



The National Carers' Strategy
Recognised, Supported, Empowered

First Annual Progress Report
September 2012 – September 2013

Tús Áite do
Shábháilteacht **1** Othar
Patient Safety **1** First

Introduction

Vision Statement

Carers will be recognised and respected as key care partners. They will be supported to maintain their own health and well-being and to care with confidence. They will be empowered to participate as fully as possible in economic and social life

The National Carers' Strategy, which was published in 2012, sets the strategic direction for future policies, services and supports provided by Government Departments and agencies for carers. It is a Cross-Departmental Strategy that sets out;

- guiding principles,
- goals and objectives addressing priority areas (income support, health, information, respite, housing, transport, training, employment, children and young people with caring responsibilities) and
- a Roadmap for Implementation containing 42 Actions to be achieved on a cost-neutral basis in the short to medium term.

This is the first Annual Report on implementation for the period of September 2012 – September 2013.

National Goal 1

Recognise the value and contribution of carers and promote their inclusion in decisions relating to the person that they caring for

Objective 1.1

Strengthen awareness and recognition of the role and contribution of carers at national, regional and local level

<i>Action</i>		<i>Progress</i>
1.1.1	Promote a better recognition of the role and contribution of carers at a national level	Minister Lynch launched DISCOVER Skills for Carers in June. This project is a pan-European project, which offers information, advice, guidance and training to support the wellbeing of carers in their caring role. DISCOVER will support two key objectives of the Government's National Carers' Strategy - to promote the availability of user friendly and timely information and advice and to provide relevant and accessible carer training opportunities for carers. (DoH)

		<p>The HSE supports both National Carers Groups and locally based groups (HSE)</p>
<p>1.1.2</p>	<p>Ensure that carers needs are considered in the development of any policies that might affect them (such as the Review of Disability Policy (DoH), the National Positive Ageing Strategy and the Children and Young People's Policy Framework 2012-2017 (forthcoming))</p>	<p>In recognition of the role that carers play in enabling older people to remain in their own homes for as long as possible, one of the stated objectives of the National Positive Ageing Strategy (published in April 2013) is to recognise and support the role of carers by implementing the National Carers' Strategy. Furthermore, given that research has found that carers of people with dementia experience excessive strain as compared with other caregiving groups, it is proposed that the National Dementia Strategy, which is currently in development, will place an emphasis on people with dementia and their carers (DoH).</p> <p>The Minister for Social Protection met with carers' representative organisations as part of the pre-budget forum 12th October, 2012. Each of the organisations presented their key priorities for consideration in advance of the budget. Outside of the budgetary process, DSP officials meet two to three times a year with carers' representative organisations as part of a structured dialogue with a range of community and voluntary groups. These meetings are normally co-chaired by the Deputy Secretary General and by a representative of the groups.</p> <p>In addition, individual meetings are arranged from time to time between DSP officials and carers' representative organisations to discuss particular issues as they arise. These arrangements provide the opportunity for these organisations to engage in a meaningful way with the Department and to contribute to the development of policy in respect of carers. (DSP)</p> <p>The DCYA Children and Young Peoples' Policy Framework (CYPF) is in development and is due to be finalised late in 2013. This will be followed by a Youth Policy for young people from the age of 10/12 upwards. In line with the CYPF, due regard will be given to the situation of young carers and their need for support. (DCYA)</p> <p>Appropriate consultation and input with carers and their representative organisations will be</p>

