



# TRANSFORM AGEING AT HOME IN IRELAND

---

STRATEGIC  
PLAN UPDATE

MAY 2021 (2019 - 2024)



YOU'RE NOT ALONE

**YOU DON'T HAVE  
TO DO THIS ALONE.**

**ALONE**

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
VISION, MISSION & VALUES	7
STRATEGIC GOALS	9
ALONE IMPACT 2024	11
GOAL 1 LEAD THE DRIVE TO AGE POSITIVELY AT HOME IN IRELAND	15
GOAL 2 STRENGTHEN THE NATIONAL NETWORK OF COMMUNITY SERVICE HUBS	17
GOAL 3 INNOVATE AND DEVELOP SOCIAL ENTERPRISE	19
GOAL 4 INCREASE ORGANISATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY	21
GOAL 5 ENHANCE ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY FOR GROWTH	23

# INTRODUCTION

We believe that every older person should have the opportunity to age happily and securely at home and to be strongly connected to their community.

For this to happen a new paradigm in community-oriented wellbeing, throughout our lives, and in particular as we age, is needed. Core to the ALONE approach is the belief that each older person is central to the decision-making process regarding their life and is facilitated to engage with their local community. ALONE services are open to all people over 60 years throughout Ireland. We support the older person to navigate complex public services.

We facilitate community engagement or re-engagement. Above all, we respect, listen to and work at the pace of the older person, be it quick or slow!

ALONE engages with an increasingly wide range of older person, from those who are aged 60 to those heading to 100 years. We are continuously learning how to age better and how to support each individual on their unique journey, be it someone who is active, someone experiencing

dementia or someone facing the latter stages of life.

The ALONE Model of Support is flexible, evolves to meet individual needs and is practical. Aligned to this is a belief that society should be governed by the principles of universal design. This means that all services and products should be designed to be accessible, easily understood and used by as many people as possible without having to be modified.<sup>1</sup>

This strategic plan was initially developed in 2019, however following the Covid 19 Pandemic, ALONE had to pivot in terms of how it organised itself and delivered our services. Some changes are here to stay, like smarter ways of working, some, others like in-person home visits, will return post-pandemic. Our target group of older people has been hardest hit by the pandemic. Demand for support services for older people living at home has soared over the past two years and will continue to grow with an ageing demographic.<sup>2</sup>

This updated strategic plan stresses the importance of ALONE playing a leadership role in the sector and beyond. ALONE is committed to playing a significant role in shifting the ageing paradigm from a passive medical-based model

to an active community-based model. We partner with others to shape and roll-out national policy ultimately delivering more effective services. We support the capacity development of the sector, training community groups across the country. We facilitate the uptake of Social Prescriptions e.g., prescribed social and community-based activities that compliment traditional medical prescriptions. We will develop a number of innovative social enterprises. Income generated from social enterprises will be reinvested in ALONE making us more sustainable. We appreciate that we need to communicate more clearly and to continuously strive to improve ourselves and how we deliver services.

From small beginnings ALONE has grown into an organisation with a national footprint. Additional organisations are seeking to partner and collaborate with us. With enhanced collaboration and synergies, we can harness our combined strengths and deliver better services. This strategic plan was developed in consultation with the ALONE Board, Staff, Volunteers and Older Persons. It is a challenging strategy and we look forward to engaging with you as we work towards achieving our goals. As we travel on this journey, we can all become ambassadors for older people, promoting living safely and securely at home with strong connections to our local communities.




Joe Sheehy  
**CHAIRPERSON ALONE**



Seán Moynihan  
**CEO ALONE**

<sup>1</sup><http://universaldesign.ie/What-is-Universal-Design/Case-Studies>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.cso.ie/en/csolatestnews/pressreleases/2017>



*“Only for ALONE,  
I have a new life.  
I would be sleeping  
on the streets.”*

72-year-old woman who  
avails of ALONE Services

## Our Vision

An Ireland where older people can age happily and securely at home and are strongly connected to their local communities.

## Our Mission

Lead the drive to support positive ageing at home, strengthen our services, innovate and create new services, be more sustainable and realise our full potential as we grow.

## Our Values - The ALONE Way

The ALONE Way is a set of core values that are central to each of us in ALONE. The ALONE Way underpins everything we do: how we listen to one another, engage with each older person, liaise with stakeholders, make decisions, deliver services and grow ALONE. The ALONE Way is our unique culture. Our Board, Staff and Volunteers are all committed to living the ALONE Way. Our core values are:

### We act compassionately

Respect the value and dignity of each older person.  
Be non-judgemental and empathise with each older person.  
Acknowledge challenges and work with each to find individual solutions.  
Value and promote the wellbeing of our staff and volunteers.

