

Care Alliance Ireland

Exchange

Spring 2015 Issue 46

Merger of Two National Carer Organisations Approved by Members

A merger between The Carers Association and Caring for Carers was approved overwhelmingly in early February by both organisations' respective memberships.

"This will mean one dedicated carer centred organisation to help support, lobby and advocate on behalf of Ireland's family carers. The merger will ensure that benefits and services of both organisations will be available to all carers throughout the country while pooling best practice and experience to create one strong national voice for family carers based on a shared vision for the future" said Pat Dolan, Chairperson, of the Carers Association.

Judith Ironside, President and a founding member of Caring for Carers Ireland said: *"I welcome the decision to merge the two organisations. I look forward to an improved network of support for family carers in Ireland and to gaining greater recognition for the voices of family carers".*

With both organisations offering services and support in different parts of Ireland, the merger will ensure the benefits and services of both organisations are available for family carers across the whole country.

In this issue

News	2
National News	7
Member News	10
Governance Corner	12
Dates for Your Diary	13
Practical Resources	14
About Us	16



News

Merger of Two National Carer Organisations Approved by Members (continued)

Apart from the appointment of a new CEO, all other permanent staff at both organisations are guaranteed continued employment on their existing terms and conditions. There will be no job losses as a result of the merger, although there will be scope for efficiencies, thereby freeing up resources for more frontline services and supports. The merged organisation will continue to provide existing services offered by both Caring for Carers Ireland and the Carers Association. These include training, support services, respite care, respite weekend breaks, nurse-led clinics, a dedicated helpline for family carers and assistance with legal/mediation services.

The new organisation will be 'owned' by local support groups. Both organisations were founded 25 years ago – Caring for Carers Ireland in County Clare and the Carers Association in Dublin. Whilst they have a lot in common, including being registered charitable companies of and for family carers, providing support services and training, and being involved in research and policy development, there are some differences. Caring for Carers Ireland has a strong focus on clinical care (-nurse led care) and also provides an annual respite weekend for family carers. The Carers Association focuses heavily on social care and provides a dedicated Freephone Care Line and legal/mediation supports for family carers.

With a new name and logo for the merged organisation to be announced in the coming months, both organisations will wind up by the end of 2015. All existing services will continue to operate. The two existing boards will form into an interim board at the first AGM of the new company. A smaller board will then be elected, and there will be significant representation of family carers. Existing supports and service provision will not change, neither for family carers nor for family carers support groups.

Speaking on the announcement, Gerry McCaffrey, Chair of Care Alliance Ireland said:
"This merger is to be welcomed and creates potential for further cohesion, efficiencies and added value to the sector. We look forward to working more closely with the new unified organisation and wish them well for the future. Care Alliance Ireland will continue to reach out to and support ever more organisations that are currently supporting or looking to support Ireland's family carers".

For more information, see www.carersassociation.ie and www.caringforcarers.ie.

News

Membership Development Initiative Underway

One of Care Alliance Ireland's objectives as part of our Strategic Plan 2014-2017 is to increase our membership by 25%. Whilst counting member numbers is only one of many ways of measuring impact, but we do believe that we have the capacity to reach out to more organisations in their work or their future work with family carers. Jennifer Graham, our Executive Officer, is leading this initiative. She has contacted several hundred community and voluntary organisations who may benefit from being members of Care Alliance Ireland. A number of new applications for membership has already been received, and the board of directors will consider each application using five criteria at its May meeting.

Speaking about the initiative, Liam O'Sullivan, Executive Director said:
"I am confident that this initiative will bring our membership to well over 100 and in doing so will further enhance our impact in supporting organisations across Ireland working with family carers."

Care Alliance welcomes New Policy & Research Officer

In January 2015, Care Alliance Ireland was pleased to welcome Zoe Hughes to the organisation as Policy & Research Officer, a post made possible thanks to a successful application to the Scheme to Support National Organisations. Zoe has previously worked with a number of disability and care-related groups in frontline support, research and policy positions, and will take the lead on a number of projects including policy submissions, research projects and the creation of the new Care Alliance Research & Policy E-Zine (the first edition of which is available [here](#)). Zoe is available via email (zoe@carealliance.ie) and phone (086-883 4942) if you would like to get in touch.



News

Care Alliance Ireland is on Twitter

Care Alliance Ireland has recently joined Twitter. We will be sharing interesting links from the media, research, policy and our member organisations, and hopefully engaging with those interested in family care issues. We are also hoping to use Twitter to publicise and engage with everyone in the run up to Carers Week 2015. Do follow us ([@CareAllianceIrl](https://twitter.com/CareAllianceIrl)) for the latest news and issues regarding family carers in Ireland.



