaghan area allows for easier access to services.

In order to celebrate and promote person-centred practice in the organisation and to support staff and volunteers in their endeavours to deliver quality care, ASI appointed a **Care Practice Co-ordinator** in the latter part of 2006.

## Service Statistics

*The Society provided 613,385 care hours in 2006; 235,874 home respite hours, 337,911 day care hours and 39,600 overnight respite hours. There was a significant increase in the number of clients receiving a service which totalled 2,902 in 2006. In addition, there are 28 carer support groups operating throughout the country providing support and information to 250 carers and family members.*



## Investing in our Human Capital

**Staff and volunteers** are core to the work that we do. The organisation's workforce grew again in 2006 with approximately 700 people employed. There were 143 new employees with 26 full time and 117 part-time, working hours varying from 3 to 33 hours per week. There are upwards on three hundred people who **volunteer** their time, energy and expertise in all sorts of different ways in the organisation. Work commenced on developing an **employee handbook** as an information and good practice initiative. **Management training** was delivered covering the areas of recruitment and selection, managing performance and best practice in employment law.

**Training** is a central to the investment in our human capital. During 2006 the training department delivered dementia specific training sessions nationally to ASI staff, volunteers and family carers. Training for **Helpline** volunteers continued as well as recruitment and training for a new group of volunteers. Under the Health Service Executive Skill Project, an initiative to facilitate greater skill acquisition for staff working in the health services, 35 ASI care staff commenced the process of acquiring FETAC level 5 accredited training. As a member of the Neurological Alliance of Ireland training network, ASI staff and volunteers attended a variety of courses. Training sessions were held with family carers in Waterford and, in co-operation with Crosscare, in Lusk and Finglas West in Dublin.



In addition to internal training, sessions for **external health care professionals** were also facilitated including for nurses, medical students, and medical and paramedical health care professionals were delivered in the Sligo School of Nursing, University College Dublin, and Dublin City University. We facilitated the participation of HSE staff in some training sessions in Clonskeagh Hospital, Dublin, Dun Laoghaire Home Help Service and in Monaghan and Cavan.

## Providing Information, Creating Awareness and Addressing Stigma

The strategic priority of providing information, creating awareness and addressing stigma embraces a significant amount of work done by the Society. Raising the profile of the condition as well as addressing some of the key issues which living with a dementia presents is central to the work. As part of our on-going work to create awareness, a **national media awareness campaign** ran on the theme of early detection and diagnosis. The *'Keep You Being You'* campaign was supported by Pfizer Healthcare.

In 2006, the **National Helpline** service handled 3,674 calls. The awareness campaign resulted in a 36% increase in the average monthly call rate. For the remaining months of the year there was a 10% increase in the average monthly call total from the 2005 rate. Nearly half of calls concerned those who were worried about Alzheimer's disease / dementia and this combined with the increased call rate is a strong success indicator for the awareness campaign. 36% of calls involved people who are living with dementia, 10% of calls were from professionals or students working in the area and 7% of calls were from unknown sources. The top five counties generating calls to the Helpline in descending order are Dublin, Cork, Galway, Kildare and Wexford.

In order to gain an understanding and begin to address the stigma associated with having a diagnosis of dementia, the Society engaged TCD researchers to complete a major study entitled **'Perceptions of Stigma in Dementia: An Exploratory Study'**. The report was launched by the Minister for Health and Children at a seminar on the theme on World Alzheimer's Day – 21 September. The political advocacy work of the organisation grew considerably with the publication of the **Dementia Manifesto 2006-2009: Making Dementia a National Health Priority**. The Manifesto is based on an extensive consultation process including the hosting of carers and people with dementia in a **National Consumer Summit** in Dail Eireann, engagement with the key stakeholders and the commissioning of an economic position paper by Professor Eamon O'Shea, Irish Centre for Social Gerontology (NUIG)



entitled **'Implementing Policy for Dementia Care in Ireland'**. Continuing on with the advocacy theme, 'The Right to be Heard' was the title of the **10th ASI National Conference** hosted by the Sligo Branch. **Representation** at national, European and international levels as well as **networking** with partners and external agencies is a vital part of the work to enable the voice of people with dementia and their carers be heard, as well as being able to influence policy and generate new ideas and methods in policy and practice issues. Among those who we work with include Alzheimer Europe, Alzheimer's Disease International, Health Service Executive, Dementia Services Information and Development Centre, Medical Research Charities Group, Neurological Alliance of Ireland, Disability Federation of Ireland and the Ageing Well Network.

Investigation into the setting up of **Safe Return** – a safety programme for people with dementia continued in 2006 with plans to launch it in 2007.

**Fundraising** has actively contributed to the realisation of the Society's strategic initiatives, with €2,956,990 raised representing **25 % of the Society's total income for the year**. Individual fundraising events, as well as solicited and unsolicited donations accounted for the majority of this income. There were hundreds of events held throughout the country involving all sorts of creative and wonderful ways to raise money supported mainly by volunteers.

**Tea Day**, our national fundraiser, in its 12th year, had the highest yield ever in terms of gross profit at €538,014. The **Write to Remember Project** was piloted in primary schools with over 140 students involved. Work continued on building the donor database as well as developing corporate partnerships and sponsorships.