

The Carers Association welcomes Government's decision not to cut carers payments in mini budget

The Carers Association welcome Government's decision not to cut Carers payments in yesterday's emergency Budget. Carers across the country were relieved to hear that their direct payments will not be affected in this budget.

The announcement of the elimination of the Christmas Bonus payment will however put additional pressure on family carers, many of whom depend on this money at Christmas to help get them through a very expensive and difficult period. This reduction is equivalent to a 2% cut in income. There is also a genuine fear out there that there are further cuts coming in the December budget and we would urge government not to aim these at family carers, who are providing 3.7 million hours of care in the home each week.

While still campaigning for the publication of the National Carers Strategy, The Carers Association is lobbying relevant government departments for its cost-neutral proposals to be introduced to go some way towards addressing the serious lack of essential supports and services available for family carers. As part of these cost-neutral proposals, The Carers Association recommends introducing a needs assessment for family carers in their own right.

"While The Carers payments has not been affected by yesterday's Budget, Government has failed to recognise the invaluable contribution Ireland's 161,000 family carers provide by refusing to publish The National Carers Strategy", says Enda Egan, CEO, The Carers Association. "Without formal recognition of the hours of unpaid work performed every week by an army of carers and the € 2.5 billion saving to the state, the Government is jeopardising its own policy of caring for people in their own home for as long as possible and may force carers to pass their caring duties to the state, putting untenable pressure on already over-burdened health services."

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 Free fone 1800 24 07 24 or see www.carersireland.com

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For further information or interview please contact:

**Orla Nolan, Purcell Masterson on 056 7723211/ 086 3097810
orla@purcellmasterson.com**

Catherine Cox, Communications Manager, The Carers Association on 086 8521611

Enda Egan, CEO of The Carers Association is available for interview on 086-6087759