Crosscare Carer Support meets Care Alliance Ireland

On 23 February we met with a number of regional managers working in Crosscare. The team were keen to discuss their work in the area of carer support, a service that Crosscare has been providing for the past 20 years. The meeting was very productive with a number of specific actions from it.

We welcome the opportunity to meet with any organisation that is currently working with or seeking to work with family carers.



News

Successful Research Bid with University of Limerick

We are delighted to report that a benefit finding in caregiving research bid made to the Carolan Research Institute in December 2014 has been successful. Led by the Department of Psychology in the University of Limerick in collaboration with Care Alliance Ireland, this modest research grant will enable the project to progress in April 2015.

Speaking on the announcement Dr. Stephen Gallagher, Principal Investigator, said:

"We are delighted to be able to progress this field of study that will seek to pilot an intervention with a number of family carers across Ireland. The primary intention of our research is that the quality of life will be improved for those who give care. Ethics for this project have been approved by the University of Limerick Institutional Review Board".

The study will be delivered over the internet and Stephen is happy to forward on the study details to organisations who work with carers or to carers themselves. He can be contacted on stephen.gallagher@ul.ie.

Care Alliance Ireland Executive Director, Liam O'Sullivan said:

"We are really excited about this research and we look forward to working together with Stephen and his team in UL. This builds on our existing collaborative projects with other third level institutions as we seek to be the thought leaders in Family Carer research both in Ireland and internationally."



UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

News

National Carers Week 2015

The 9th Annual National Carers Week will be held from 8 to 14 June 2015. Events will take place nationwide to celebrate and recognise the role of Ireland's family carers.

RTÉ presenter Nuala Carey who is supporting the week says: *"I know all too well how important family carers are, enabling people to continue to live at home. The week is a fantastic celebration of the contribution carers make to our loved ones' lives and it's an opportunity for us all to do something extra special for family carers in our community".*

There are nine national organisations who are partners in the week and who will be organising events around the country to acknowledge the valuable work and contribution that family carers make not only to their individual families but to Irish society more widely. Partners this year are: Acquired Brain Injury Ireland, Alzheimer Society of Ireland, Care Alliance Ireland, Carers Association of Ireland, Caring for Carers Ireland, Disability Federation of Ireland, Irish Cancer Society, Irish Hospice Foundation and MS Ireland.

For details on events being organised or tips on how to organise an event, see www.carersweek.ie or our facebook page www.facebook.com/nationalcarersweek over the coming months.



Nuala Carey, RTÉ presenter,
is once again supporting
National Carers Week 2015

National News

National Carers' Strategy Annual Report 2014 Published by Department of Health



The National Carers' Strategy was published in 2012, and on 28 January 2015 the Department of Health published the second annual report on the progression of the Strategy. This report can be found [here](#).

Whilst there are clear examples of good practice and improvements in many areas covered by the Strategy, Care Alliance Ireland remains concerned that many of the national goals and objectives have overrun their time frames, and that many more are classified as 'ongoing'. We understand that policy improvements need to take into account the current recovering nature of the economy, but this does not nullify responsibility for implementation of the Strategy's goals.

We will continue to work with our colleagues across the sector and with the relevant government departments to promote implementation of the Strategy, and to support the ongoing forensic analysis of the report by the Carers Association.

The National Carers' Strategy *Recognised, Supported, Empowered*

Second Progress Report
September 2013 – September 2014

Department of Health Identifies 25 priorities for 2015

The Department of Health has identified 25 priorities for 2015. One is to “Agree a plan for extending HIQA regulation to other health and social care sectors, commencing in 2015 with private healthcare providers”. We are seeking clarification as to what this means. For full list of priorities see <http://bit.ly/15jFlrz>.



National News

HSE Service Plan Promises to Improve Engagement and Deliver More Home Care Support



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

HSE Social Care Division Operational Plan for 2015 Published

Key carer-specific points of interest include:

“A commitment to establish a multi-agency, cross divisional, national committee to review the information and communication needs of carers and put in place measures (within current resources) to improve the range of communication through print and electronic means to support carers and staff”. We look forward to engaging in the work of this committee.

“To support the objective in the Positive Ageing Strategy; ‘Ensure that older people’s needs are considered in the development of policies’ we will work with key voluntary organisations (e.g. Active Retirement, Age Action, Care Alliance, etc.) to develop a comprehensive consultative process for meaningful service user engagement with older persons, family members and carers.” Again we look forward to this engagement.

