

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – MARCH 30th 2021 –

## Carers Organisation Welcomes Tomorrow's Dáil Debate

Care Alliance Ireland today welcomed the debate scheduled to take place in the Dáil tomorrow morning about the situation for Ireland's 500,000 family carers.

"Right throughout this pandemic family carers have doubled down on the care they provide for loved ones. The return to services such as respite care, day centres, face-to-face support groups and dementia cafés seems as far away as ever" says Executive Director Liam O'Sullivan. Mr O'Sullivan continues:

We know from CSO data that 1 in 8 adults are family carers, with this rising to 1 in 5 for women in their forties and fifties. Family carers have shielded their loved ones from the risk of catching Covid-19 and yet they remain nowhere on the Covid-19 vaccine roll-out prioritisation list.

We also know that going into this pandemic, family carers were 55% more likely to report mild to moderate depression. We fear this situation will have worsened considerably when we do emerge from the pandemic.

We are calling on the government to do three things;

- Ensure family carers are prioritised in the vaccine roll-out, as is being done in the UK, Australia and the US.
- Progress a new National Carers Strategy in accordance with the commitment made in the Programme for Government.
- Commit to developing the proposed Carers Assessment, whereby carers needs are considered in their own right and separate to the needs of the care recipient.

### Notes to Editors

Care Alliance Ireland responded to Covid-19 in several ways. Most significant is the online Support Group that it established in March 2020, and which now supports over 2,100 family carers across Ireland.

### The figures on the online Support Group

Between March 2020 and March 2021 (12 months)

- 2,100 members
- 94% have stayed in the group
- 2,329 posts
- 26,810 comments
- 850 care packages/hampers/resource books distributed across Ireland

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‘Guiding support for family carers’

- 91% of members were not participating in face-to-face carer support groups prior to Covid-19

The group’s online activities have now expanded into monthly quizzes, a regular book club (the group posts out complimentary books and chocolates to every member who wants them), a gardening club, chair yoga, and a weekly drop-in coffee/chat. The group holds regular raffles and light-hearted competitions. It also directs members to an increasing array of online supports being delivered by other not-for-profit organisations.

For more information about the Support Group please contact Liam O’Sullivan (087 207 3265) or email [info@carealliance.ie](mailto:info@carealliance.ie)

Quote source: <https://www.cso.ie/en/csolatestnews/presspages/2020/irishhealthsurvey-carersandsocialsupports2019/>

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