### We are honest in all our dealings

Be honest, accountable and transparent in all we do.  
Communicate clearly and regularly with our stakeholders.  
Regularly challenge ourselves, our colleagues and our peers.  
Advocate and communicate on behalf of every older person.

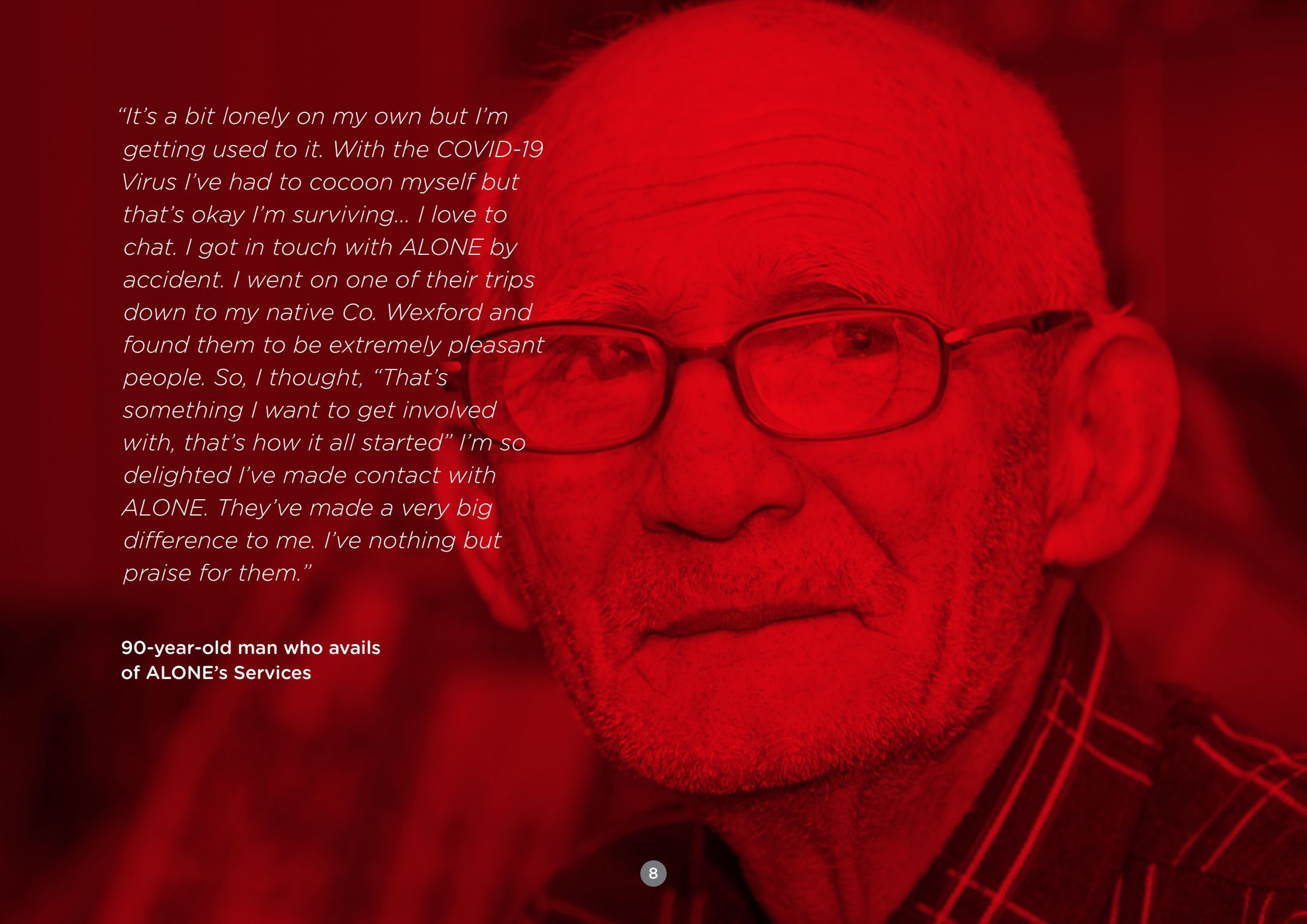
### We work collaboratively

Share knowledge and work collaboratively.  
Ensure that services are effective and efficient.  
Deliver evidence-based solutions and measure impact.  
Deliver services which are transferable, scalable and sustainable.

### We foster innovation

Influence and lead change.  
Create and drive synergies.





