

Summary Annual Report - 2014

2014 was another successful year for Care Alliance Ireland. Key events in 2014 were the launch of a peer-reviewed and well-received literature review on the relationship between Family Carers and paid home care workers, a very successful eighth National Carers Week in June, and a successful funding bid to the *Scheme to Support National Organisations in the Community & Voluntary Sector*.

Implementation of the 2012 *National Carers' Strategy* by government agencies remains disappointing. We worked intensively as part of a monitoring group led by the Carers Association, and had fruitful meetings with various government departments. The second annual report on the strategy, published in early 2015, demonstrated some progress.



Communication

We continue to assist researchers, students, the media and the general public with queries in relation to Family Carers, both by email and telephone. All 95 member organisations and over 450 other organisations and individuals involved in supporting Family Carers received regular communications from us, on issues relating to support, practice, policy and research. We use email in a measured and focused way to ensure that communication is relevant to members and stakeholders. We review sectoral publications and, in particular, carer-related research, and disseminate information in a targeted way.

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Since its publication in May 2013, the updated *Family Caring in Ireland* report has been downloaded from our website 2, 840 times (www.carealliance.ie). Work began in 2014 on updating the report, with the aim of reflecting changes in research policy and practice. We have been successful in securing funding to disseminate the report to a wider audience in hard-copy format, and this was completed early in 2015.

We continued to work closely with the HSE and others in their progression of the Single Assessment Tool and, in particular, the creation of a Carer Assessment supplement to the InterRAI, which we envisage will now be piloted in Ireland and abroad in 2015. We also undertook regular reviews of new international Family Carer research, policy, and practice resources, and disseminated these as appropriate.

Our involvement in an EU project concerned with Young Adult Carers continued in 2014. The ToYAC project published a booklet for practitioners: *Together for Young Adult Carers*, and launched a comprehensive website: www.youngadultcarers.eu.

Our website (www.carealliance.ie) is increasingly viewed as a portal for Family Carer research and policy. The website reach in 2014 was the highest yet, with in excess of 58,000 downloads. The number of unique users in 2014 was 8,459, which represents an increase of 16% on 2013 levels. Visitors increased to 16,715 – an increase of 36%.

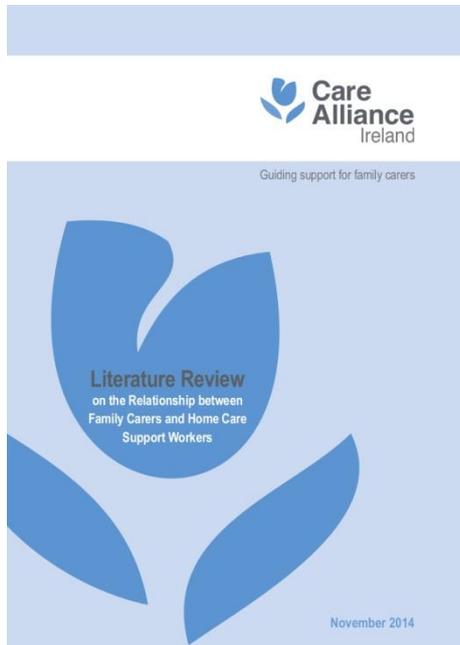
Three editions of our newsletter, *Care Alliance Ireland*, were produced and disseminated widely; they remain available on our website. The number of downloads of our newsletters reached 6,000 – an increase of 93% year-on-year.

Research

Considerable time was spent during 2014 on preparing a comprehensive and peer-reviewed literature review on the relationship between Family Carers and home care support workers. It was launched in November and has been disseminated widely, with 1,220 downloads by February 2015. Care Alliance continued to lead the sector in considering and addressing research gaps. We have ongoing contact with senior academics regarding their Family Carer research proposals and projects (for example, on elder abuse and carer stress). We also continue to participate on the Consultative Group of the National Centre for the Protection of Older People, which meets twice yearly. We provided ongoing support to two Trinity College Dublin research projects involving Family Carer research (on the topics of dementia and intellectual disability). In late 2014 we collaborated with the University of Limerick on

'Guiding support for family carers'

a research proposal relating to Benefit Finding in Carers. We heard recently of the success of this proposal, and look forward to progressing this important and innovative research in 2015.



June 9th - 15th 2014



Celebrating Ireland's Family Carers

www.carersweek.ie

Find Us www.facebook.com/nationalcarersweek

Member organisations

Much of 2014 was spent deepening our engagement with our member organisations. This involved travelling around Ireland to meet with both new and long-standing members. Meetings also took place with key member organisations with whom collaborative ventures are ongoing or planned. Our membership currently stands at 95, and includes key intellectual-disability organisations and nearly all of the significant condition-specific organisations. Our collaborative pre-budget media event with other NGO federations resulted in considerable national media attention to Family Carers.

National Carers Week

The eighth National Carers Week, which took place from 9 to 15 June, exceeded our expectations; it is now a significant entry in the calendars of organisations supporting Family Carers. Events took place in every county. New developments in 2014 included the launch of a smartphone app for Family Carers – the 'Jointly' app, which was developed by Carers UK. Our social media campaign was extensive, primarily via the NationalCarersWeek Facebook page. The page received over 7,500 'likes' and, in the

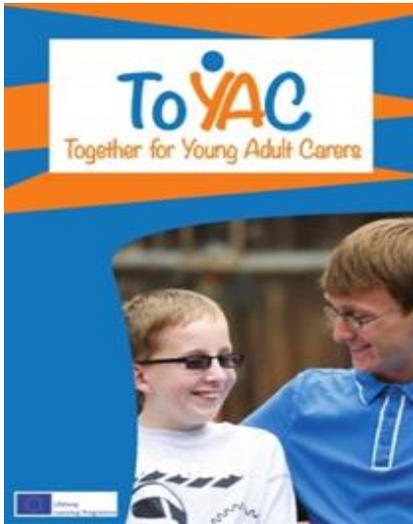
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run-up to the week, became one of the most active Facebook pages within the NGO sector in Ireland. The page reached over 130,000 users in the week before Carers Week.



Developments

In 2014 we prepared a strong funding bid to the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government under the *Scheme to Support National Organisations in the Community and Voluntary Sector* (SSNO). We were delighted with the outcome – a 67% increase in funding under this scheme, allowing us the opportunity to recruit a Policy and Research Officer, which was finalised in December 2014.

The Board reviewed Care Alliance's compliance with the Governance Code and reiterated our full compliance with same in November 2014.

Throughout 2014 we continued to be active in the international sphere, with participation in the International Alliance of Caregiver Organisations (IACO) as well as in Eurocarers. We were particularly active in an online carer information project (InnovAge) in late 2014. This web-based resource aimed at carers of older people will be launched in summer 2015.



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