Other points of interest include:

- Home Care Packages - €5m to provide 400 home care packages to 600 additional clients.
- €2m to provide additional Community Intervention Teams (CITs) across Dublin dealing with an additional 2000 referrals per team per annum.
- Social Care Budget 2015 set at €2.988m representing a 3.2% increase on 2014. The Social Care Division will use funding for 2015 to deal with unfunded costs of 2014. This relates to the level of agency cost growth in 2014, which it is not intended to fully fund in 2015.
- Social care services support the ongoing services requirements of people with disabilities ... ‘to support and maintain people to live at home or in their own community and to promote their independence and lifestyle choice in as far as possible’.
- Service Improvement Teams to work with service providers in order to maximise on the efficiency measures.
- Integrated Care programmes, including for children, patient flow, older people and management of chronic disease.
- 2015 marks the beginning of zero budgeting. The HSE vote is being amalgamated with the vote for the Department of Health; any overrun in 2015 will be first charge on budget allocated in 2016.
- Operating the CHO 9 areas (KPI’s now broken down for these areas). Lack of identifiable change in programmes as set out in the Balanced Score Card (even though VFM is about move to person centered models of service in the community and for example, under quality and safety one of the strategic priorities is to ‘support the implementation of advocacy programmes in the social care division’).
- Recognition of PQASSO as a quality improvement methodology.
- A framework will be implemented for the procurement of services including residential places from private for-profit agencies, aimed at achieving a 10% saving.
- Commitment to ‘commence planning’ for implementation of the Neuro Rehabilitation Services.

Some of the above analysis is courtesy of DFI. The full plan can be found at <http://bit.ly/1AIL4dg>.

National News

UCC to host new part-time course in "Ageing and the Validation Method"



Having organised and hosted a very successful validation workshop in May 2014 - with Naomi Feil, UCC is now delighted to be in a position to host a Level 1 Validation Worker Course, starting in April 2015. This is the first such course to be held in Ireland.

Validation is a method of supporting and communicating with older people who have dementia that focuses on listening and building trusting relationships. It makes use of sensory methods of communication (touch, song, movement, etc.) to build those relationships and connect with the interests people had and the activities they undertook at earlier times in their lives, when they were more able to be actively engaged in all aspects of their lives.

Using validation techniques, carers can offer disoriented elderly the opportunity to express whatever they wish, using either verbal or non-verbal communication. When disoriented elderly can express emotions that they have often suppressed for many years, the intensity of the feelings lessens, people communicate more, and are less likely to withdraw into further stages of disorientation.

This course is certified by the Validation Training Institute. It is targeted at those working with the elderly or those suffering from dementia or Alzheimer's (healthcare workers, social workers, nursing home staff, carers, family members, etc.). Students of validation do not need any sort of medical or paramedical training. What is needed is genuine interest in older people, a desire to communicate better with disoriented elderly people, openness for new experiences and the willingness to develop yourself. Participants who successfully complete the course (including practising validation for at least 26 weeks, including some sessions in each of the four phases of resolution) will receive Level 1: Validation Worker certification.

The course will be delivered by Vicki De Klerk-Rubin who works as a Validation Master-Teacher and lecturer, as well as Naomi Feil's manager in Europe. She was a founding member of the European Validation Association (1993) and assisted in the development of Authorized Validation Organizations in Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Sweden and Switzerland. She taught the first formal validation course in 1994 and since then has been training internationally, delivering certification courses at all levels. Her book, *Validation Techniques for Dementia Care: The Family Guide to Improving Communication* (English edition, 2008) has been published in German (2006), Japanese (2009) and Swedish (2010).

The course consists of five, two day blocks of training spaced over eight months on the following dates:

Block One: 10-11 April, 2015

Block Two: 5-6 June, 2015

Block Three: 7-8 August, 2015

Block Four: 18-19 September, 2015

Block Five: TBC November, 2015

The programme fee is €600. Early application is advised as places are limited. Applications are processed on a first-come first served basis. For further details about the programme or to apply, please see <http://www.ucc.ie/en/sc-71/> or contact Lyndsey El Amoud at l.elamoud@ucc.ie or 021-4904700.

Member News

Carers Collaborate on Crochet Project



The spirit of collaboration is alive and well in West Cork as shown by a new exciting project that West Cork Carers Support Group is undertaking.

"We pride ourselves on being a carer-led support group and many of our carers had expressed the desire to do a collaborative crafts project, so the West Cork Carers Crochet Project was born" said Lorna Harte, Support Worker.