		necessary in the context of the future development of policies for vulnerable groups and the implementation of current policies in respect of people with disabilities and older people. (DECLG)
1.1.3	Build on the work begun in Census 2011 to establish a comprehensive statistical profile of Family Caring in Ireland	<p>The DCYA requested the Central Statistics Office to include a question in the Census of Population 2011 concerning carers. The DoH and HSE also highlighted the need for changes in questions tabled in the Census to better capture the extent of caring.</p> <p>People of all ages were asked whether they provide any unpaid personal help for a friend or family member with a long term-term illness, health problem or disability (including old age). The Department published the <i>State of the Nation's Children – Ireland 2012</i> in March 2013 and it included data on Children as Carers arising from the 2011 Census of Population. (DCYA)</p> <p>Census 2011 Profile 8 Our Bill of Health - Health, Disability and Carers in Ireland – released in Summer 2012 (CSO)</p> <p>It is planned, under the National Strategy for Research and Data on Children's Lives published by the Department last year that an analysis of those children who reported in the 2011 Census that they undertake caring roles, will be carried out by the end of 2013. (DCYA)</p>
1.1.4	Continue to convene an annual carers forum to provide carers with a voice at policy level	DSP hosts an annual meeting of carers' representative organisations (National Carers' Forum). This Forum includes both representatives from Government Departments and agencies involved in providing services for carers, in addition to the broad spectrum of groups representing carers, the disabled and the elderly. (DSP)
1.1.5	Support national organisations representing the interests of carers	The Dormant Accounts Training for Carers Measure recently concluded. Funding of €1.48 million was provided over several years to 12 groups to develop training programmes to up-skill family carers in order to help them to provide the best care possible, to reduce injury to the carer and to help them to cope with the emotional and psychological aspects of their role. The measure is

		<p>complete insofar as all the funding has been drawn down by Pobal from this Department's vote. (DSP)</p> <p>The HSE provides grant aid to carers organisations at both national and local level. In some HSE locations, the Carers Development Officer works closely with Carers Association and Caring for Carers Ireland. (HSE)</p> <p>The DoH participates in the annual National Carers' Forum and is the contact point in Government re implementation of the National Carers' Strategy. (DoH)</p>
1.1.6	<p>Promote more proactive approaches to the identification of carers and to addressing their needs among staff and organisations that are likely to encounter individuals in caring situations (e.g. health and personal social service providers, and particularly primary care team members, community and education professionals).</p>	<p>In a number of locations, the HSE's Primary Care Teams (PCTs) are usually aware and supportive of carers needs, particularly in the provision of home support and respite services to older people. In those areas where the HSE has a Carers Department, there are well established dual referral processes between HSE community and hospital health professionals, Voluntary and other Statutory Organisations and Community Groups and the Carers Department.</p> <p>In some areas, the HSE has created Carers Databases, which are updated on an on-going basis.</p> <p>In a number of locations, the HSE has also established a number of Carer Support Groups, which are proactive in identifying new carers and in;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - promoting the health and well-being of the carer - identifying their specific needs - facilitating the sharing of experiences and information - reducing isolation - encouraging learning and problem-solving - working with the Carers Association to establish Carers Support Groups in other locations <p>In some HSE areas, the Carers Department identifies new carers through its Information and Advice</p>

		<p>Service and through the broad range of Training Courses that they provide.</p> <p>In other HSE areas, Carers Co-ordinators identify and support new carers. In addition, carers needs are discussed at Primary Care Clinical Meetings. Some Primary Care Teams are developing specific programmes for family carers with the support of and co-ordination by their Carers Development Officer. (HSE)</p>
1.1.7	Promote carer self-identification initiatives and encourage carers to formally identify themselves to service providers	<p>The HSE adopts a variety of approaches from one location to the next to encourage carers to formally identify themselves to service providers, which include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - liaison and information sharing between members of the Primary Care Team (PCT) and carers - through information and advice services, which encourage carers to make themselves known to the PCT - through outreach activities by Carers Co-ordinators (where available) - statutory funding provided to the Carers Association, which supports carers to identify their needs - Public Health Nurses (PHNs) raise awareness of carer burden with the PCT (in some areas, PHNs conduct formal carer burden assessments) - Advertising the Carers Development Officer (where available) and the courses and support that it provides (HSE)