*"It's a bit lonely on my own but I'm getting used to it. With the COVID-19 Virus I've had to cocoon myself but that's okay I'm surviving... I love to chat. I got in touch with ALONE by accident. I went on one of their trips down to my native Co. Wexford and found them to be extremely pleasant people. So, I thought, "That's something I want to get involved with, that's how it all started" I'm so delighted I've made contact with ALONE. They've made a very big difference to me. I've nothing but praise for them."*

**90-year-old man who avails  
of ALONE's Services**



## ALONE Strategic Goals




- 1 Lead the drive to age positively at home in Ireland
- 2 Strengthen the National Network of Community Service Hubs
- 3 Innovate and Develop Social Enterprise
- 4 Increase Organisational Sustainability
- 5 Enhance Organisational Capacity for Growth



## ALONE 2025 Impact Statement

**45,000** Older People will be supported throughout Ireland each year.

- 
- 9,000 Volunteers
  - 865,000 Volunteer Hours
  - 500,000 Support & Befriending Visits
  - 450,000 Support & Befriending calls
  - 200,000 Practical Tasks carried out by Volunteers
  - 36,000 Older People supported to uptake Social Prescriptions and reengage in their communities
  - 27,000 Older People receive ALONE Coordinated Supports
  - 320 Housing with Supports provided
  - 5,000 Older People using Technology in the home
  - 10 ALONE Mergers with other organisations
  - 50 ALONE Local Partnerships
  - 100 ALONE Community Network Organisations supported with training and technology
  - 18,000 Older People supported through ALONE Community Network

*“ALONE has changed my life. My ALONE Volunteer takes me out for a walk, chats to me and makes me a cup of tea. I really appreciate that and hope that it continues for the rest of my days.”*

**77-year-old lady living with Alzheimer’s**



### **Ireland’s Ageing Population - 65 years and older**

This age group saw the largest increase in population since 2011, rising by 102,174 to 637,567, a rise of 19.1%. The census recorded 456 centenarians, an increase of 17.2% on 2011. Over half a million or 577,171 in this older age group lived in private households, an increase of 19.6%, while those in nursing homes increased by 1,960 to 22,762.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.cso.ie/en/csolatestnews/pressreleases/2017pressreleases/pressstatementcensus2016resultsprofile3-anageprofileofireland/#:-:text=Ireland's%20population%20has%20been%20getting,the%2025%2D44%20age%20group.>

## ALONE Community Hub Service Teams are made up of Staff and Volunteers, these are our:

- Service Managers
- Support Coordinators
- Volunteer Support Officers
- Support & Befriending Volunteers
- Support & Befriending Telephone Coordinators
- Technology Engagement Officers

## ALONE Volunteers

Volunteers are an integral part of ALONE. By 2024 there will be 9,000 ALONE Volunteers throughout Ireland. The positive impact on the wellbeing and quality of life of each older person supported by each volunteer is very significant. Feedback from older people on how volunteers have enriched their lives is overwhelmingly positive. Older people stress the importance of the quality, reliability and consistency of support they receive from volunteers. If the match between the older person and the volunteer lasts more than a year it tends to become an enduring friendship. As the friendship evolves the nature of support evolves into a combination of emotional and practical supports. Volunteers are increasingly involved in supporting the older person to uptake social prescriptions or re-engage in their communities. ALONE appreciates the contribution of each volunteer and acknowledges their importance. Volunteers are on the ALONE Board. We continuously review and upgrade our volunteer support and training programmes

Volunteers support the older person in a variety of ways, these include:

- home visits and telephone calls
- video chats with family members
- participation in social/community activities
- attend on-line events e.g., choir, concerts
- information on events/ activities/ health updates
- research and access general information e.g., local services
- help with letters and correspondence
- reminders for medical appointments
- minor help with maintenance issues
- hospital and nursing home visits
- administrative support in central office

## Social Prescribing

Social Prescribing describes referrals from health professionals recognising that people's health and wellbeing needs are determined by a range of social, economic and environmental factors. It seeks to address people's needs in a holistic way and aims to support individuals to take greater control of their own health. Social Prescribing can involve a range of activities that are typically provided by community organisations e.g., arts activities, gardening, volunteering, cookery, healthy eating advice, choirs and sports. Social Prescribing is listed as one of the ten high impact actions in the NHS England General Practice Forward View.<sup>4</sup>



