

RESPITE CARE GRANT

Towards 2016 states:

"Implementing significant increases in the value of the Respite Grant for Carers, subject to available resources."

- Increase the respite grant to €2,880, in order to allow the Carers' to take the statutory holiday entitlement of 20 days per year. (160 hours of home care services at €18 per hour)

CARERS BENEFIT

Towards 2016 states:

"Continuing to review the scope for further development of the Carers Allowance, Carers Benefit and the Respite Care Grant having regard to the recommendations of the Equality Authority Report "Implementing Equality for Carers" The Carers Association Report "Towards a Family Carers Strategy" and the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Social and Family Affairs Report on the Full -Time Carers and other available research."

- Carers' benefit model should be made similar to that of maternity benefit where the amount of benefit is based on a percentage of the applicant's salary. (Model used in Canada)

Young Carers

Towards 2016 states:

"A study of the extent to which children under take inappropriate care roles will be undertaken to establish the extent and degree to which this issue arises and the level of impact it has on the lives of children concerned. Based on the outcome of its study and an analysis of the issues identified a program of in-home supports will be developed to alleviate specific problem areas identified for children."

- As per National Agreement "Towards 2016" carry out research in 2007 to establish the issues and effects of caring on young Carers and introduce an appropriate programme of in-home supports.
- Introduce a budget of €5 million for services for young Carers.

Services for Carers

Towards 2016 states:

"Examine the potential for improved supports services to Carers. Consideration will also be given to enhancing economic and social inclusion supports to people whose caring responsibilities have concluded."

"The use of community and home based care should be examined and should support the important role of family and informal care."

- Introduce a specific budget for the provision of in-home respite for all full time Family Carers to allow them to take at least a six hour break from their caring duties per week.
- Further Increase the Home Care Package budget in 2008
- Standardise, implement procedures for Home Care Packages
- Insure that the public health nurse service is properly resourced to deal with an expanding work load.

CORE GRANT FUNDING

Introduce a specific budget line for the funding of core grant issues for Voluntry Organisations operating in the Older Persons and Carers Sector. This is a vital requirement for sustainability of this sector.

Provide sufficient funding for the Carers Association to sustain the current level of service provision and introduce multi annual funding to maintain strategic development going forward.

www.carersireland.com

The Carers Association
National Office,
Bolger House, Patrick Street, Tullamore, Co. Offaly
Tel (057) 9322920 Fax (057) 93 23623



Carers contribution to the Social Economy

Cities & Counties	No. of all Carers (Census'02)	Total hours worked per week	Value per year at €12 per hour in € millions
Leitrim	1,074	26,266	€15.76
Waterford City	1,465	33,786	€20.27
Longford	1,281	34,693	€20.82
Carlow	1,600	41,290	€24.77
Waterford Co.	2,064	48,843	€29.31
Galway City	2,273	48,897	€29.34
Monaghan	2,104	51,572	€30.94
Sligo	2,332	56,502	€33.90
Cavan	2,220	57,383	€34.43
Limerick City	2,167	57,450	€34.47
Laoise	2,260	57,588	€34.55
Offaly	2,346	59,293	€35.58
Roscommon	2,482	60,415	€36.25
Tipperary North	2,505	62,913	€37.75
Westmeath	2,663	65,661	€39.40
Tipperary South	3,013	76,847	€46.11
Kilkenny	3,111	78,413	€47.05
Louth	3,745	92,051	€55.23
Clare	4,110	95,381	€57.23
Wicklow	4,200	97,918	€58.75
Wexford	4,141	107,075	€64.25
Limerick Co.	4,759	109,959	€65.98
Meath	4,792	110,896	€66.54
Cork City	4,954	120,764	€72.46
Kildare	5,308	123,883	€74.33
Mayo	5,091	133,063	€79.84
Kerry	5,597	141,681	€85.00
Fingal	6,940	144,003	€86.40
Donegal	5,361	147,838	€88.70
Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown	7,636	148,471	€89.24
Galway Co.	6,089	154,964	€92.98
South Dublin	8,037	183,559	€110.14
Cork Co.	12,927	290,581	€174.35
Dublin City	18,107	437,071	€262.24
Grand Total	148,754	3,556,970	€2.134 Billion

PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION TO THE GOVERNMENT OF IRELAND BUDGET 2008



DELIVERING ON SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP
PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2008



SEPTEMBER 2007



Budget Issues 2008

Who Are Family Carers?

Family Carers are usually immediate relatives, who provide high levels of care at home, for children and adults with severe disabilities, frail older people and people who are terminally ill. Carers need to be constantly available due to the high levels of social and health care needed at home, and in case of emergency. The Carer's life centres on the persons requiring care. Many Carers are in poor health arising from the physical, social and emotional affects of providing long-term high-level care, often without basic supports. **"The 2006 Census of Population states that there are 161,000 Family Carers in Ireland."**

Carer of the Year Awards 2007

Young Carer of the Year – Brigid Cahill

Brigid Cahill from Kilkenny is the 2007 Young Carer of the year. Brigid has been caring for her grandfather Michael for the past five years, Michael is 84 years of age and suffers from severe rheumatoid arthritis, reynaud's disease, has had two replacement hip operations, balance and immobility problems and also has a pacemaker. Brigid herself is no stranger to illness having suffered a life threatening brain injury when she was a child.



As a first hand witness Brigid is very aware of the many sacrifices made by all young carers in the areas of education, socialising with friends and often missing out on holidays. She sat the leaving cert last summer and has decided to defer her college place to selflessly dedicated her teenage years to provide fulltime care for her grandfather.