Objective 1.2

Include carers in care planning and decision making for those that they care

<i>Action</i>		<i>Progress</i>
1.2.1	Involve carers, as appropriate, as partners in care planning and	<p>The HSE acknowledges the importance of a partnership approach to care planning. Again, a variety of approaches that vary from one location to the next are adopted in this regard. These include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provision of family support services following care planning with the family carer - care plans include both family and external services contributions that are responsive to

	provision by health and personal social service providers and particularly by the primary care team	<p>assessed need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carers are given the opportunity to relay their caring needs through the Training Service, Carers Support Group Service and the Information and Advice Service provided by Carers Departments (where they are available) - Carers Databases have been established and are updated on an ongoing basis by Carers Departments - Two Carers have been selected by a Carers Department to represent carers on a Steering Group for a research project being undertaken by NUI Galway in consultation with the HSE entitled: “Exploring the educational and support needs of carers of older people with dementia living at home” (NUIG, Dec. 2012– Dec. 2013). - Carers needs are discussed at Primary Care Team Clinical meetings as part of overall assessment and provision of care to meet needs (HSE)
1.2.2	Identify carers and their involvement in discharge planning, including their details provided in discharge letters to GPs	In some HSE areas, carers are involved in discharge planning processes (HSE)

Objective 1.3

Recognise the needs of carers by the provision of income supports

<i>Action</i>		<i>Progress</i>
1.3.1	Provide regular benefits advice sessions and information through	<p>Local offices and information services are available to provide advice to carers. Consideration will be given to assessing the need for increased support. (DSP)</p> <p>In some HSE areas, carers clinics provide information relevant to the carer. (HSE)</p>

	the application process	
1.3.2	Ensure that carers can access benefits advice as early as possible when their caring role begins	Advice is available from Citizens Information and from local offices. Consideration will be given to assessing the need for increased support. (DSP)
1.3.3	Publicise more widely that the Carer's Allowance can be shared by two carers providing care on a part time basis	Care Sharing is currently prominently displayed and highlighted by means of a Banner Headline on the Department's Website. Website and printed materials will be checked with a view to maximising awareness of shared caring. (DSP)
1.3.4	Continue to work to reduce waiting periods for processing of Carer's Allowance applications and appeals	Following the completion of a major service delivery modernisation project, an in-depth Business Process Improvement (BPI) project was completed for the Carer's Allowance (CA) scheme. This project focused on optimizing output and customer service and the elimination of backlogs. The average time taken to decide a carer's allowance application received in the 6 months up to end November 2013 was 9 weeks. (DSP)
1.3.5	Review existing transition arrangements for carers at the end of their caring role	Existing arrangements will be reviewed during 2013/14 (DSP) (HSE)

National Goal 2

Support carers to manage their physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing

Objective 2.1

Promote the development of supports and services to protect the physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing of carers

<i>Action</i>		<i>Progress</i>
2.1.1	Raise awareness among health and personal social service providers of the physical and emotional health issues that carers may experience	<p>The Teaching Council's Code of Professional Conduct sets out the expectations for the teacher's responsibilities regarding students' holistic development and well-being. These include having regard to the background/situation of students. Continuing professional development helps to ensure that teachers are aware of current research and best practise in working with young people. (DES)</p> <p>The HSE adopts a number of mechanisms to raise awareness among staff of the physical and emotional health needs of carers. These include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - on-going liaison between Carers Departments and the Primary Care Team (PCT), particularly in relation to the counselling services that are available to carers - on-going liaison between Carers Co-ordinators and the PCT - Health and social care providers attendance at carer support groups and at family resource centres, at which carers have the opportunity to highlight their needs. (HSE)
2.1.2	Encourage carers to attend their GP for an annual health check	<p>Approaches taken to encouraging carers to attend their GP for an annual health check vary from one HSE area to another. However, some useful approaches in this regard include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - members of the PCT discussing carers needs when providing services to the care recipient - carer co-ordinators, carer specific training courses, information and advice services and support groups flagging the importance of carers attending their GP regularly - Carers Week has been a useful mechanism for raising awareness in relation to the need for carers to look after their own health needs in addition to the needs of the person for whom they are providing care. (HSE)

