



Strategic Plan

2019–2024

'Guiding support for family carers'

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Family carers are people who provide regular unpaid personal help for a friend or family member with a long-term illness, health problem or disability¹.

Care Alliance Ireland is the National Network of Voluntary Organisations supporting family carers.

Our Vision: That the role of family carers is fully recognised and valued by society in Ireland.

Our Mission Statement: Care Alliance Ireland exists to enhance the well-being of family carers by supporting our member organisations in their direct work with family carers. We do this by providing information, developing research and policy, sharing resources, and instigating opportunities for collaboration.

Guiding Values of Our Organisation

1. **Professionalism**
2. **Integrity**
3. **Collaborative Approach**
4. **Accountability**

We will endeavour to demonstrate these values in all the work we undertake.

In practice this means that we will maintain high standards of work, be open and honest in all our interactions and value the contributions of all our stakeholders.

¹ We have used question 22 from the 2016 Irish Census as the basis for this definition. For the purposes of clarity and simplicity, we use the term 'family carer' in this document. Whilst the vast majority of unpaid care is provided by family members, we do not wish to exclude from our definition others who also provide unpaid care such as neighbours, friends and/or partners. We also acknowledge that terms such as unpaid carer and informal carer are used extensively.



Strategic Priorities for 2019–2024²

1. **Work with member organisations and other stakeholders**

We will know that we are making progress on this priority when we see:

- Actively encourage and support our member organisations to do more to support family carers
- Share with members details of funding opportunities relevant to supporting their work with family carers
- Develop international links and participate in international networks to facilitate the transfer of good practice and policies
- In collaboration with others, pilot the delivery of innovative online interventions to support family carers
- Increase awareness and understanding of our activities using different channels, including social media
- Our members in Ireland and our international partners delivering more comprehensive and impactful supports to the family carers they work with
- Our members continuing to approach us for support
- Other organisations maximising the use of online carer support interventions
- More clarity among our stakeholders about what our organisation does

² We believe that a five-year plan with a mid-term review is optimal.

2. Bring cohesion to the family carer sector

- Take specific initiatives to bring cohesion to a diverse range of not-for-profit organisations that support family carers
- Prepare detailed policy submissions on issues of relevance to family carers and to our member organisations
- Provide opportunities for our stakeholders to interact, network and share learning by coordinating meetings, conferences, seminars and other events
- Engage with relevant not-for-profit organisations and encourage them to apply for membership of our alliance
- Take up national representative opportunities to ensure that family carer issues are considered comprehensively
- Increase the active engagement and participation of member organisations in the work of our alliance

We will know that we are making progress on this priority when we see:

- The delivery of more collaborative carer support services by a range of providers
- The meaningful and appropriate inclusion of family carer issues in new national policy documents
- More joint public statements about issues of relevance to family carers
- More applications and approvals for membership of our alliance
- Significantly greater numbers of our member organisations engaging in the preparation of our submissions and discussion documents



3. Provide up-to-date relevant information

- Produce evidence-informed and analytically rigorous policy and research briefings, discussion documents and overview reports
- Disseminate widely the latest national and international policy, research and practice initiatives
- Extensively use online and social media platforms to disseminate relevant information and to build relationships

We will know that we are making progress on this priority when we see:

- Significant referencing of our publications by others and in particular in national policies
- Continued high levels of downloads of documents hosted on our various websites and other online media
- New relevant collaborations

4. Drive the research agenda on family caring

- Secure resources for Care Alliance Ireland and others to deliver family carer research
- Deliver high-quality collaborative and accessible primary research
- Support carer-specific research that informs and progresses policy and service development for family carers
- Support early-stage and student researchers throughout their research where appropriate
- Create opportunities for successful collaboration and engagement in research across the academic, statutory and not-for-profit sectors, both nationally and internationally

We will know that we are making progress on this priority when we see:

- Continued significant funds allocated to family carer research, from both state-funded and philanthropic research institutions
- Family carer research being increasingly disseminated through Open Access routes
- A greater number and range of individuals engaging with our family carer research group and our research conferences
- A number of successful new collaborative research projects that will positively impact on the delivery of specific carer support services



5. Resourcing and governance

We will know that we are making progress on this priority when we see:

- Secure the resources required to successfully implement our vision, mission and objectives
- Continue to implement exemplary operational and governance structures, and to promote this philosophy and practice among our members and the wider not-for-profit sector
- Support the ongoing development of our staff, volunteers and board of directors
- Adequate multi-annual funding together with greater diversification of funding sources
- Our organisation being regarded as a leader in governance and operational delivery
- High-performing and highly engaged staff, volunteers and board of directors



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