

The challenges of recruiting family carers of people with dementia to workshops: Experiences from Ireland

Kevin Deegan², Sandra McCarthy¹, Amanda Phelan¹, Liam O'Sullivan², Gerard Fealy¹

Background

- Approximately 60,000 family carers in Ireland provide care for approximately 35,000 people with dementia in Ireland (O'Shea *et al.* 2017).
- In 2015, an Irish Health Research Board funded project led to the creation of the *Take Care of Yourself* resource, with aims to enhance levels of resilience in family carers of people with dementia.

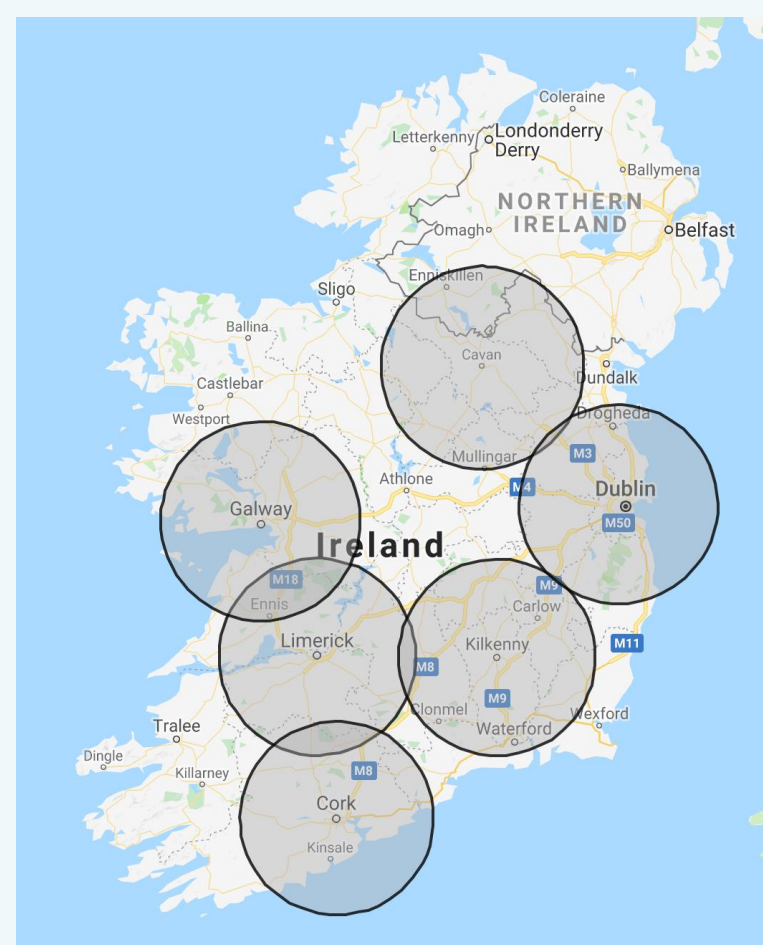
Summary

- We planned six workshops to promote the resource across Ireland, with a target of recruiting 72 family carers.
- We used a multi-component recruitment strategy to register 95 family carers of people with dementia.
- We were successful in using social media, partner collaboration and community engagement to recruit family carer of people with dementia.

Workshop participant recruitment

We aimed to recruit workshop participants using established local networks in six regional centres:

