

Press Release

7<sup>th</sup> March 2008

**Submissions Urged for Ireland's First National Carers Strategy**

**In response to the start today of Government's national advertising campaign seeking submissions to Ireland's first National Carers Strategy, The Carers Association are urging family carers and other interested parties to use this opportunity to affect positive change for family carers.**

"While we welcome Government's commitment to a National Carers Strategy, it is essential this is developed in consultation with family carers", says Enda Egan, CEO of The Carers Association. "To fully inform the progression of this strategy, which we have been lobbying Government for over the past 3 years, we are urging interested parties to submit to Government their issues and solutions for the implementation of much-needed support and services for family carers."

"There is a major shortfall in the number of family Carers receiving financial support from the state, let alone any other form of support", continues Mr. Egan. "The National Carers Strategy marks a landmark policy development for family carers, particularly the 95,000 family Carers who receive no state assistance, and must be comprehensive to cover the financial, social, health and emotional needs of family Carers".

Susan Byrne (51) from Saggart, Dublin cares for her autistic daughters Hannah (12) and Alice (11) and says "At the moment, I don't feel my caring role is even recognised let alone valued. I receive no allowances from the state and would like to see more services and financial assistance provided for family Carers in the National Carers Strategy".

Bernard Roche (59) from Tullamore cares for his son, Paul (20), who has mental and physical disabilities. "I receive one night's respite care for Paul per month and this is not enough. My son is a very healthy and happy man but I need more respite care to give me a break from my caring role which is all day, every day".

According to The Carers Association, there are 160,000 family Carers in Ireland providing over 3 million hours of care in the home, saving the state over €2 billion per year.

"The implementation of the National Carers Strategy is vital to support and enhance the work of family Carers whose role in society is crucial caring for older people, people with special needs and those chronically and terminally ill", says Mr. Egan. "The clear lack of proper financial and support services for family Carers must be addressed as a matter of urgency and we are urging family carers to submit their say on this Strategy to Government to make positive change for family carers."

Submissions can be emailed to [carers.strategy@welfare.ie](mailto:carers.strategy@welfare.ie), or posted to National Carer's Strategy Consultation; Planning Unit; Floor 1; Department of Social and Family Affairs; Áras Mhic Dhiarmada; Store Street; Dublin 1 or faxed to: 01-7043457

The closing date for submission is Friday 18 April.

**The Carers Association is the National voluntary organisation of family carers in the home, providing support services, respite, training and information to carers throughout Ireland. The Carers Association can be contacted on the National Careline Freefone 1800 24 07 24 or see [www.carersireland.com](http://www.carersireland.com).**

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**For further information or photography please contact:**

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**Editorial Note:**

Enda Egan, CEO of The Carers Association and family Carers nationwide in a variety of caring situations are available for interview on request