*“Older People are their  
own best resource”*

80-year-old woman who  
avails of ALONE Services

# Goal 1 - Lead the drive to age positively at home in Ireland

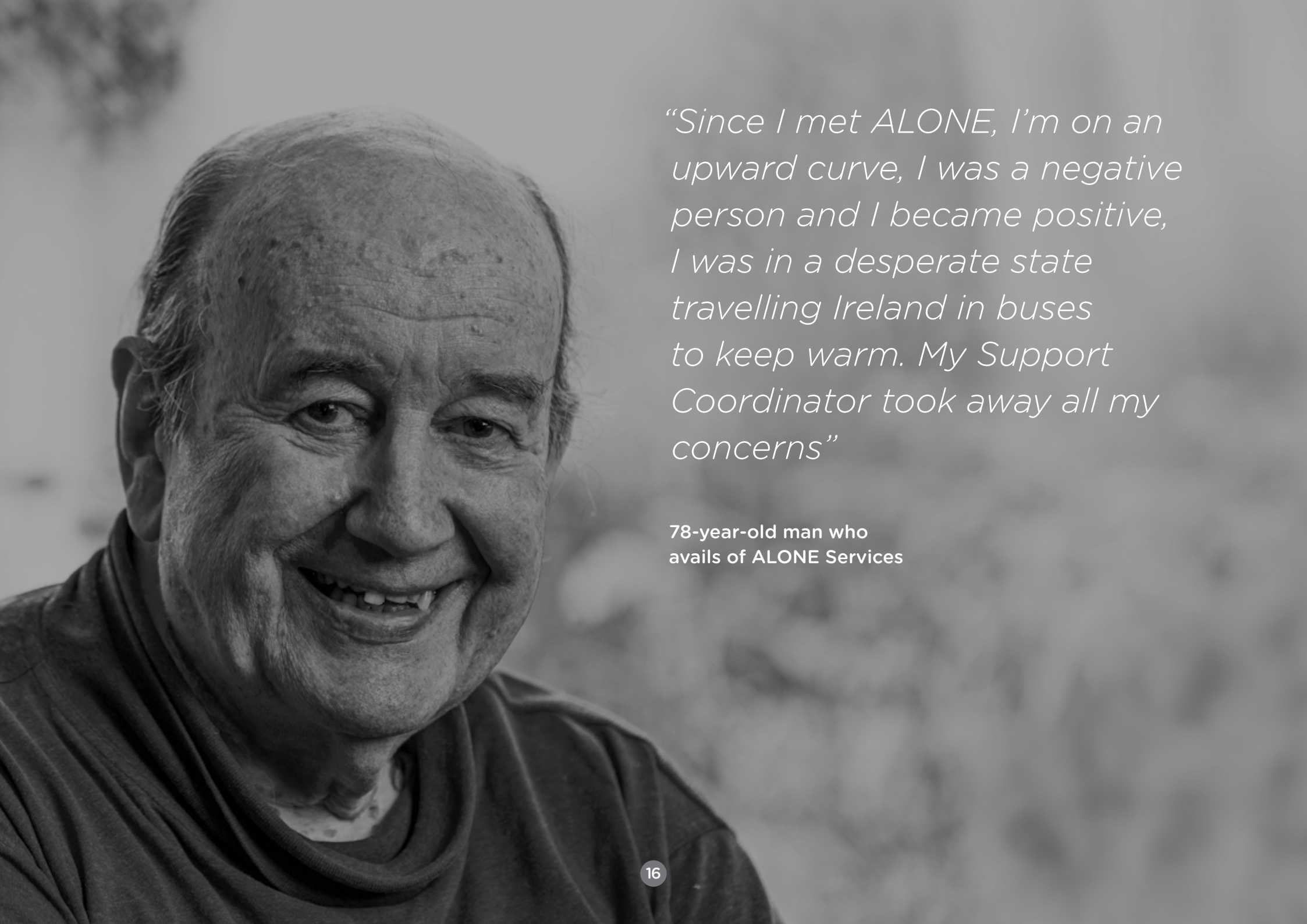
- **Strengthen strategic relationships and develop new relationships**
- **Support National Age Alliance and National Older Person Policy roll-out**
- **Formalise pathways for Integration, Partnership and Mergers**
- **Agree Service Delivery with Partners**
- **Develop and drive ALONE National Strategic Policy**
- **Support ALONE Community Network**

ALONE is committed to shaping a new ageing paradigm from a health-based model to a community-wellbeing model and thereby facilitate ageing more positively at home and engaging in our local communities. We are committed to leading this change. This involves collaborating with other leaders in the sector, developing community capacity, commissioning research, developing policy, acting on evidence, innovating, working with partners and advocating on behalf of the older person.

We believe that through collaboration and creating synergies we can lead and drive change. As a member of the

National Age Alliance, ALONE is helping to lead the drive for strategic systematic change, moving to a community-based ageing model. Strategic Partnerships help to shape and deliver national social policy in relation to older people. As an organisation, with a national footprint, a number of bodies are seeking to merge and/or form service level agreements with us. We will continue to do due diligence and progress these approaches and/or mergers. ALONE supports a range of organisations around the country in our Community Impact Network. This Network, of 70 organisations, delivers services to circa 11,000 older persons in Ireland each year. ALONE will continue to provide on-going capacity development and technical training, including smart software, for this Network. We host the annual ALONE Community Network conference which is excellent for networking and sharing learning.

Using an evidence-based approach ALONE will research and develop new and innovative policies and programmes. A number of Pilot Projects e.g., Sláintecare Project and Project Working Groups e.g., Way Forward Working Group are being developed and rolled out. Through innovative projects like these we can test new ideas, influence policy, improve services, learn and grow as an organisation.