All carers across West Cork have had the opportunity to contribute to this wonderful project which will showcase the friendship and collaboration that exists between carers. This has happened over a number of meetings across West Cork during February and March under the guidance of a crafts facilitator. The carers have been coming together to crochet a quilt in a fun, supportive and creative atmosphere. Working together to design and create this quilt generates a great sense of community among carers across West Cork and gives them an opportunity to display their creativity and talent.

The finished quilt will be raffled as part of West Cork carer's celebrations for National Carers Week from 8 to 14 June.

For further information on the West Cork Carers Crochet Project or any of the supports offered to carers across West Cork, please contact 027 53848 or westcorkcarers@eircom.net.



Keeping in touch with Brí

Brí provides support, information and advocacy to people with brain injuries, their families and carers.

Brí is now using social media. Find Brí on Twitter [@BRIIESupport](https://twitter.com/BRIIESupport) or on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/FBBri>. Support meetings are announced on Meetup <http://www.meetup.com/members/183574600/> and on Facebook.

The new Brí office is based in St. Catherine's Sports and Community Centre, Marrowbone Lane, Dublin 8.

For more information, see www.briireland.ie.



Member News

'Home from Home' Apartment Open to Anyone with a Disability and Friends and Family

Muscular Dystrophy Ireland (MDI) is a voluntary organisation that provides information and support to people in Ireland with muscular dystrophy and allied neuromuscular conditions, and their families, through a range of support services.



The MDI 'Home from Home' Apartment is located in a new purpose-built, fully accessible self-contained building in Dublin. It is available for short term stays for people with a physical disability and their friends and family members. The apartment consists of four bedrooms, a kitchen and a lounge area and can accommodate groups of one to six people. Guests are asked to make a voluntary contribution of €25 per room, per night to stay in the apartment.

The apartment is equipped with aids and appliances, including ceiling and standing hoists, shower chairs, grab rails, an intercom system, emergency call buttons, emergency evacuation chairs, an adjustable kitchen counter and air mattresses.



Three of the four bedrooms in the apartment are fully accessible and contain hi-lo electric profile beds and ceiling tracking hoists. Each of the bedrooms has its own bathroom, all of which are also equipped with a ceiling track hoist. The bathroom and shower can be accessed directly by use of the inter-connecting ceiling track hoists between the bedroom and bathroom. All visitors to the apartment are advised to bring their own slings. Please note that the twixie clip slings do not work on the hoist system. The fourth bedroom contains a standard single bed and is primarily used by personal assistants and family members. The kitchen is equipped with an adjustable motorised worktop which enables the work surface height to be adapted to a suitable level for all users. It contains all modern appliances and laundry facilities.

Availability throughout the year varies, but we are more than happy to accommodate anyone with a disability and their friend and family members when we can. The Home From Home has been used by people going to concerts, international visitors, as accommodation during or awaiting a hospital appointments and by people who wish get experience of Independent Living.

MDI provides information about how to use equipment within the apartment and other necessary information to help you to make the most of your stay. MDI also provide you with information about services available in the local community, places to visit in Dublin and details about local public transport and other ways to get around Dublin.



As part of our service we can also offer a fully adapted self-drive Volkswagen Transporter van which can be booked at a rate of €25.00 per day (subject to availability).

To book the apartment please contact us on 01 6236414 (from 9am-5pm) or email owen.collumb@mdi.ie. Further details about the apartment and MDI can be found on www.mdi.ie.

Governance Corner

Health and Safety

Following a thorough independent health and safety assessment, we have prepared a health and safety statement and have addressed any issues raised during the process.

Policy Review

As part of good governance, the board undertake regular reviews of policies and procedures. In December 2014, the following policies were reviewed and amended.

1. Volunteer Policy
2. Responsibilities of Board members
3. Company Law — Key Requirements for Board Members
4. Roles and Responsibilities of Honorary Officers and the Company Secretary
5. Code of Conduct at Board Meetings
6. Conflict of Interest Policy
7. Confidentiality Policy
8. General Procedures at Board Meetings

The Governance Code

The Governance Code is undergoing a review.

As part of this review, the consortium is asking for open feedback from any community and voluntary organisation. If you have something important you want them to think about as part of the review, please submit your thoughts to: info@governancecode.ie. It would be very helpful if you could format your comments under one or more of the following headings:

1. Code compliance process
2. Stewardship and ownership of the code
3. Content of the code.

Dates for Remaining Board Meetings in 2015

Tuesday 5 May

Tuesday 14 July
(Board Review/Update)

Tuesday 15 September
(Followed by AGM/20 year anniversary)

Tuesday 17 November

As of 20 March 2015

109 organisations
report being
compliant with the
Governance Code

547 organisations report
being on the journey
to adoption

For a full list of
organisations, see
<http://bit.ly/1aTs2ag>.

