

2011 Annual Review– Care Alliance Ireland

Chairpersons Statement

Care Alliance Ireland has continued its programme of development in the sector throughout 2011. Membership has increased by over 20% and by year end stood at 84 organisations, including all the carer organisations and the majority of the condition specific organisations. We are delighted to welcome on board as members a wider range of organisations and we believe it reinforces our mandate to support collaborative working across organisations and to guide support for Family Carers in Ireland.

This report will outline the work of Care Alliance Ireland in supporting collaboration, supporting research, promoting National Carers Week, developing resources for the sector, sharing information, contributing to regional and national planning and policy initiatives, and in working with other organisations to advocate on issues relating to Family Carers.

Our Board of Directors has been further strengthened this year with three new directors coming on board, two of whom we recruited through Boardmatch Ireland. This year has seen the resignation of two directors who have made a significant contribution to the organisation over the years - Jean Day, a founder and former Chairperson, and Catherine Keogh who helped steer the organisation through incorporation. We are grateful for the enormous contribution they have made. We pride ourselves in having strong governance and look forward to the adoption of the new Governance Code by our peers.

In spite of tighter budgetary constraints we have made the necessary adjustments that have allowed us to continue to implement the central elements of our Strategic Plan 2010-2012. Later in 2012 we have planned a strategic review which will allow us to identify with our members the key priorities for the coming 2 year period.

I would like to thank my fellow board members and all of the staff team for their professionalism and dedication. I would like to thank Liam O Sullivan our Executive Director for his hard work and commitment to Care Alliance Ireland this year. As all our member organisations will know it is not easy to deliver against strategic and operational goals in the current environment and Liam continues to provide excellent leadership and support for the organisation.

I would also like to thank each of our member organisations for their support and feedback and I look forward to meeting more of them in the coming year

I would also like to thank the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, and the HSE for their continued support



Colum Conway

Chair

Report of the Executive Director

Care Alliance Ireland is made up of 84 member organisations that represent a wide group of voluntary organisations throughout the island of Ireland, all of whom are involved in supporting Family Carers in various ways. Our vision is that the role of Family Carers is fully recognised and valued by society in Ireland. We exist to enhance the quality of life for Family Carers and we endeavour to achieve this by supporting our member organisations in their direct work with Family Carers through the provision of information, developing research and policy in the field, sharing resources, and instigating opportunities for collaboration. During 2011 we strived to give expression to our new catch line - Guiding Support for Family Carers.

Key projects through 2011 included the 5th National Carers Week, two joint seminars as well as our involvement in the Census 2011 Carers Count Campaign.

A significant membership development initiative during the latter end of the year, increased our membership significantly and now includes key intellectual disability organisations.

Our research function continued throughout 2011 with our leading of the Family Carer Research Group that met quarterly throughout the year. Our joint primary qualitative research with TCD, entitled '*Between Worlds; The Experiences and Needs of Former Family Carers*' was launched in September. There was extensive demand for hard copies of the report which have been distributed to over 300 of our stakeholders with in excess of 700 downloads of the report from our website. We look forward to continuing to collaborate with Trinity and other third level institutions into the future.

We also made a number of submissions to various bodies throughout the year including a joint submission with The Carers Association to the Department of Health concerning a review of Disability Policy. We also made a pre-Budget Submission and a submission to the EU on Carers Leave. We assisted researchers, students, media and the general public with queries in relation to research on Family Carers, via e-mail/phone. We received occasional calls from Family Carers and we advised and re-directed as appropriate.

We continue to participate on the Consultative Group of the National Centre for the Protection of Older People (NCPOP) that meets quarterly. The NCPOP/HSE have agreed on a 3 year research programme – 1

of the 3 key research projects will look at Carer Stress/Elder Abuse, following successful representation on this issue by our own and other carer organisations.

Facilitating collaborative ventures is a key component of our work and in this regard we work closely with The Disability Federation of Ireland with whom we have a Memorandum of Understanding.

