

## **Waterford News & Star**

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### **Call for greater resources for dementia patients and their carers**

The need for long-term planning for the approximately 55,000 people living with dementia and their carers was raised at Question Time in the Dáil by Fianna Fáil Deputy Mary Butler.

“It stands at 55,000, but that figure is expected to increase in the next three years to 68,000,” she said. “Population ageing is happening all over the world and Ireland is no exception in this regard. We are all living longer, which is good, but people want to live at home, safe and secure in the knowledge that if they need medical assistance, it will be provided to them. The number of people with dementia in Ireland is expected to increase.”

“My question is specifically about dementia care advisers, of whom there are eight in the country and who cover 11 counties,” she said. “When a person is diagnosed with dementia, the support of a dementia care adviser cannot be underestimated. In order to provide a service for everyone with dementia, 32 dementia care advisers are required to cover the entire country. If we could see an increase of eight advisers year on year for the next three years, we would meet that target. I welcome the money allocated from the Dormant Accounts Fund. In my constituency of Waterford a memory clinic has been set up in St. Patrick's.”

In reply, Health Minister Simon Harris said it is estimated that there are over 55,000 people who have a form of dementia. “There are about 4,000 new cases each year. After the age of 65 years, the prevalence of dementia nearly doubles every five years, but, of course, onset can occur at a much younger age. There are 4,000 people under the age of 65 years with early onset dementia. Based on population projections from the CSO, the number of people with dementia will double to 115,000 by 2036 and treble to 157,000 by 2046.”

“I am very much aware of the work done by dementia care advisers and that the Alzheimer Society of Ireland provides a dementia care adviser service which is funded by the HSE at eight locations nationwide. I am aware that an evaluation was conducted by UCC to investigate how well it worked and provide recommendations on the future development of the service.”

### **A hard Brexit could cost thousands of job losses**

The people of this State cannot have confidence in what they have heard from the Tánaiste and the Taoiseach in respect of a no-deal Brexit or a hard crash, Sinn Féin Deputy David Cullinane told the Dáil.

“We are not hearing of any preparation and people, farmers and businesses are concerned,” he said. “For example, companies in the south-east that export to Britain, employ large numbers of people, and are affected by the currency fluctuations, and that would be affected disastrously if there was a hard Brexit, are also concerned. It is not only people in the North but people across the island of Ireland who will be affected. There can be no negotiation downwards on what has been agreed. A hard Brexit will result in a drop of between 4% and 7% in GDP for the South and potentially the loss of thousands of jobs.”

“Collectively, we have all got behind getting a solution for Ireland,” he continued. “We all want a deal that protects Ireland from the worst effects of Brexit. We all accept that Brexit is

not good, that there is no good outcome and no good Brexit. We all want a deal to be put in place that will avoid a hardening of the Border and protect the Good Friday Agreement but some in Britain do not want this to happen, will attack the backstop and have no difficulty using Ireland as collateral to get their Brexit through. On behalf of the people we represent, that cannot happen.”

The people of the North, and this island, need these basic protections fully protected, he said. “My message for the Taoiseach is that there can be no renegotiation of those basic protections that collectively we have secured for the people of our island.”