

What about the Carer? They have needs too.

Assessment of Family Carers needs called for by Alliance of Carer Organisations.

To-day, as part of National Carers Week, Care Alliance Ireland, is launching its Position Paper – ‘The Case for Carers Assessments’ (Download 3 Page report [here](#))

‘For too long Family Carers have been taken for granted and treated as disposable assets. They now need to be treated as equal partners in care’ say Liam O’Sullivan, Executive Director, Care Alliance Ireland.

He goes on to say ‘We know that Family Carers provide in excess of 80% of care to dependent people, and identifying the needs of Family Carers has to be a central aspect of the current development of a Single Assessment Tool for older people. Family Carers should be seen as partners in health and social care and be given access to an assessment process which would allow them to identify their needs, be given information and advice, explore difficulties they may experience, and make contingency plans if they are ill or are unable to continue to provide care.’

The position paper outlines succinctly the reason why the right to a Carer Assessment needs to become embedded in health and social care provision.

The main points of the position paper are;

- Carers Assessments can build carer morale and capacity and are central to care planning.
- They can provide timely feedback to health and social care professionals and can inform policy and service provision.
- Carers who have their needs assessed feel acknowledged, valued, and better understood by health and social care professionals.
- Carers gain a better grasp of their role and the abilities required to carry out tasks.
- It’s a way to monitor the effectiveness of interventions and to inform policy

Carer Assessments have been in place successfully for over 10 years in the UK and the evidence is that they do not create significant additional demands on existing services.

A review of their use in Northern Ireland found;

‘ the assessment process was itself a support for carers, it supported with carer involvement in the delivery of support services and evaluation of same and it can support the prevention of the breakdown of the caring situation.’

O’Sullivan says; ‘If we are serious about providing recognition of the role played by Ireland’s 274,000 Family Carers, then assessing their needs is a must.’

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Ends.

Notes to the Editor:

Family Carers are usually immediate relatives who provide very high levels of care, at home, for children and adults with severe disabilities, frail older people and people who are terminally ill.

The full report is available to download at

<http://www.carealliance.ie/userfiles/file/The%20Case%20for%20Carers%20Assessments%20June%202012.pdf>

The 2009 Quarterly National Household Survey estimated there to be in the region of 274,000 Family Carers in Ireland.

Care Alliance Ireland is an alliance of 88 charities involved in support Family Carers. Its vision is that the role of Family Carers is fully recognised and valued by society in Ireland. It seeks to achieve this by supporting its 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.

www.carealliance.ie

A list of Carers Week Events nationally is available at www.carersweek.ie

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