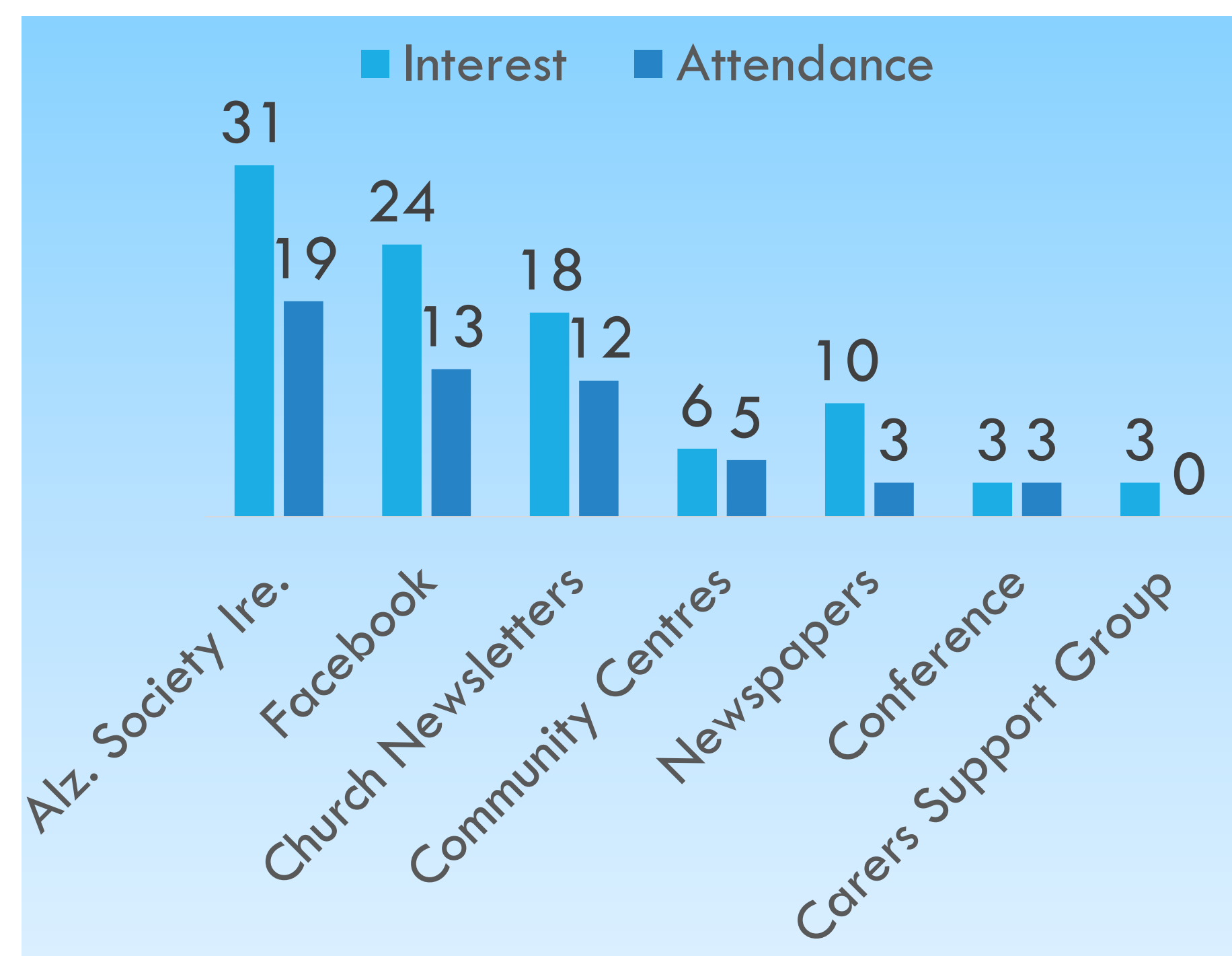
- Cavan
- Cork
- Dublin
- Galway
- Kilkenny
- Limerick



Using social media

- Created several posts on Facebook and Twitter to promote workshops to family carers of people with dementia.
- Used Facebook advertising tools, focusing on targeted audiences, to maximise reach to family carers across Ireland.

Registration vs. Actual Attendance



Collaborating with partners

- Recruiting family carers of people with dementia to workshops involved collaborating with partner organisations.
- Leaflets with workshop information were sent to partners throughout Ireland to boost recruitment.
- Coordinated with dementia advisors from the Alzheimer Society of Ireland.

