NUMBER OF PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA WILL JUMP BY 40PC IN THE LIFETIME OF NEXT GOVERNMENT.

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland launches its General Election 2016 campaign ‘Vote to Remember’ as it reveals the numbers set to develop dementia will jump by 11 people a day to 68,000 by the end of the next Government.

The Vote to Remember campaign on www.votetoremember.ie urges candidates to make dementia a political priority, and asks for the public’s support by voting for candidates who do so.

Dementia is one of the most serious health and social care challenges facing Ireland today. It affects every community, every family and must be a priority in the new Programme for Government. The Irish health and social care system is failing to adequately support people with dementia and their carers where they need it most, in their own homes and communities.

Although the cost of dementia care ranks higher than stroke, heart disease and cancer combined, healthcare spend for dementia continues to be substantially lower than these conditions.

The National Dementia Strategy published in December 2014 was the first step in changing the lives and hopes of people with dementia in Ireland. It is due to have a crucial mid-term review in 2016. Findings from this must be used to develop a revised and reformed dementia strategy. Critically, this new Strategy must be properly resourced with ring-fenced funding for dementia.

“This year alone every day in Ireland 11 people will develop dementia, that’s eleven mothers, fathers, grandparents, sisters or brothers. The ASI’s Vote to Remember campaign is asking candidates to Renew, Reform and Resource the National Dementia Strategy (NDS) which was published in December 2014 to address this growing demand for dementia care,” said Colette Kelleher, ASI CEO.

“The majority of people with dementia (over 63%) who live in our communities wish to continue to live at home. We regularly hear from those with dementia and their family carers about the lack of support they received following their diagnosis. Improving dementia services is an essential part of political and social reform in Ireland. The quality of dementia services has a major impact on us all. It is a major constituency issue and must be a political priority. “The Programme for Government must therefore include a specific reference to action and investment on dementia. We are asking candidates to remember people with dementia by pledging their support for the full implementation of the NDS and the development of a second strategy that will ensure people with dementia are supported to live well in the community,” she added

Chair of The ASI’s Irish Dementia Working Group Helen Rochford Brennan was diagnosed with Early Onset Alzheimer’s at the age of 62. “I am a person with dementia. When I was diagnosed I was very much alone, and lived through a very sad, dark and lonely time. There were no services in place for me and nowhere to turn. My family and I need supports, so I can continue to live at home which is my basic human right. Please vote to remember and support candidates who prioritise dementia.”

Visit www.votetoremember.ie
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.
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