2.1.3	Develop and roll out a single assessment tool for older people and ensure that the views of carers as well as the people they care for are taken into account	<p>The HSE is committed to implementing a single assessment tool for older people. Following a comprehensive selection and pilot process, the InterRAI™ suite of tools was selected. The HSE has commenced this implementation process. The final report of the HSE working group established to select a single assessment tool states: Reflecting an acknowledged gap in the InterRAI™ suite of tools and having regard to the recommendations presented to the SAT Working Group by the Carers Group and the Consumer Reference Group, the following will be part of the implementation programme;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the term Informal Carer will be replaced by the term ‘Family Carer’ in the versions of interRAI™ tools ratified for use in Ireland; - specific Family Carer awareness should be provided for all professionals as part of the education and development programme; - where carer distress is identified a suitable assessment of the carer(s) will be conducted; - the development of a formally adopted supplement to the interRAI™ suite to provide for a suitable carer assessment will be pursued. (DoH/HSE)
2.1.4	Continue to implement the recommendations of the Home Solutions Report (13) on telecare	There are a number of telecare initiatives on-going throughout the country. However, resources are an issue in terms of this roll out. (HSE)
2.1.5	Promote awareness of adult and child protection services that are in place	The HSE has developed a comprehensive elder abuse protection service, including at present 28 Senior Case Workers countrywide and Dedicated Officers for the Protection of Older People in each of the four HSE regions. Each year the HSE works to raise awareness of elder abuse, including through events around the annual <i>Say No to Ageism</i> campaign and <i>World Elder Abuse Awareness Day</i> . (HSE)
2.1.6	Review the Fair Deal system of financing nursing home care with a	The Programme for Government commits that “the Fair Deal system of financing nursing home care will be reviewed with a view to developing a secure and equitable system of financing for community and long-term care which supports older people to stay in their own homes”. In addition, <i>Future</i>

	<p>view to developing a secure and equitable system of financing for community and long-term care which supports older people to stay in their own homes.</p>	<p><i>Health – A Strategic Framework for Reform of the Health Service 2012 – 2015</i> commits that the Department of Health will develop policy in relation to the introduction of financial assessment, contribution and charges for certain social and continuing care services.</p> <p>This process has commenced within the overall review of the Nursing Homes Support Scheme (<i>A Fair Deal</i>) which is considering the long term sustainability of the Scheme as well as looking at related aspects of home and community care. One of the Terms of Reference of the review is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “to consider the extension of the Scheme to community based services...”. <p>Work will continue on the review in the coming months with a view to completion by early 2014. It is not possible at this point to pre-empt the recommendations that will arise from the review. (DoH, HSE)</p>
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Objective 2.2

Support children and young people with caring responsibilities and protect them from the adverse impacts of caring

<i>Action</i>		<i>Progress</i>
2.2.1	<p>Raise awareness and understanding among education providers of the signs that children and young people have caring responsibilities and the impact of caring on them</p>	<p>The National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) is developing national guidelines as a practical support for schools in the preparation of School Attendance Strategies as outlined in Section 22 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000. The guidelines will assist schools to implement effective measures to support children at risk of poor attendance and participation, including those with caring responsibilities. (DCYA)</p> <p>In one HSE area, the Carers Association has developed a Young Carers Project with the HSE (HSE)</p>
2.2.2	<p>Encourage statutory agencies to review the way that they respond</p>	<p>In preparation for the establishment of the new Child and Family Support Agency, the National Carers’ Strategy has been disseminated to key children and family services staff and the Corporate Parenting Strategy that is in development will reference the National Carers’ Strategy. (DCYA)</p>

	to children and young people with caring responsibilities	The NEWB is integrating its three service strands based on the principle of “ <i>One Child, One Team, One Plan</i> ”. This reform will enable NEWB to better respond to the circumstances in which children and families need its assistance. The integrated practice model is being piloted until the end of 2013 with ongoing monitoring and evaluation. (DCYA)
2.2.3	Identify support services needed by children and young people with caring responsibilities and create mechanisms for young carers to contact service providers	In some areas, the Carers Association has developed a contact service for children and young people with caring responsibilities. (HSE)
2.2.4	Investigate and analyse the situation of children and young people undertaking caring roles	In one HSE area, a Joint Project between the Counsellor of Special Needs and the Carers Association is on-going (HSE)

