



Care Alliance Ireland

The National Network of Voluntary Organisations for Family Carers

2010 Annual Review– Care Alliance Ireland

Chairpersons Statement

2010 marked the continued development of Care Alliance Ireland. Membership has continued to increase, collaborative ventures are continuing and we continue to be involved in the development of a European wide Carers sector.

Following the co-option during 2010 of 2 new directors, we now have a complement of 12 who bring with them a wide range of skills and experience and we can report a high level of appropriate governance in the organisation.

We are well into our journey of implementing our Strategic Plan 2010-2012 and are confident that it can continue to be implemented in spite of the continued economic downturn.

The different funding environment in the community and voluntary sector continues to be a challenge for Care Alliance Ireland this year. We have had to make some difficult decisions. We are very aware that this is a situation faced by all our members and we will continue to work in partnership with our members and other stakeholders to find creative solutions to the challenges we face.

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, the European Commission 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:

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Report of the Executive Director

Care Alliance Ireland has over 70 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.

Throughout 2010 Care Alliance Ireland continued to implement its Strategic Plan. As some income sources were reduced, this necessitated a review of each and every expenditure together with a greater use of ICT. We are glad to report that following the necessary adjustments, that we were able to withstand the cuts and indeed develop new and exciting collaborative ventures.

Throughout 2010, as in previous years, we led in various collaborative projects, specifically National Carers Week (June 13th-20th 2010), the Family Carer Research group and an initiative on Young Carers. We also took part in other collaborative ventures including the Census 2011 Campaign, a joint seminar with The Disability Federation of Ireland, and joint research projects.

The Executive Director spent much of his time maintaining each of these collaborative ventures. Time was also spent on board recruitment, putting together a directors induction pack, developing organisational policies and procedures and membership development. 3 organisations joined Care Alliance during 2010; namely Curam, The Osteoporosis Society and The Bloomfield Care Centre. By year end the organisation was 95% fully compliant with the HSE Governance checklist.

Our administration throughout 2010 was co-ordinated effectively by Esther Kavanagh. Esther also played a key role in Carers Week since she joined us in 2008 as well as in the European Life-After-Care project. Unfortunately, due to uncertainties over funding, Esthers' position was made redundant at the end of 2010. We wish her well for the future.

Our research function continues with our leading of the Family Carer Research Group, that met quarterly throughout the year. Our primary qualitative research relating to Family Carers of people with Parkinson's was launched during Carers Week in June 2010 and was distributed widely and internationally. Two (unsuccessful) research proposals were made during the year. We also produced and distributed widely a comprehensive overview report on Family Caring in Ireland, which we continue to update regularly.

Our co-funded research on post-caring was professionally undertaken by Marianne Breen and her colleagues in TCD School of Nursing and Midwifery. We look forward to the publication of the report during 2011. We also 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 and Caring for Carers Ireland to the Department of Social Protection concerning engaging unemployed people in Family Carer support work. We also made a pre-Budget Submission to the same department and a submission to the 'HSE and You' project. We continued to support students with enquiries around Family Carer issues and prospective research projects.

Facilitating collaborative ventures is a key component of our work and in this regard we work closely with The Disability Federation of Ireland. In 2010 we jointly collated a Directory of Support Services

for Family Carers in the South Dublin/Dun Laoghaire Rathdown Area. This directly has been widely circulated and the process contributed to the setting up of 2 new carer support groups in the area. In April we co-facilitated a seminar on collaboration between Disability and Carer organisations.

Our newsletter continues to provide its audience with an update of the latest research, policy and practice issues in the sector with three editions being produced and distributed in 2010.

National Carers Week 2010 built on its strength in recent years with in the region of 100 events taking place throughout the week. In 2010, we welcomed the National Rehabilitation Hospital becoming a new partner. As lead agency in this project, our involvement included the facilitation and leading of planning meetings, financial management as well as co-ordinating the profiling and the media aspects of the week. New aspects of the week in 2010 included a primary schools competition as well as distribution of the Carers Week posters to a selection of health centres. We also introduced better quality merchandise. Together with posters, this merchandise was distributed nationwide to promote in the advertising of the week and for participants to keep. Events were held during the week in all areas of the country. This is a similar level of events to 2009. The events included lunches, days out, pamper days, tea and coffee mornings, information sessions, sports events and many more. Approximately 60% of the events were organised by partner organisations, the remaining 40% by 23 other (non-partner) organisations. Media coverage was extensive with over 25 regional and local radio stations covering the week together with in the region of 45 print media stories/articles, including 1 national print article (Independent) The website was updated and secured over 2,600 unique users, and circa 90,000 hits. The launch of the week was held again in the Mansion House with the Lord Mayor and celebrities attending. A comprehensive review of the week took place in July 2010, with very positive feedback from both partners and other organisations who organised events. In spite of efforts, no direct corporate sponsorship was secured. This is an avenue we continue to explore. Carers Week 2011 will take place from June 13th to the 19th

Our website continues to be updated regularly and viewed extensively.

We continue to manage an up to date database of Family Carer Training in Ireland and facilitated a meeting with providers of Family Carer training to share good practice.

As in previous years we continue to seek other sources of funding for our work to widen our funding base. As is prudent, the board in 2009 agreed a financial reserve policy, which has been fully achieved 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.

Our work in Europe also includes being partners in a European Commission supported LifeAfterCare Project. We hope shortly to have completed a booklet aimed at those whose caring has ended in recent years.

Several European Carers Conferences took place in 2010, at which Care Alliance was well represented.

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

As our Chair person alluded to, 2011 promises to be a challenging year for all organisations working in the Community and Voluntary sector, including 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 line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Liam O'Sullivan

Executive Director

Care Alliance Ireland

May 2011