

03rd July 2020

Dear Minister Donnelly,

We, the below signed, are writing to outline our concerns that the health impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, on people living with dementia and their family carers, is not being adequately considered and that the unique needs of this extremely vulnerable group of people are not in any way part of current discussions and debate.

The recently published report "*The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on people living with dementia in Ireland*", by Niamh Hennelly and Professor Suzanne Cahill, describes the complex and problematic situation in Ireland for people living with dementia and their family carers. The report concludes that "policy and practice needs to focus on how people living with dementia and their informal and formal carers can be optimally supported".

We are deeply concerned that dementia has not been included specifically in data collection related to Covid-19 mortality or in the public messaging being issued. We are also alarmed at the lack of emphasis placed on the complex needs of those impacted by dementia, whether in the community or in residential settings.

People with dementia and their family carers have been rendered invisible during this crisis, and we are calling on you to address this invisibility as we move beyond the "emergency" planning for Covid-19. We are writing to ask you to ensure that dementia is given the consideration it warrants and deserves in terms of public health policy, research into its impact and future planning with regards to Covid-19 and to prioritise the issuing of guidelines for the reopening of services and supports for people and their families.

We hope that you will give these issues the consideration they deserve.

Yours sincerely,

1. Pat McLoughlin, CEO, The Alzheimer Society of Ireland
2. Sinead Grennan, CEO, Engaging Dementia
3. Prof Mary McCarron, Director of the Trinity Centre for Ageing and Intellectual Disability

4. Karen Horgan, CEO, Age and Opportunity
5. Dr Tony Foley, GP
6. Prof Des O'Neill MD FRCPI, Consultant Physician in Geriatric and Stroke Medicine and Professor in Medical Gerontology, Tallaght University Hospital and Trinity College Dublin
7. Áine Brady, CEO, Third Age
8. Pat Holmes, CEO, Western Alzheimers
9. Dr Joanna McHugh Power, Maynooth University
10. Zoe Hughes, Policy & Research Officer, Care Alliance Ireland
11. Dr Fiona Keogh, Centre for Economic and Social Research on Dementia NUI Galway
12. Mervyn Taylor, Executive Director, Sage Advocacy
13. Dr Maria Pierce, Independent Researcher and Adjunct Faculty Member, Faculty of Science and Health, Dublin City University
14. Nicole Müller, Professor of Speech & Hearing Sciences, University College Cork
15. Paddy Connolly, CEO, Age Action
16. Áine McGuirk, Chair, The Irish Association of Social Workers
17. Sabina Brennan, PhD., C.Psychol., PsSI.
18. Prof Brian Lawlor, Consultant Psychiatrist, St. James's Hospital, Connolly Norman Professor of Old Age Psychiatry, Trinity College Dublin and Deputy Executive Director, Global Brain Health Institute
19. Maurice O'Connell, Chair of NGO Homecare Coalition
20. Colette Kelleher, Founder & Co Convenor All Party Oireachtas Group on Dementia 2016-2020
21. Dr Sarah Donnelly, Assistant Professor of Social Work, School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice, UCD
22. Sally Whelan, Ph.D. Researcher, School of Nursing and Midwifery, NUI Galway
23. Dr Colm Cunningham, School of Biochemistry and Immunology at Trinity Biomedical Sciences Institute & Trinity College Institute of Neuroscience
24. Deirdre Shanagher, National Development Manager, Palliative and End-of-Life Care, The Irish Hospice Foundation
25. Dr. Unai Diaz-Orueta, PhD, Department of Psychology, Maynooth University
26. Prof. Sean Kennelly, Consultant Physician in Geriatric and Stroke Medicine and Chair of Dementia Research Network Ireland
27. Dr. Carol Rogan, Scientific Project Manager, Dementia Research Network Ireland
28. Prof. Catherine Blake, Dean and Head, UCD School of Public Health, Physiotherapy and Sport Science
29. Dr. Barry Boland, Lecturer, Department of Pharmacology & Therapeutics, UCC

30. Prof Jochen Prehn, Executive, SFI Future-Neuro Research Centre, RCSI
31. Dr. Louise Hopper, Assistant Professor School of Psychology, Dublin City University
32. Ruth Usher, Lecturer, Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, University College Cork
33. Dr Michelle Kelly, Lecturer in Psychology and International Cognitive Stimulation Training
Trainer, National College of Ireland
34. Aoife Smith, Director, The Great Care Co-op
35. Edel McGinley, Director, Migrant Rights Centre Ireland
36. Dr. Una FitzGerald, Director, Galway Neuroscience Centre at NUI Galway
37. Prof. Eamon O'Shea, Director of the Centre for Economic and Social Research on Dementia at
NUI Galway
38. Arun Bokde, PhD Associate Professor, Psychiatry & Institute of Neuroscience, Trinity College
Dublin
39. Colette Ryan, General Manager, CareBright
40. Dr Diarmuid O'Shea, President, Irish Gerontological Society
41. Dr. Maria Pertl, RCSI, University of Medicine and Health Sciences
42. Matthew Gibb, Director, Dementia Information Services and Development Centre