National Goal 3

Support carers to care with confidence through the provision of adequate information, training, services and supports

Objective 3.1

Promote the availability of user friendly and timely information and advice

<i>Action</i>		<i>Progress</i>
3.1.1	Ensure frontline staff in key ‘first contact’ agencies such as local authorities, local health offices and health and personal social service providers have the correct information to be able to sign post carers to other services as appropriate	<p>This action will be pursued following consultation with the other agencies responsible. (DSP)</p> <p>Approaches to ensuring that frontline staff have the correct information to sign-post carers to other services as appropriate vary from one HSE area to the next depending on the availability of local resources. Some examples of how this action is being pursued include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - liaison between frontline staff and HSE Carers Departments (e.g. in 2012, 1,372 carer queries were processed by the Carers Department, Galway PCCC and up to August 2013, they had processed 875 carer queries). - Carers Co-ordinators ensure that carers know what services and supports are available and how they can be accessed - Statutory funding is provided to the Carers Association, which provides on-going information and advice on how to access services at a local level - Where Carer Development Officers are available, they endeavour to ensure that GP’s, PHN’s and other frontline staff are aware of their existence and that signpost carers to them as necessary (HSE) <p>A key priority in the Department’s Housing Strategy for People with a Disability Implementation Framework is the establishment of dedicated Housing Advice Centres as part of a coordinated approach to provide integrated and accessible advice and information to support all people with their housing and related support needs and other local authority services. Guidance for local authorities to support the establishment of these centres is being developed by the Housing Agency.</p>

		The specific needs of carers, including appropriate referral procedures for other services such as healthcare, will be considered in this regard. It is expected that a Housing Advice Centre will be piloted in a local authority area shortly (DECLG)
3.1.2	Review material (paper and Internet based) available to carers and investigate (in conjunction with carers' representative organisations) how more comprehensive information materials dedicated to carers' needs can be developed and distributed to service providers likely to be a carer's first point of contact	<p>This action will be pursued following consultation with the other agencies responsible and carers' representative organisations. (DSP)</p> <p>The HSE disseminates information at a national level for carers as a matter of course. Specific and more local information provision initiatives in this regard include those provided through;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carers Departments - Carers Development Officers - Carer Co-ordinators - Carer Support Groups - Training courses (HSE)
3.1.3	Ensure that the information needs of sub-groups of carers, such as older carers, children and young people with caring responsibilities, carers	This action will be pursued following consultation with the other agencies responsible and carers' representative groups. (DSP)

	in rural areas are addressed	
3.1.4	Proactively collate and disseminate information about services and supports available at a local level for carers	<p>This action will be pursued following consultation with the other agencies responsible and carers' representative organisations. (DSP)</p> <p>Information about services and supports that are available to carers at a local level is collated and disseminated by;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carers Departments - Carers Development Officers - Carer Co-ordinators - Carer Support Groups - Training courses (HSE)