We undertake regular reviews of new Family Carer research, policy and practice resources internationally and disseminate as appropriate. We continue to manage an up to date database of Family Carer Training in Ireland and following consultation with providers, plan to facilitate a meeting with providers of Family Carer training to share good practice in early 2012. Our newsletter continues to provide its audience with an update of the latest research, policy and practice issues in the sector with four editions being produced and distributed in 2011. Throughout 2011 we engaged in on-going targeted distribution of information by e-mail and through our listserv. Our list of contacts continued to grow and now exceeds 500.

We co-ordinated the 5th National Carers Week (June 13th-19th) in 2011, in partnership with eight leading Irish charities/NGOs who support Family Carers. Other national partners in the week are: The Alzheimer Society of Ireland, Brí, The Carers Association, Caring for Carers, The Disability Federation of Ireland, Extra-Care, Headway, and The Irish Hospice Foundation. The objective of the week was to highlight the contribution of Ireland’s Family Carers. The week has become a significant event in the calendar of many organisations supporting Family Carers. In 2011 over 40 organisations organised and took part in well in excess of 150 events for Family Carers in every county in Ireland. This is a 40% increase on 2010 figures. In spite of increasingly tight budgets and limitations that this puts on service delivery, increased levels of collaboration has enabled greater number of events involving more Family Carers to be organised. We estimate that in the region of 4,000 Family Carers took part in events including pamper days, health checks, seminars, tea dances, lunches and day trips. Media coverage was extensive, including lengthy coverage during the week on the 1pm, 6pm and 9pm RTE News. The ever expanding choice of the merchandise was well received. Developments included free health checks for Family Carers, an expansion of the schools competition and enhanced profiling of the week in Health Centres. As part of the week, we co-hosted a lecture on novel stroke Treatments with Research and Hope as well as a seminar on Carers and End of Life Care.

Our website continues to be updated regularly and is viewed extensively, with a full revamp and launch in early 2012.

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In 2011 we completed the Gruntvig European Post Caring Project. As part of this project, a Handbook for former carers has been completed and both hard and soft copies have been distributed nationwide. We continue to work on a revised resubmission to the EU Gruntvig funding scheme for a Young Carers knowledge exchange project for submission in early 2012.

Our work on inputting into the development of a Single Assessment Tool for the Care of Older people also led to us taking a lead role in the preparation of a Carer Resource Pack that was sent to 55 HSE pilot assessors. This resource has been well received. We are further engaging with our partners and with the HSE on an evaluation of the pilot assessment tool, specifically with respect to Family Carers.

In September we organised a well-attended seminar on young carer policy and service developments, co-hosted by Crosscare Carer Support. A report on the seminar was distributed widely. A further joint seminar on the same theme is planned for 2012.

In late 2011 we engaged with DIT Masters Students with a view to securing their services for free to develop a rebranding of our organisation. This was rolled out in early 2012. We also are embracing social media in a considered and strategic fashion.

As in previous years we continue to seek other sources of funding for our work to widen our funding base. The financial reserve policy was reviewed in 2011, and progress was made towards achieving this. 2011 audited accounts have been prepared using the gold standard of SORP. (Statement of Recommended Practice). During 2011, a review of our administration requirements enabled significant savings to be secured, together with further out sourcing of some functions and greater use of ICT.

We encourage our member organisations and other stakeholders to actively consider collaborations, joint work and mergers as appropriate. We continue to operate out of The Carmichael Centre where we make extensive use of the shared services (Accounts, Offices, Meeting Rooms etc.) as well as making use of peer support with other NGO’s.

We continue to work very closely with the HSE regional carer support co-ordinators as well as those NGO’s contracted to provide carer support programmes in other areas around the country.

Internationally, we continue to be active within Eurocarers, providing financial management support, and have continued to support the work of the European Parliament Special Interest Group on Carers. We have also made good connections with the US National Caregiving Alliance.

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'Guiding support for family carers'

The board of Directors continue to meet bi-monthly, meeting 6 times in 2011, and receive a comprehensive report from the Executive Director in advance of each meeting, aligned to agreed Key Performance Indicators and The Strategic Plan.

We look forward to continue in 2012 in our ambition to make Ireland a better place to live in for Family Carers.



Liam O'Sullivan

Executive Director

Care Alliance Ireland

May 2011