Dates for Your Diary

Brain Awareness Week

Neurological Alliance of Ireland

9 – 15 March 2015

Nationwide

www.nai.ie/go/brain_awareness_week



The International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics European Region Congress

International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics

23 – 26 April 2015

Dublin Convention Centre

www.iaggdublin2015.org



Alzheimer's Tea Day

Alzheimer Society of Ireland

7 May 2015

Nationwide

www.alzheimer.ie/Get-Involved/Fundraising/Tea-Day.aspx



World MS Day

MS Ireland

27 May 2015

Nationwide

www.ms-society.ie/pages/what-we-do/world-ms-day



National Carers Week

8 – 14 June 2015

Nationwide

www.carersweek.ie



Family Carer Research Group Meeting

Care Alliance Ireland

23 June 2015

Carmichael Centre for Voluntary Groups, Dublin

Email: zoe@carealliance.ie



Practical Resources

Online Tool for Information on Non-Statutory Services

Developed by the Neurological Alliance of Ireland (NAI) and the Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI), Neuronetwork www.neuronetwork.ie is a one-stop central location for all the services, supports, events, publications and profiles of over 30 neurological non-statutory organisations nationwide. Working closely with staff across the health services, these organisations aim to deliver a range of flexible, person centred services focused on every aspect of living with a neurological condition.

Neuronetwork is the result of an ongoing project to examine how voluntary organisations can support and train healthcare staff working with people with neurological conditions and their families. NAI and DFI worked in close consultation with potential users of the website, to ensure that the information is provided in a way that suits their needs.

Information searches can be performed under a number of criteria including: a specific service, a specific neurological condition or a specific county in Ireland.



Young Carers Website — www.youngcarers.ie

An initiative led by the Carers Association, this website offers a suite of resources and tools for both young carers and support workers. The key features of the site include:

- Links to young carers social media pages (Facebook/Twitter/Youtube)
- Video diaries and cartoons
- A calendar of events
- Information on support group meetings and helplines available to young carers
- Resources and information for teachers and school policy makers
- An agony aunt section
- An online forum (available on Wednesdays).



Practical Resources

Skills Acquired through Caring

This popular and useful resource reminds us all about the skills that family carers invariably possess but all too often are unaware of.

<http://bit.ly/1G0pKmo>

The Seven Deadly Emotions of Caring

Paula Spenser Scott discusses how guilt, resentment, and other powerful caregiver feelings can raise your stress and sap your energy, and what you can do to avoid the damage.

<http://bit.ly/1sxloaE>

Social Work, Carers and Older People

Excellent social work with older people: a discussion paper

The College of Social Work (UK)

"We know that excellent social work with older people and their carers makes a real impact. It strengthens families, neighbourhoods and communities, and it helps to ensure that vital resources are used in the best way possible. It is an essential part of high quality social care – but it remains all too often overlooked, under-resourced and inaccessible to the people who stand to benefit from it."

For full report click [here](#).

About Us

Care Alliance Ireland is the National Network of Voluntary Organisations supporting family carers. Our vision is that the role of family carers is fully recognised and valued by society in Ireland.

We exist to enhance the quality of life for family carers. We achieve this by supporting our member organisations in their direct work with family carers through the provision of information, developing research and policy in the field, sharing resources, and instigating opportunities for collaboration.

There are approximately 274,000 family carers in the Republic of Ireland. Family carer support is provided by a number of organisations, including those dedicated solely to carer support and others who support carers as part of their response to individuals with specific conditions.

We work with our 95 member organisations and other agencies to support them in their work with family carers. Our membership includes all the carers organisations and virtually all the condition specific organisations currently providing services to many of Ireland's family carers.

To apply for membership of Care Alliance Ireland, please [click here](#).

Contact Us:

T +353 (0)1 874 7776

M +353 (0)87 207 3265

A Coleraine House, Coleraine Street, Dublin 7

E info@carealliance.ie

W www.carealliance.ie

Company Limited By Guarantee

Registered in Dublin, Ireland, company address as above

Company Registration No 461315

CHY No 14644

Charity Registration No 20048303

10 Reasons To Join Us

Disclaimer: This newsletter is for information only and does not constitute endorsement of any service or product referred to. The views expressed are those of the authors/ organisations and are not necessarily shared by Care Alliance Ireland. No responsibility is accepted for any errors, omissions or statements in this newsletter, or on any website or publication referenced.