*“Since I met ALONE, I’m on an upward curve, I was a negative person and I became positive, I was in a desperate state travelling Ireland in buses to keep warm. My Support Coordinator took away all my concerns”*

**78-year-old man who  
avails of ALONE Services**



## Goal 2 - Strengthen National Network of Community Service Hubs

- **Strengthen National Network of ALONE Community Service Hubs**
- **Deliver National Co-Ordination Service and Support & Befriending Service**
- **Align ALONE National Support & Befriending Telephone Service with core services**
- **Facilitate the delivery of services for Partners**
- **Recruit, Train, Manage and Support Volunteer Teams**
- **Roll-out range of innovative and evidence-based programmes**

ALONE Community Service Hubs deliver a range of consistent, quality assured, practical and cost-effective services. The ALONE Service Model is aligned to national public policies, in particular, the national older person healthcare policy. Our Services are designed to meet the needs of each individual older person. We assist with support coordination, case management and integrated care pathways for and with older people. By having the older person involved in determining their care we are maximising the capacity and continued resilience of each older person. ALONE Service Coordinators help each person navigate complex public and community services. ALONE Volunteers are at the centre of our Community Hubs providing social, emotional and practical supports to older people across Ireland. Both Service Coordinators and Volunteers are increasingly involved in the

roll-out of social prescriptions, designed to support a wide range of people engage or re-engage in their communities. We are committed to supporting our Staff and Volunteer Teams, so that they are trained to understand and provide the full range of support services.

Demand for ALONE services has grown in line with the national ageing demographic and the increasing need for greater investment in the sector. The Covid-19 Pandemic has resulted in an unprecedented surge in demand for services. The ALONE National Telephone Support Line was established in response to this rapid demand. This service will be further developed and embedded into our core community services. We will also be incorporating new technology into our services and will ensure that older people can understand and use the smart technology. During the lifetime of this strategic plan the ALONE Community Service Hubs will grow in depth, in terms of range of services it delivers, and reach, in terms of reaching more older people, across the country. We will work with more Partners such as the Credit Union, An Post and Citizens Information Centres. Our networks of staff and volunteers have the ability to work with many partners. When organisations work together, we can harness combined strengths, become a more effective organisation and deliver better services to more people. The ALONE Community Service Hub Model can be replicated, can grow in scale and can be adapted to suit local need.

<sup>5</sup><https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/clinical-strategy-and-programmes/a-practical-guide-to-the-local-implementation-of-integrated-care-programmes-for-older-persons.pdf>

<sup>6</sup><https://www.cso.ie/csolatestnews/pressreleases/2017>

# ALONE Living Lab Project Partners



## Inishowen Sláintecare Project

Provide technology and guidance to enable communication between dementia patients and HSE OT's / Family

## Sligo Living Labs

Provide technology expertise facilitating community integration project



## Galway Tech Grant

## Tintain/ALONE Project

To develop a Support-Network-as-a-Service that enables people with mild/moderate frailty to live safe and well at home



## Vodafone Phones

Bring a total of 1,570 smart phones to older people nationally



## Carlow CC - Tech Grant



## La Casa - Housing Project

Research pilot project to create a new activity monitoring system using AI and alerts



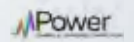
## Healthy Ireland Project - Louth

Supporting 25-30 participants with technology



## mPower

mPower works with communities to support older people to manage their own health and care



## Meath County Council

Supporting 20 participants with technology



## Sláintecare

Supplying 50 participants technology to support with health monitors at home after discharge from hospital



## ALONE TB&S App

ALONE Telephone Befriending & Support App provides access for volunteer support staff to provide a call, supports and monitoring service

## ALONE Befriend App

ALONE Befriend App maintains volunteer engagement, supports service quality and responsiveness, keeps volunteers and core staff connected, and reports on service effectiveness



## Respond Housing Project

Research pilot project to create a new activity monitoring system using AI and alerts



- Distribution, installation and response to technology.
- In the future, we hope to use AI to empower older people to age at home.

## Goal 3 - Innovate and Develop Social Enterprise

- **Develop ALONE Tech. Social Enterprise**
- **Pilot Living Lab Tech. Projects with Partners**
- **Nurture and Develop Innovative Pilot Projects**
- **Develop ALONE Housing Shared Services Social Enterprise**
- **Develop ALONE Housing with Support (HwS) Social Enterprise**
- **Manage and Review Existing Housing Projects**

Innovation is central to developing and embedding smarter services. Assistive Technology (AT), Information Technology (IT) and Digital Technology (DT) all play increasing roles in our lives. Digital Health is about putting the older person at the centre of the process. Finding innovative ways to integrate technology and provide smarter supports with the older person continuously engaged, presents significant opportunities and challenges<sup>7</sup>. There is an evolving shortfall in healthcare workers, combined with increased demand, and increased costs, all demand that smarter services are delivered. Smarter ways to work, the need to navigate complex systems and access information together with the need to provide more efficient and effective services are all growing challenges. ALONE is to the forefront in exploring these challenges. ALONE is currently piloting a number of innovative technological projects around the country with multiple partners in the ALONE Living Lab. Some of the ALONE Living Lab Projects will be integrated into our mainstream services whilst others will be further examined and developed into ALONE Tech. Social Enterprises.

