



Care Alliance Ireland

*The National Network of Voluntary Organisations for
Family Carers*

2009 Annual Review– Care Alliance Ireland

Chairpersons Statement

2009 marked the continued development of Care Alliance Ireland. Membership continued to grow, solid collaborative ventures are progressing well and we are playing our part at a European level particularly through Eurocarers.

Governance is an important aspect of our organisation, and we are delighted to have made good progress in this area with a strong and effective board of 10 who bring with them a wide range of skills and experience. We plan to build on this strength in 2010 with the co-option of new directors.

In November we launched our Strategic Plan 2010-2012 and as is the case with all our member organisations we are facing into challenging times, we are hopeful that the key objectives of the plan can be delivered in the coming years.

I would like to thank my fellow board members and all of the staff team for their professionalism and dedication. 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 Community Rural and Gaelteacht Affairs, the HSE and the Department of Health and Children for their continued financial support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Colum Conway'.

Colum Conway
Chair
Care Alliance Ireland

Care Alliance Ireland is a company limited by guarantee not having a share capital, registered in Dublin, Ireland, with registered office at :

*Coleraine House, Coleraine Street, Dublin 7
www.carealliance.ie Telephone: (01) 8747776 E-mail: info@carealliance.ie
Registered Company No: 461315 CHY No: 14644*

*Directors : G Clarke, C Conway, J Day, Dr. G Fennell, F Goodwin, A Kavanagh, C Keogh , Dr. P Lane, M Lynch,, R Webster
Patron: Dr. Maeve Hillery*



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Report of the Executive Director

Care Alliance Ireland has over 65 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. We also have a number of statutory organisations who are associate members.

Care Alliance Ireland began the year with an ambitious but credible work plan. Throughout early 2009 our Strategic Plan was drafted and sent out to members for their consideration. In many ways the plan reflected the existing activities of the organisation however it brought considerable focus clarity and further legitimacy to our work.

Throughout 2009, we led in various collaborative projects, specifically National Carers Week (June 8th-15th 2009), and the Family Carer Research group.

The Executive Director spent much of his time developing new collaborative ventures, including a joint Conference with the Neurological Alliance of Ireland as well as developing a new website for those caring for someone with a life limiting illness. Time was also spent on board development, governance and membership development. 4 organisations joined Care Alliance during 2009. By year end the organisation had developed several new draft policy documents, thanks to external support from the Training and Support Services team in The Carmichael Centre. Work began on putting together a comprehensive board induction pack.

Our administration was led up effectively by Esther Kavanagh, with a set of clear and comprehensive financial and administrative procedures. Esther also played a key role in Carers Week as well as the European Life-After-Care project.

Our research function was delivered primarily by Ann Stokes, our Research and Policy Officer. Ann continued to progress her primary qualitative research relating to Family Carers of people with Parkinsons and completed this research on time. The report will be launched during Carers Week in June 2010. Ann also drafted an overview report on Caring in Ireland, which will be of benefit to all those with an interest in Carers. Ann ensured that we made a number of submissions to various bodies including The National Anti-Poverty Strategy, An Garda Síochána Strategy for Older Persons, and the NESF Project on the Implementation of Home Care Packages. We also issued several position statements/papers. We continued to support students with enquiries around Family Carer issues and prospective research projects. We gave input to the research being carried out by NUI Galway on Young Carers.

Facilitating collaborative ventures is a key component of our work. In June 2009 we presented a paper on Collaboration within the Community and Voluntary sector to the 16th Annual Conference Multi-Organisational Partnerships, Alliances and Networks (MOPAN). In late 2009, a draft Memorandum of Understanding was agreed between The Disability Federation and Care Alliance Ireland.

The work of the Family Carer Research Group continued, meeting quarterly and succeeded in widening its membership base. Members of the group gave input to a number of research proposals, with some success.

National Carers Week 2009 went from strength to strength with over 110 events taking place throughout the week. Key developments included new merchandise, a live website, as well as the participation of the Disability Federation of Ireland becoming a new partner. As lead agency in this project, our involvement included the

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facilitation and leading of planning meetings, financial management as well as co-ordinating the media aspect of the week. Avenues for long term funding for this project continue to be explored.

Our website continues to be updated regularly and viewed extensively. Following an evaluation, our newsletter was revamped, with three editions being produced and distributed in 2009.

In June we brought together 14 organisations who are currently delivering Family Carer training. International speakers made compelling cases for evidenced based interventions at the seminar in Athlone. We now manage an up to date database of Family Carer training in Ireland and endeavour to widen participation in the various courses on offer.

In April, the Executive Director completed his participation in the Stronger Leaders Programme, a Leadership Development programme for senior managers in the Voluntary and Community Sector. Such participation has brought a new level of professionalism to the operations of the organisation, and we aim to lead by example in areas of governance, transparency and financial management. All staff continue to be supported in their development through regular support and supervision, as well as opportunities to take part in relevant training and courses. The board of Directors meet bi-monthly and receive a comprehensive report, aligned to agreed Key Performance Indicators and The Strategic Plan.

We continue to seek other sources of funding for our work to widen our funding base and have had some success in this regard. In December we secured research funding from the Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS) to undertake research in the area of post-caring. The research is being carried out in collaboration with the School of Nursing and Midwifery in Trinity College Dublin.

As is prudent, the board have agreed a financial reserve policy, which we aim to fully achieve by year end 2010.

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 continued to be active on the executive of Eurocarers and have continued to support the work of the European Parliament Special Interest Group on Carers. Plans are underway for a European Carers Conference in Edinburgh in May 2010. In July 2010, Leeds University and Carers UK will co-host the Bi-Annual International Carers Conference.

2010 promises to be an exciting year for Care Alliance Ireland. We will continue to build on the successes of recent years and we look forward to deepening our relationships with our various stakeholders. We will continue to focus on our mission of ensuring that the role of Family Carers is fully recognised and valued by society in Ireland.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Liam O'Sullivan", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Liam O'Sullivan
Executive Director
Care Alliance Ireland

April 2010

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