

Carers completely overwhelmed by caring responsibilities

The Carers Association welcome the results of the Quarterly National Household Surveys special module on Caring (Q3 2009). The findings are a reminder that caring affects people from all walks of life, regardless of age, geography or economic status.

Research both in Ireland and internationally has consistently shown the negative impact that caring can have on the lives of Carers. Findings from the QNHS have provided further evidence of this with 38% of carers who look after someone in the same household reporting that they feel completely overwhelmed by their caring responsibilities. 92 percent of survey respondents who provide more than 57 hours of care each week stated that caring has impacted on their health and lifestyle.

Enda Egan, CEO of The Carers Association said that *'the negative consequences of caring are particularly evident when support services for family carers, such as respite care, home help etc are inadequate or not available at all. These findings show the critical importance of providing adequate supports to family carers and further illustrate the enormous contribution carers make to Irelands already fragile health system'*.

The 2006 Census of Population showed that almost 161,000 persons or 4.9% of the population aged 15 provided regular unpaid personal help for a friend or family member with a long-term illness, health problem or disability (including problems due to old age). Findings from the QNHS however show that 8% of those surveyed identify themselves as being a Carer.

Mr Egan stated that *'the wording used in Census 2006 referred to those who provide 'unpaid care' meaning that some genuine families carers who were in receipt of Carers Allowance did not answer this question as they believed the CA payment meant they were in effect paid. The figure of 8 percent provides a more realistic reflection of amount of Irish people providing care for a loved one'*.

Findings also illustrate the enormous commitment of carers with 21 percent caring for more than 57 hours each week and a third of carers looking after someone in the same household have been caring for 10 years or more

ENDS

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