Objective 3.2

Provide relevant and accessible carer training opportunities for carers

<i>Action</i>		<i>Progress</i>
3.2.1	Identify gaps in the content of current training programmes for carers (in conjunction with carers' representative organisations)	SOLAS, the new Further Education and Training Authority will support the delivery of integrated education and training that is relevant to individual learner needs, including those of carers, and national skills needs. (DES)
3.2.2	Enhance the accessibility of	There are a range of tuition models available to adult learners including online and blended learning options. (DES)

	education and training courses through the use of face-to face, on-line and distance learning options	
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Objective 3.3 Promote the development of accessible living environments for all		
<i>Action</i>		<i>Progress</i>
3.3.1	Prioritise funding for the operation of the suite of housing grants for older people and people with a disability and ensure that they can be accessed by families in a timely way	A review of the adaptation grant schemes, co-ordinated by Housing Agency and involving the CCMA and Housing Practitioners was carried out recently. A report will be submitted to the Minister for Housing & Planning very shortly. The aim of the review is to achieve more with the decreasing budget and ensure that the maximum numbers of households are supported. The priority is to spread the benefits as widely as possible and to ensure fairness and value for money in the operation of the grant schemes. The intention is that the new grant structures will apply from 2014 onwards (DECLG)
3.3.2	Identify good practice in implementing assistive technology and ambient assistive living technology to support independent living and telehealth opportunities	The role of assistive technology in supporting independent living can be examined as part of a pilot programme which will test good practice in sustainable communities for people with disabilities. The programme will be developed by the Housing Agency and work on the scoping of the project is expected to be undertaken before end 2013 with a view to implementation during 2014. The DECLG and HSE previously worked together on the Home Solutions Research Study which was launched in 2011 with the aim of investigating the benefits of telecare systems to assist people to remain at home for longer. The recommendations of the study can be examined in the context of the development of the sustainable communities pilot programme (DECLG)

		The HSE has a number of assistive living technology projects in place e.g. 60 assistive technology packages approved in Inishowen as part of a CAWT project. Assistive Technology exhibitions organised by HSE (carers development officer) will take place in November (Letterkenny and Ballyshannon). Resources continue to be a challenge in this area. (HSE)
3.3.3	Review and up-date Transport Sectoral Plan under Disability Act 2005	Review completed and updated Plan published August 2013 (DTTS)

National Goal 4

Empower carers to participate as fully as possible in economic and social life

Objective 4.1

Enable carers to have respite breaks

<i>Action</i>		<i>Progress</i>
4.1.1	Promote a better awareness of the existence of the Respite Care Grant	<p>It is considered that awareness of the existence of the Respite Care Grant is currently high. This will be kept under review. (DSP)</p> <p>The HSE advertises the availability of the respite grant through;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carers Departments - Carers Development Officers - Carer Co-ordinators - Carer Support Groups - Training courses (HSE)
4.1.2	Promote a range of	The HSE advertises the availability of respite options through;

	person-centred and flexible respite options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carers Departments - Carers Development Officers - Carer Co-ordinators - Carer Support Groups - Training courses (HSE)
4.1.3	Identify gaps in existing services and establish performance indicators for the provision of respite services	This Action will be progressed in 2013/2014

Objective 4.2

Enable carers to remain in touch with the labour market to the greatest extent possible

<i>Action</i>		<i>Progress</i>
4.2.1	Promote existing carer friendly HR policies within Government Departments and Agencies	Government Departments and Agencies operate family friendly policies such as flexi time (for specific grades), reduced working week, shorter working year, unpaid leave and career breaks for staff in order to facilitate carers in so far as possible.
4.2.2	Promote awareness of the Carer's Leave Act 2001	A full range of flexible working arrangements and family friendly policies, including the Carer's Leave Scheme, are available to staff to assist in combining work and caring responsibilities and are promoted on Government Departments and Agencies intranet

4.2.3	Encourage work-life balance provisions that are needed to ensure that working arrangements are carer friendly	This Action will be progressed in 2013/2014
4.2.4	Explore how back-to-work and education training courses can be tailored to the needs of carers who wish to return to the workplace	Existing arrangements will be reviewed during 2013/14. (DSP) The Department of Education and Skills currently provides a large range of part-time, full-time and distance (e-learning) further education and training courses many of which would be suitable for carers. (DES)
4.2.5	Review access by family carers to labour market activation measures	Existing arrangements will be reviewed during 2013/14. (DSP)