



“Ireland could now have as many as 274,000 Family Carers”.

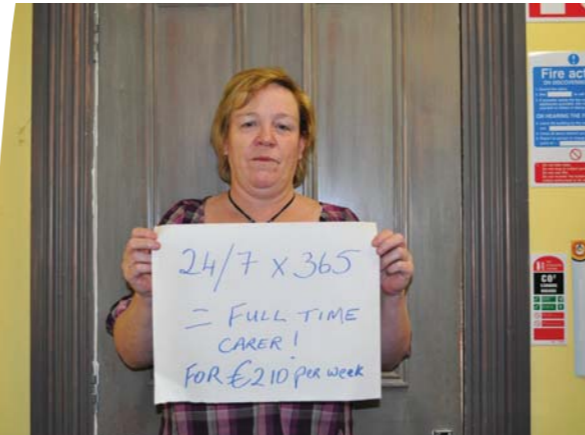
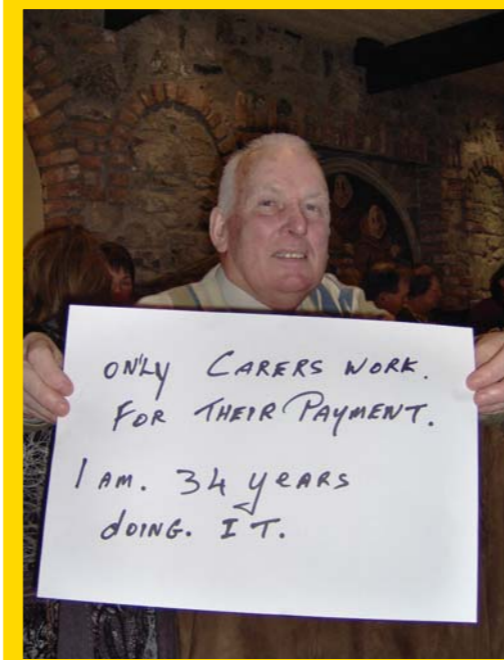
CSO, QNHS, Q3, 2009

“We will develop a National Carers Strategy to support Carers and to address issues of concern”.

Towards Recovery: Programme for a National Government 2011 – 2016. P38

“The new government will find a way of refocusing priorities to ensure Carers are cared for”.

Dept. Health Spokesperson, May 31st 2011



IF YOU DON'T CARE
HOW CAN WE?



The Carers Association
Pre Budget Submission 2012

The Facts

- Since Budget 2009 Carers incomes have decreased by up to €64 per month.
- 82 percent of Carers have been affected by cutbacks in State services.
- Carers are being forced to use savings, skip meals and cut back on essentials to make ends meet.
- Many long-term Carers have sacrificed their careers and pensions and will inevitably face a life of financial hardship when they reach old age.
- Respite Care Grant is the ONLY payment given to more than 20,000 fulltime Family Carers.
- 27% of Carers scored 7 or more on the Carer Strain Index, indicating considerable burden and strain.
- 38% of Carers looking after someone in the same household feel completely overwhelmed by their caring responsibilities²
- Admissions to hospital and residential care will rise as Carers are pushed to breaking point by a lack of support.

What Carers Need

- Financial support and recognition
- Regular breaks
- To know support is available when they need it
- Supports to relieve the stress of caring including respite, home help and counseling
- Be recognized by health professionals as partners in care
- Access to information and training
- Support to help stay mentally and physically well
- Support to remain in, or return to, employment

¹ Carer Health Survey 2009: Irish College of Psychiatrists and the Carers Association.

² Central Statistics Office, Quarterly National Household Survey, Caring Module Quarter 3, 2009.



The Carers Association

Ireland's National Voluntary Organisation for and of Family Carers in the home.

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If You Don't Care How Can We?