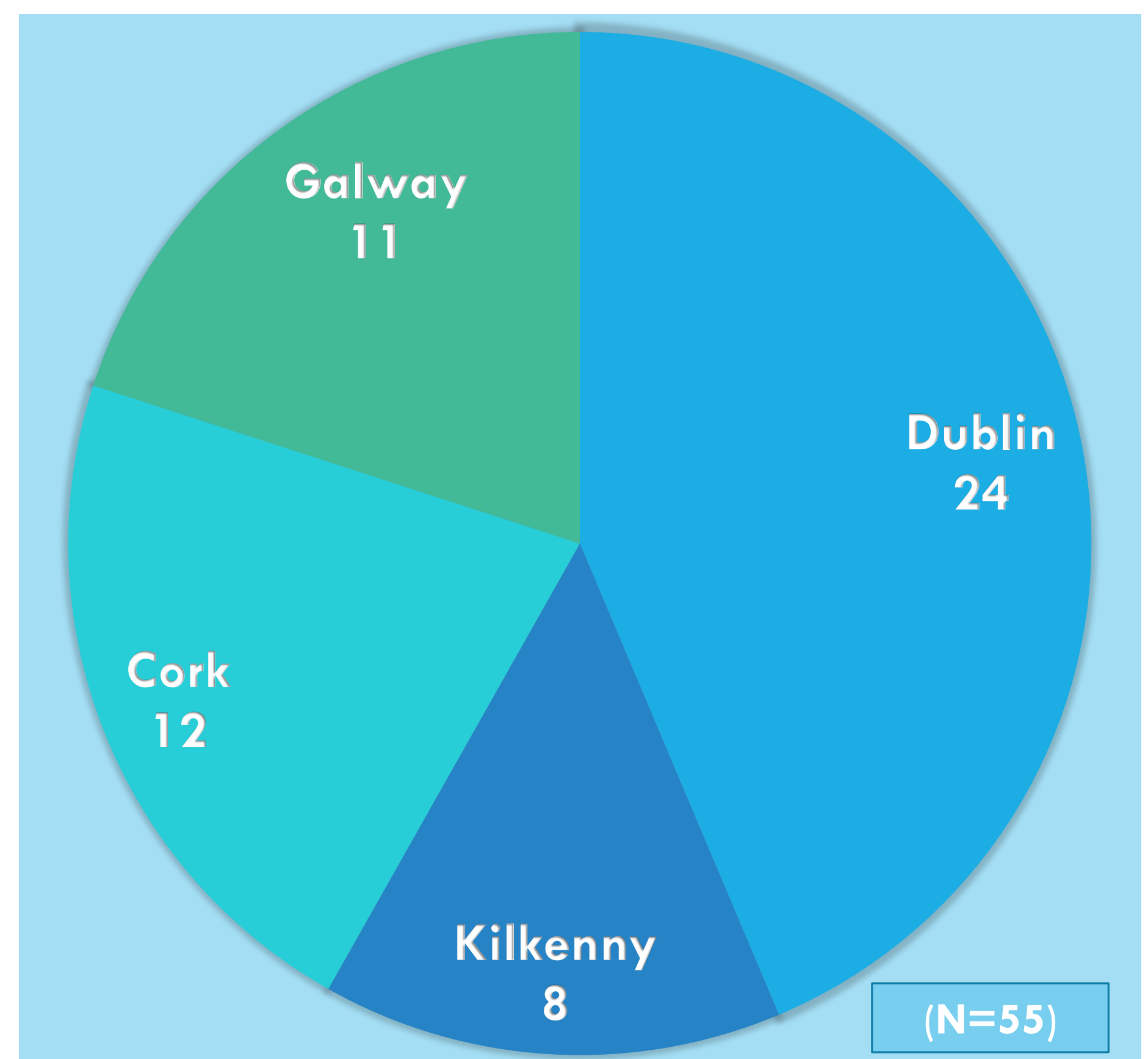
Engaging local communities

- We engaged churches and community centres via email and telephone, promoting the workshops.
- We negotiated with churches and community centres to speak about the workshops.

Results of recruitment campaign

- 95 family carers of people with dementia registered to attend workshops.
- 55 family carers attended five workshops throughout Ireland, with 40 family carers unable to attend.
- 10 family carers attended without prior registration or notice.

Workshop locations and attendees



Recruitment challenges

- Family carers may be unable to take time off from their caring duties.
- Significant challenge in recruiting family carers from rural areas, due to isolation, transport difficulties, caring duties.
- Tempering expectations of family carers who were interested in participating in the workshops.
- Ensuring family carers of people with dementia knew the workshops were directed at them, meant to strengthen their resilience as carers.

Conclusions: Lessons learned

- Adopt a multi-component recruitment strategy to engage larger field of potential participants.
- Take advantage of social media, local and national newspapers and local radio to promote recruitment.
- Engage local community centres, churches, sports clubs to reach as many family carers in communities as possible.
- Plan for unannounced participants.

Author affiliations:

- University College Dublin
- Care Alliance Ireland

Contact: Care Alliance Ireland,
 A: Coleraine House, Coleraine Street, Dublin 7, Ireland
 E: info@carealliance.ie
 W: www.carealliance.ie
 Twitter: @CareAllianceIrl

References (selected)

Care Alliance Ireland, 'Defining Carers' 2015,
 Care Alliance Ireland, 'Rural Carers in Ireland – Challenges & Opportunities', 2018.
 Eamon O'Shea, Suzanne Cahill, and Maria Pierce, 'Developing and implementing dementia policy in Ireland', 2017, 148.
 Maria Pierce, Suzanne Cahill, and Eamon O'Shea, 'Prevalence and Projections of Dementia in Ireland, 2011 - 2046', 2014.