



Strategic Plan

2014 -2017

'Guiding support for family carers'

Context: Care Alliance Ireland is pleased to present its Strategic Plan for the period 2014–2017. This plan builds on the achievements of the previous strategic plan (2010–2013), and is based on those guiding principles which are fundamental to the work we do: raising awareness of Family Carers and enhancing their quality of life through effective collaboration, networking and partnership with our member organisations and other stakeholders. In preparing this document, we have consulted extensively with our member organisations, potential member organisations and a wide array of other stakeholders.

The plan identifies our strategic priorities for the next three years, whilst recognising the challenges that face our member organisations and the caring sector as a whole. These include:

- Reductions in income supports for Family Carers and for the organisations who support them and the need to demonstrate greater value for money;
- Changing demographics as the population ages, resulting in increased dependency ratios;
- Increasing demand for our members' services, with a move towards care in the community;
- Greater regulation of services and governance standards in the sector.

The contribution of Family Carers to Irish society is grossly undervalued. Both numerically and in terms of the hours and intensity of their work, they provide by far the most important contribution in Irish society to the support of people with disabilities, those with mental illness, the frail, the sick, and the elderly. The reorientation of the health service away from institutional-based settings in favour of care at home, the escalation in the type of high level complex care now routinely provided by carers, along with our ageing population, means that family caregiving is now an irreplaceable element of the health system and must be firmly recognised as such at the centre of the Government's agenda. Supporting our member organisations at regional and national level remains our focus in this challenging environment.

Vision: That the role of Family Carers is fully recognised and valued by society in Ireland.

Mission Statement: Care Alliance Ireland exists to enhance the quality of life for Family Carers. We achieve this by supporting our member organisations in their direct work with Family Carers through the provision of information, developing research and policy, sharing resources, and instigating opportunities for collaboration.

Guiding Principles:

1. We are committed to raising awareness of Family Carers and the critical role they play in health and social care provision.
2. We believe that our member organisations have a pivotal role to play in enhancing the quality of life of Family Carers, and are committed to working in partnership in pursuit of this shared objective.
3. We are committed to delivering up-to-date information, advice and support to our member organisations in a timely, professional and accessible manner.
4. We will implement and promote an efficient, effective and professional approach in relation to our own work and that of our member organisations.
5. We are committed to the full and effective implementation of the National Carers Strategy.

Strategic Priorities for 2014 – 2017

1. *Providing a united voice for, and strengthening the impact and relevance of, Family Caring organisations in Ireland.*

- To ensure that we are seen as a significant representative voice for the Family Carer sector;
- To prepare policy submissions on issues of relevance to Family Carers and our member organisations;
- To provide opportunities for our members to interact, network and share learning by coordinating meetings, events and workshops.

2. *Providing up-to-date, relevant information to our members in a timely and accessible manner.*

- To produce information, including policy and research briefings, that will inform member organisations on issues of relevance;
- To disseminate the latest national and international policy, research and practice initiatives.

3. *Supporting primary and applied research on Family Caring and the role of Family Carers.*

- To communicate and support carer-specific research that informs and progresses policy and service development for Family Carers;
- To influence the Family Carer research agenda by collaborating with third level institutions, statutory bodies and other relevant agencies, both nationally and internationally.

4. *Building the profile and raising awareness of Care Alliance Ireland.*

- To expand our membership by 25% over the period 2014–2017;
- To increase the active engagement and participation of member organisations in the work of our alliance;
- To continue leading and developing National Carers Week as the primary annual awareness-raising event for Family Carers in Ireland, and to organise at least one other annual event/seminar that generates significant publicity and media interest;
- To increase awareness and understanding of our activities using different channels, including the use of social media.

5. *Ensuring we have the capacity and resources to progress strategic priorities.*

- To secure the resources required to successfully implement our vision, mission and objectives;
- To develop and implement exemplary operational and governance structures, and to promote this philosophy and practice among our members;
- To support the ongoing development of our staff, volunteers and board of directors.

6. *Supporting member organisations and international alliances*

- To support the development of member organisations through the provision of services and supports that will strengthen their organisational effectiveness and corporate governance structures;
- To share with members details of funding opportunities relevant to their work with Family Carers;
- To develop international links and to participate in international networks to facilitate the transfer of good practice and policies.



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