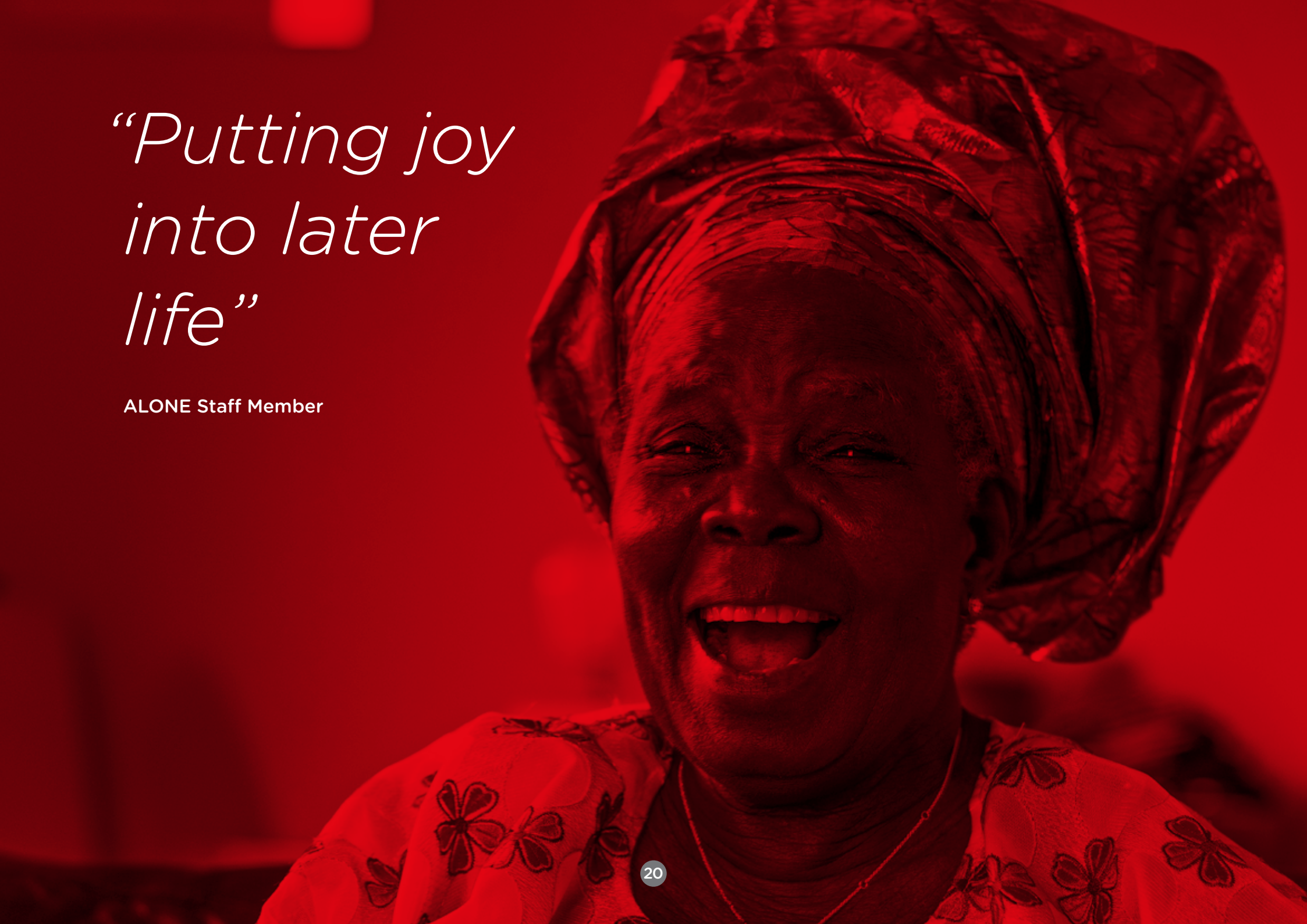
ALONE has an extensive network of staff, volunteers, clients and partners across the country. This knowledge and connectivity network will be explored in innovative ways. We are open to working with others and developing innovative solutions that, not only make us more sustainable, but more importantly, enrich the life of the older person. The combination of ALONE with a national footprint, and having capacity and experience, along with our ability to work with others, gives ALONE a unique competitive advantage to deliver services to older people in the home. Services in areas such as nutrition, transport, physical and mental resilience are all areas of high interest to older people and have social enterprise potential. We will continue to explore and develop new service offerings.

