Press Release

THE ALZHEIMER SOCIETY OF IRELAND URGES CAUTION WHEN INTERPRETING RESULTS OF NEW UK RESEARCH.

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland is urging caution when it comes to the interpretation of the findings of research conducted by researchers at University College London.

The researchers speculate a form of brain damage associated could infect healthy people via certain medical procedures.

Tina Leonard Head of Advocacy and Public Affairs at The Alzheimer Society of Ireland said the study was very small and a lot more work was needed before any major conclusions could be drawn.

“While the findings certainly sound alarming, there is currently no evidence that Alzheimer’s is a contagious condition that can be transmitted from person to person via a medical procedure. We would urge that caution be exercised when interpreting these results. What we do know is the biggest risk factor for Alzheimer’s is age, along with genetics and lifestyle factors such as smoking, obesity and high blood pressure. However, all research that sheds light on potential causes of Alzheimer’s and the related dementias is welcome. What we really need is for the concept of “brain health” to inform government policies geared at promoting a healthy lifestyle, which it is believed could prove significant in reducing the risk of dementia,” said Ms Leonard.

For further information please contact Communications Manager at The Alzheimer Society of Ireland, Edel O’Connell on 086 1674741.

Notes to the Editor:
- There are approximately 48,000 people living with dementia in Ireland. This number is expected to increase significantly in the coming years; rising to 68,216 people by 2021 and to 132,000 people by 2041.
- The majority of people with dementia (63%) live at home in the community. Most people living with dementia are cared for by a family member and there are approximately 50,000 dementia family carers in Ireland.
- Dementia is an umbrella term used to describe a range of conditions which cause changes and damage to the brain.
- The overall cost of dementia care in Ireland is just over €1.69 billion per annum; 48% of this is attributable to family care; 43% is accounted for by residential care; formal health and social care services contribute only 9% to the total cost.

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland National Helpline is open six days a week Monday to Friday 10am–5pm and Saturday 10am–4pm on 1800 341 341.