

Irish Rural Link

25<sup>th</sup> May 2023

### **Irish Rural Link Welcome the Announcement of Additional Funding to Meals on Wheels Services**

Irish Rural Link (IRL) – the national network representing the interest of rural communities has welcomed the announcement by Minister for Mental Health and Older People, Mary Butler, T.D. yesterday 24<sup>th</sup> May, of an additional €1.75 million in funding for Meals on Wheels services across the country.

Meals on Wheels providers across the country have felt the impact of the cost of living crisis. The increased cost of ingredients and fuel, together with increase in demand for the service has left many providers struggling financially. This announcement will help relieve some of the financial pressures Meals on Wheels providers are currently experiencing.

Meals on Wheels is more than just a meal. It also helps reduce isolation and loneliness with a social element to it. Meals on Wheels aligns with many of the objectives of *Sláintecare* – the Government’s healthcare framework – providing health and social care in the community and allowing people to age in their own home. It is essential that this service continues to be adequately funded and resourced if it is to continue to meet growing demand and prevent increased costs being passed on to providers’ clients.

Seamus Boland, CEO of IRL, said: *“Yesterday’s announcement of additional funding to Meals on Wheels services is welcome and will go some way to help providers with rising costs they have faced over the last year. We would like to see this as a start to increasing the budget for Meals on Wheels providers and continue to call for multi-annual funding so they can plan their budgets for the year ahead”*.

Tracey Noone, Coordinator of National Meals on Wheels Network, said: *“The National Meals on Wheels Network welcomes today’s announcement of additional funding by Minister for Mental Health and Older People, Mary Butler, T.D. This will go towards alleviating some of the pressures and challenges currently facing many of the providers throughout the country. The Network acknowledges the support of the meals on wheels’ service by the Minister and will continue to engage and work with her department and the HSE in achieving increased multi-annual core funding for all providers to ensure the sustainability of the service into the future”*.

Ends

**For further information, please contact (anytime):**

Seamus Boland (Chief Executive) 0862491153 or Louise Lennon (Policy and Communications Officer) 0861069244

**About Irish Rural Link:**

Irish Rural Link represents the interests of locally based rural groups in disadvantaged and marginalised rural areas by highlighting problems, advocating appropriate policies, sharing experiences and examples of good practice. It has a membership of nearly 600 rural community groups dedicated to sustainable rural development and represents rural communities at a national and international level