Another area where there is capacity to innovate is the development of social enterprises supporting older people remain in the home. ALONE has extensive experience of providing coordinated shared services all supporting older people remain in the home. The ALONE Shared Services Model can be extended to include multiple partners, be scaled up and rolled-out nationally. The ALONE Shared Services Model could be extended to include tenants of Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) throughout Ireland. In addition, ALONE will develop its Housing with Supports (HwS) Model, providing up to 24/7hr. on-site supports. This more intensive form of housing support, can be provided to support older people remain in the home as an alternative to a nursing home. We plan to establish an ALONE Shared Services Social Enterprise and also an ALONE Housing with Supports (HwS) Social Enterprise. ALONE will continue to review existing housing stock and roll-out legacy housing projects.

<sup>7</sup><https://www.irishgerontology.com/news/blogs/technology-innovation-and-care-older-people>

*“Putting joy  
into later  
life”*

ALONE Staff Member



## Goal 4 - Develop Organisational Sustainability

- **Effectively implement ALONE Fundraising Plan**
- **Effectively implement ALONE Communications Plan**
- **Develop ALONE Information Hub**
- **Publish Annual Reviews**
- **Publish Annual Impact Statement**
- **Disseminate information on ALONE Model of Support**

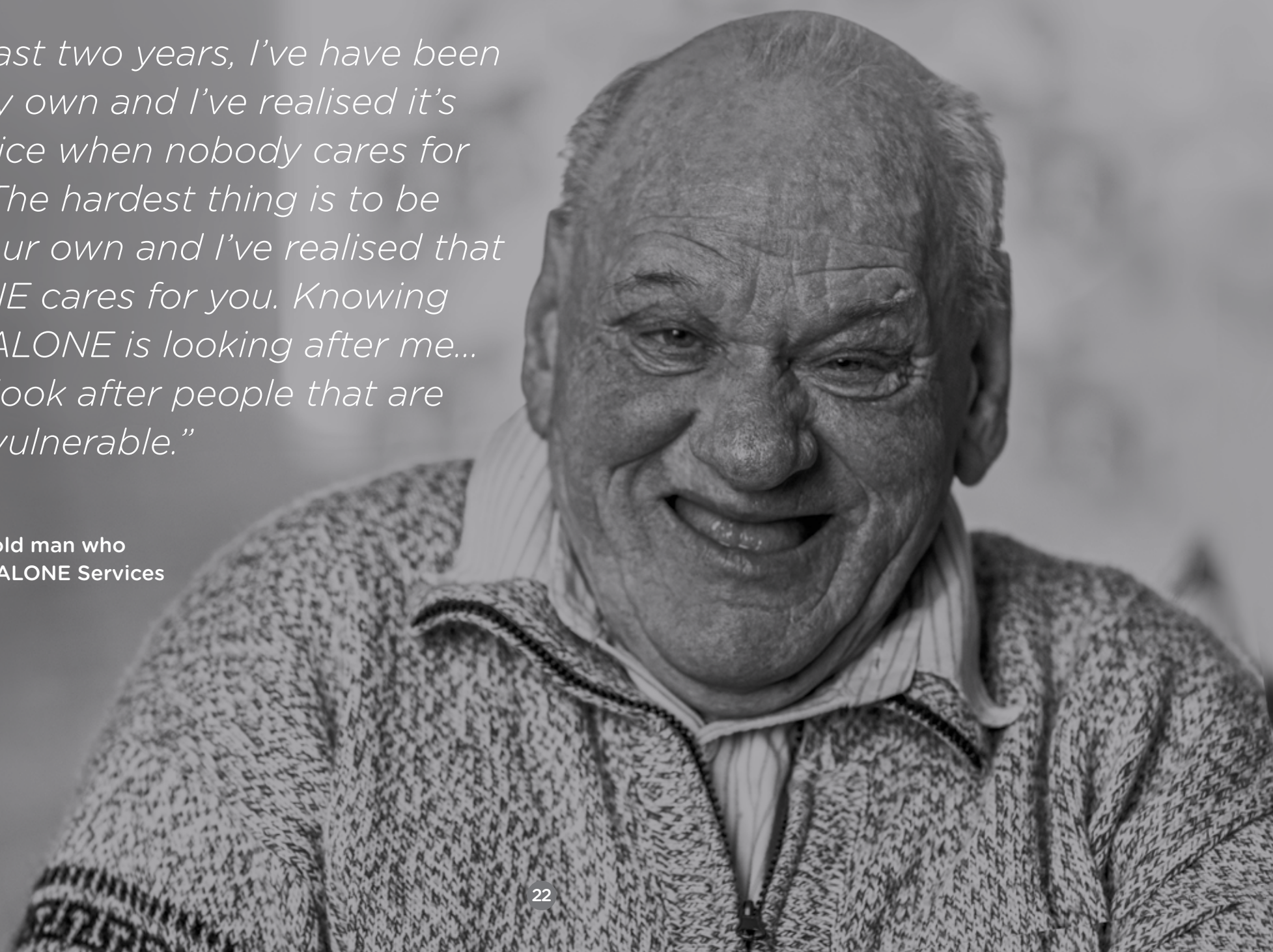
ALONE has a strong tradition of community support. Over the past few years, and especially during the Covid 19 Pandemic, financial support from statutory bodies, the business community and the wider community has been very positive. Ensuring broad based long-term financial sustainability is critical for our independence and the successful delivery of services. A key priority is to effectively implement an ALONE Fundraising plan with clear national and local targets. Aligned to fundraising is regular monitoring and evaluation which ensure that services are efficient and effective, from the perspective of, the older person, multiple stakeholders and funders. We are committed to publishing Annual Reviews and an Annual Impact Statement.