"I call on our government to take seriously the issue of young carers and immediately implement the commitment made in the National Agreement towards 2016 to research the issues of young carers in Ireland and to provide a program of specific supports."



National Carer of the Year - Margaret Curran

Margaret Curran comes from Kerry and is this years National Carer of the Year. Margaret has been caring for her husband John for over 29 years, following a neck injury which left him paralysed from the neck down and totally dependent on Margaret for his everyday needs. Margaret has devoted her entire life since the accident to caring for John and never leaves his side.

"I am very aware of the challenges facing all full-time Carers in Ireland today. I am urging government to put in place more supports and services to ensure that loved ones requiring care can be cared for at home for as long as possible. This could be achieved by addressing the overall health, social and respite needs of Family Carers".

Family Carers contribute €2.1 Billion to the State's budget each year

Every Week 3.5 million hours are worked by 161,000 Family Carers. Less than 1 in 6 Carers qualify for the Carers Allowance, at present €200 per week, even though Ireland's Family Carers saves the State over €2.1 Billion each year, when compared to the market place costs of providing this home care service.

We acknowledge the progress made in Budget 2007, especially in the area of dual eligibility on Social Welfare payments for carers and engagement regarding organisational core funding.

National Strategy

The Carers Association welcomes government commitment to develop a National Carers Strategy as part of the new national agreement by the end of 2007. The Association urges that a comprehensive public consultations process be conducted and that the following 6 components be included in this strategy.

- Comprehensive services and supports for Family Carers;
- Enhancing and supporting Carers' health and well-being;
- An adequate and fair system of remuneration for Carers;
- Education and training for Carers;
- Work-life Balance policies that support Carers;
- Access to up-to-date and accurate Information.

The implementation of the Equality Authority Report on Carers is fundamental and should be intrinsic to the Strategy. As the deadline of December 2007 will not be met, we call on the government to commit to a detailed work schedule to deliver the National Carers Strategy by June 2008.

Needs Assessment

- Introduce a legal right to a comprehensive Needs Assessment for Family Carers, to include health and social issues.

Medical Cards

- Provide all full-time Carers with medical cards and one comprehensive annual health check.
- A person with a diagnosed long term illness should have a long term entitlement to the medical card
- Renewal of prescriptions should be extended from a three month period to a six month period

Remuneration for Full and Part-time Carers

Towards 2016 states: "Continuing to review the scope for further development of the Carers Allowance, Carers Benefit and the Respite Care Grant having regard to the recommendations of the Equality Authority Report "Implementing Equality for Carers" The Carers Association Report "Towards a Family Carers Strategy" and the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Social and Family Affairs Report on the Full -Time Carers and other available research."

- Apply means test for Carers Allowance to the Carers income only.
- Increase the rate of Carers Allowance to €338 per week. (equal to the minimum wage for the standard working week)
- Within a 3 year time-frame, introduce a payment for full-time Carers, linking the levels to labour market equivalent. This should be delivered as part of a 3 year National Strategy for Carers.
- Allow Carers to work 19.5 hours per week and be eligible for the Carers Allowance. This would also allow Carers on the Back to Work Allowance to claim the half rate Carer's Allowance.

- Any income generated from this 20 hours per week work should not be taken as means. The anomaly currently exists where income generated from working part-time (currently 15 hours per week) as a home help with the Health Service Executive is not taken as means.
- Allow Carers to receive a full Carers Allowance in respect of each person they care for. The current rule only allows a maximum of one and a half Carer's Allowances, even if the carer is looking after two people or more.
- Award Family Carers the fuel allowance as a none means tested payment
- Abolish the Habitual Residency clause for people returning to Ireland to provide family care. (This clause prevents people from being eligible for the Carer's Allowance).
- Make all social welfare payments all week payments given that up to 15,000 carers will now be entitled to another social welfare payment but may not be able to collect the two payments on the same day e.g. Carers Allowance paid on Thursday and Old Age Pension paid on Friday.
- Give consideration to the introduction of a family Carers tax credit for part-time Carers, which can be claimed by a married couple, where one partner is providing care in the home for an incapacitated family member or loved one. This credit could also be claimed by a single person who is providing a high level of care in the home and working part-time or full-time outside the home.
- PRSI contribution should be awarded to Carers on the same basis as paid contributions. Also ensure that Carers will not be caught by the changed conditions for retirement pension. (520 paid contribution needed from 2012 to qualify for old age contributory pension compared to 260 a present)
- Ensure that the Carers Allowance section of the Department is adequately resourced to deal with the volume of applications in an acceptable and stated time frame.

INCOME TAX

Tax relief should be given to Carers for predetermined categories of expenses associated with their caring commitment (e.g. technical aids, medical care, care products, renovations to home, bought in support care (full-time or part-time). This could be offset against their taxable income for the previous year, retrospectively going back over 6 years.

TRAINING

Towards 2016 states: "The Department of Social and Family Affairs in the context of the sectoral plans will work with the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment and Fas to progress issues associated with training for Carers."

- Provide funding to allow all full-time Carers access to accredited training in caring skills, which would be linked into the national framework of qualifications.
- Fund the development of specific back to work training programs for Carers whose caring role has ceased.

INFORMATION

Towards 2016 states: "Continue to support information and awareness campaigns."

- Implement legislation, to provide Carers with a legal right to information on their entitlements.