The Carers Association Pre Budget Submission 2012

Family Carers have been hit hard by the economic crisis. Carers have seen their welfare payments reduced by €64 per month, 82 percent have been affected by cutbacks in State services and 23 percent say that an overburden of caring work has led to their own physical disability. Many Carers are now forced to live in poverty, cut back on food, heating, clothes, and sacrifice pensions and savings in order to make ends meet. Despite this, Ireland's 161,000 Family Carers continue to provide vital, unpaid support for their elderly, sick or disabled relatives, making a contribution worth €3 billion a year to the Irish economy.

The Carers Association has two simple priorities for Budget 2012:

- **Publish the National Carers Strategy**
- **No More Cuts for Family Carers**



PUBLISH THE NATIONAL CARERS STRATEGY

Action needed by Government:

Publish the National Carers Strategy, setting out Governments commitment in relation to income supports, healthcare, training, the labour market, transport, housing and information services for Family Carers.

The Carers Association are heartened to see the recognition given to Family Carers in the Programme for Government, in particular the commitment to publish the National Carers Strategy. We believe that the Strategy remains the only opportunity to address Carers needs in a coherent, sustainable and cost effective way. By setting out Government's vision for Family Carers and establishing goals in areas such as income, healthcare, housing, information and transport, Government will take an important step in recognising the enormous contribution of Carers and the vital role they play in our health and social care system. Finding ways to support Family Carers is a win-win-win approach - for the care recipient; the Family Carer; and the public purse.

The Facts

- Despite undertaking a nationwide consultation, and developing the Strategy to draft stage, the previous Government reneged on their commitment to publish the Strategy.
- Renewed commitment to publish the Strategy in the current Programme for Government.
- No legislation or policy in Ireland to protect or support Carers.
- Makes economic sense to provide a strategy that supports Family Carers in the community rather than through more expensive residential or hospital care.

What Carers Need

- Recognition and social justice.
- Fair shouldering of care between the family and the State.
- Access to a range of support services that meet Carer needs.
- Support so that Carers are not forced into financial hardship.
- Support to stay mentally and physically well.
- Targeted supports for young Carers, male Carers, elderly Carers and Carers with a disability.



NO MORE CUTS FOR FAMILY CARERS

Action needed by Government:

No More Cuts to Carers Payments

- No cuts to Carers Allowance, Half Rate Carers Allowance, Carers Benefit, or Domiciliary Care Allowance.
- Respite Care Grant to be retained at its current level.

No More Cuts to Community Care Services

- No more cuts to home help, respite and community care services.
- Increase funding for Home Care Packages.
- Provide a non means tested medical card and annual health check to all fulltime Carers.
- Abolish the 50 cent prescription charge.
- Increase respite services including emergency, residential and in-home respite care.
- Families in receipt of Carers Allowance must NOT be excluded from receiving home care supports.
- Ensure the Single Assessment Tool for Older People includes a Carer Needs Assessment.
- Government made a commitment to prioritise the interests of Family Carers and to 'refocus efforts to ensure Carers are cared for'. The Carers Association call on Government to honor this commitment by increasing the core grant funding provided to organisations operating in the caring sector, helping to ensure current service levels are maintained.

Ireland's Carers are in crisis. Many are living under extreme financial hardship and having to cut back on essentials just to make ends meet. Like other families they are struggling as living costs rise and Governments austerity measures take hold. However unlike other people, Carers never experienced the benefits of the boom years and were struggling while other groups in society flourished. Because of their caring role, they have little opportunity to work or earn an income and so are forced to rely on State benefits. This hardship is compounded by the fact that Carers are also faced with the additional costs that come with caring, such as increased heating costs, medical and hospitals bills, transport, dietary and incontinence costs.

We must acknowledge that many Carers do not receive any State support. Just one quarter of all Carers receive a Carers Allowance and many do not get any support from social or health services.

Carers bear a great physical cost, neglecting their own health and wellbeing. Many cannot afford to attend to their own medical needs, don't have time for exercise or may develop poor eating habits. A quarter of Carers describe their own health as 'Not Good' and over a half report having a significant mental health problem.¹