Another key strategic priority is improved communications. Effective implementation of the ALONE Communications plan. This Communications Plan will include both internal and external communications. With a growing workforce in diverse locations, significantly more volunteers throughout the country, greater numbers of clients and families and more complex stakeholder relationships, it is critical that clear branding, messaging and communications are in place. Regular communications initiatives along with published impact statement reports will all feature as part of improved communications.

Promoting the ALONE Model as an international model of best practice in supporting positive ageing at home will be included as part of improved communications.

*“The last two years, I’ve have been on my own and I’ve realised it’s not nice when nobody cares for you. The hardest thing is to be on your own and I’ve realised that ALONE cares for you. Knowing that ALONE is looking after me... they look after people that are very vulnerable.”*

**79-year-old man who  
avails of ALONE Services**



## Goal 5 - Enhance Organisational Capacity for Growth

- **Continue to enhance good Governance including Financial, Risk and Legal Management**
- **Develop and embed Impact Measurement Framework**
- **Strengthen Human Resource Management**
- **Develop Organisational Learning Frameworks**
- **Prioritise Internal ICT Technology and Facilities Management**
- **Grow Quality & Compliance Standards across the organisation**

ALONE has a strong track record of modelling best practice and being pro-active in terms of governance. We will continue to ensure that annual risk management plans are implemented. Financial management and financial oversight systems will continue to be maintained and upgraded. With a growing number of complex partnerships, organisational capacity in terms of carrying out due diligence and ensuring robust legal partnership agreements are in place will be enhanced. ALONE will also continue to develop and embed the ALONE Impact Measurement Framework.

With growing staff numbers, and significantly greater volunteer numbers the ALONE human resource function will be further strengthened. Organisational Learning Frameworks

will ensure that staff and volunteers develop their full potential, are adequately supported, understand our strategic intent and approach and ultimately deliver excellent services. It is critical that we live the ALONE Way, are all ambassadors for ALONE, that we facilitate older person active involvement, understand complex health and community supports and deliver quality assured services. Ensuring that we are a learning organisation is critical to our success.

Managing internal technology and data systems, including a range of ICT hardware in multiple locations is, an increasing priority as we grow. ICT capacity development for all staff is continuously being addressed. ICT and Facilities Management are key resources that increasingly need to be serviced and managed. We will prioritise ICT and Facilities with ongoing structured support.

Finally, ALONE has a range of internal and external quality assurance systems in place. Our Services are externally validated by three external quality management agencies. We are committed to maintaining these standards and plan to add additional standards. Quality assured standards in areas such as Health & Safety (Staff & Volunteer) Wellbeing and Universal Design Principles are two that we plan to add to our suite of standards.



We are a national organisation and have a network of staff and volunteers across the Country.

**ALONE Central Office**

Olympic House  
Pleasants Street  
Dublin 8  
D08 H67X

**T** 01 679 1032

**ALONE**

Aspen House,  
76 Seatown,  
Dundalk,  
Co. Louth  
A91 K20F

**T** 042 933 0103

**ALONE**

St Dymphna's  
Hospital Complex,  
Athy Road,  
Co. Carlow  
R93 Y2V0

**T** 059 913 6340

**ALONE**

St Canice's  
Neighbourhood Centre,  
Butts Green,  
Co. Kilkenny  
R95 VK7X

**T** 056 777 2151

**ALONE**

No. 6 Dr Denis McLaughlin Road,  
Buncrana,  
Co. Donegal  
F93 V052

**T** 074 932 1598

**ALONE National Support Line 0818 222 024**

[www.alone.ie](http://www.alone.ie)



Registered Charity Number: CHY8259