

THE IRELAND FUNDS ARE WORKING TO ENSURE THAT IRELAND'S OLDER POPULATION IS NEVER **ALONE**

ALONE

After three weeks on his own, the last thing Ed wants is 'me time'.

Compassion alone is not always enough.



ALONE

Helping older people in need



Ann's hands wrap around a mug of tea as she thinks about how different her life was not so long ago. "I had a big garden and a greenhouse. I had such a happy life with my husband, my five children, and my grandchildren here in Ireland. However my children moved abroad with their families. Then about a year and a half ago my husband passed away. My husband and I used to talk so much. He had a fantastic sense of humor. How I miss the smile. We had such a life together...and then suddenly, it was so quiet."

Ann is one of the older people that ALONE supports. ALONE works with those who have difficulties with loneliness, ill health, poverty, poor housing or homelessness, and all of their services are designed to support people to age at home. ALONE is independent and receives no government funding for the day to day running of our services. They have 250 active volunteers that are trained and supported by professional staff. All of their services are quality approved ensuring they are high value and low cost. 100% of all donations goes directly to providing services to older people in need.

Ann has benefitted from their befriending service and social events program which is supported by The Ireland Funds. Ann was paired with Collette, a volunteer who meets with her once a week for everything from conversation to ensuring that older people like Ann do not slip into social isolation.

"Collette comes and we chat, and we laugh. We always end up laughing. No matter what's going on. It's wonderful," says Ann. "It's the joy of being able to talk to somebody. And I think she enjoys it just as much as I do."

Other services offered are key to older people in crisis like John. Soon after John's wife Marian was admitted to a nursing home, he found out that his landlord was selling their apartment where they had resided for seven years. John was at great risk of becoming homeless but ALONE stepped in just in time to provide permanent housing for him in one of their properties.

"My place is really lovely," says John. "It's a small two bedroom place with a garden out in the back. I think there are only 11 flats in the block. I'm just thankful for ALONE, really. I've found working with them has saved my life."

There are new challenges and opportunities for ALONE. "In Ireland, older people are dealing a lot more with issues such as housing quality, onset dementia and challenges around finances because they are living longer," explains Sean Moynihan, CEO of ALONE. "Our job is to link people in, to guide, to support and to resolve. Sometimes it's a long term relationship and sometimes it's short, but it's about flexibility. ALONE always keeps the older person at the center of all decisions. What do they want? What's best for them? How do they want to live their lives?"

ALONE receives no state funding. Their programs rely on private donations and hundreds of volunteers who bring thousands of hours of expertise, time and compassion. "I think sometimes people can think donating money or supporting a cause doesn't actually make a difference. I think the important thing to take away is, it does. It changes lives," says Sean. "The Ireland Funds' support demonstrates that people care. It's real money, going to real services, for real people. But what it means to the people who use our services is that the community actually does care."

