

# ANNUAL REPORT

Directors' Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2024

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# **Legal and Other Details**

#### The Directors who served during the year were as follows:

(Denyse) Elen Gebremedhin (Chairperson)

Laura O'Philbin

Elaine Teague

Pierre-Yves Fioraso

Adele Spillane

Mary Shovlin (resigned April 10th 2024)

Carmen Elise Pocknell (appointed April 18th 2024)

Michelle MacDonagh (appointed May 10th 2024)

Ronan Conboy (appointed August 8th 2024)

#### **Company Secretary:**

Barbara Barrett (resigned August 29th 2024)

Michelle MacDonagh (appointed August 29th 2024)

#### **Finance Quality Audit & Risk Committee:**

Adele Spillane (Chairperson)

(Denyse) Elen Gebremedhin

Pierre-Yves Fioraso

Elaine Teague

Ronan Conboy (appointed September 10th 2024)

#### **Research Committee:**

Laura O'Philbin (Chairperson)

Carmen Elise Pocknell (appointed June 4th 2024)

**Charity Registration No.:** 20048303

**CHY Number:** 14644

**Registered Company Number:** 461315

# **Legal and Other Details**

#### **Chief Executive Officer:**

Liam O'Sullivan

#### **Registered Office:**

Care Alliance Ireland Coleraine House Coleraine Street Dublin 7 **D07 E8XF** 

#### **Independent External Auditors:**

Strata Financial (incorporating Duignan Carthy O'Neill) 3 Harmony Court, Harmony Row, Dublin 2, Ireland, D02 VY52

#### **Principal Bankers:**

Allied Irish Bank Capel Street Dublin 1

#### **Solicitors:**

None appointed

#### **Legal Name:**

Care Alliance Ireland, a Company Limited by Guarantee and not having a Share Capital

#### **Country of Incorporation:**

Republic of Ireland

Website: www.carealliance.ie LinkedIn: Care Alliance Ireland

Email: info@carealliance.ie





#### CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

As Chairperson of Care Alliance Ireland, it is a privilege to reflect on our achievements throughout 2024 — a milestone year as we celebrated our 30th anniversary. Over the past three decades, Care Alliance Ireland has grown into a leading advocate for Ireland's family carers, with one clear and enduring purpose: to enhance the lives and wellbeing of family carers.

#### **Expanding Support for Family Carers**

One of our proudest accomplishments this year has been the continued success and growth of our Online Family Carer Support Project, now entering its fifth year under the leadership of Tara O'Connor, Project Manager. Supporting over 9,000 family carers nationwide, this vibrant online community has become a trusted and valued space for connection, support, and resilience. Engagement rose by nearly 30% in 2024, demonstrating the value carers find in peer support and the accessible, practical resources offered.

#### Helping with Carers Re-Engage **Opportunities**

2024 also saw the conclusion of the Re-emerge project, managed by Amy Lavelle, which provided tailored support for carers wishing to re-enter education or employment. It has been deeply inspiring to know that family carers regain confidence, build new skills, and take brave steps toward new opportunities.

The successful launch of Re-emerge 2 reflects our belief in nurturing carers' aspirations, and we remain ambitious regarding our 2025-2026 goals for this initiative.

#### **A Stronger Voice for Carers**

On the advocacy front, we welcomed significant progress in 2024, with family carers gaining greater visibility in public discourse and political commitments following the General Election. Alongside our partners, our efforts helped influence a Programme for Government that, for the first time, includes specific pledges to improve the lives of family carers. Although work remains, this momentum is an encouraging sign of shifting attitudes and a stronger recognition of carers' contributions.

#### Policy, Research and Communication

We continued to strengthen our policy and research work during the year, publishing journal articles and collaborating with key stakeholders. A new podcast series, hosted by our Senior Policy and Research Officer, Zoe Hughes, was launched to further extend our reach, featuring expert insights on critical issues affecting family carers. This has proven to be an effective and engaging platform for disseminating research-backed information to a wider community.





#### **Carers Week**

This was the 18th year of National Carer's week in Ireland. The event lasted a full week and we partnered with almost a dozen organisations to raise awareness of the invaluable contribution of family carers across the country. There was a significant increase in the events held, with the right balance of events held in person versus online.

#### Membership

One of our key aspirations for 2024 was to grow our membership, particularly after facing challenges in this area at the close of 2023. We are proud to report that by the end of 2024, we achieved a significant milestone: reaching 100 member organisations, all of which are not-forprofit entities supporting family carers either directly or indirectly. While we are proud of this achievement, we remain committed continuing to expand our membership and to deepening our partnerships. We pledge to support our members wherever possible in their own initiatives to improve the lives of family carers.

#### Risk Management, Governance, and **Recognition of Excellence**

In 2024, we remained steadfast in adhering to practice in governance and management. We maintained full compliance with the Charities Governance Code and

continued to refine our internal policies and Terms of References. Our Board is undertaking an appraisal exercise to ensure we functioning efficiently and fulfilling our strategic duties. We were honoured to receive the 2024 Good Governance Award, achieving a 90% score a testament to our ongoing commitment to accountability, transparency, and governance excellence. This recognition reflects dedication of our Board, staff, and volunteers who uphold the trust placed in us.

#### **Financial Overview**

Our financial statements, detailed on page 85, highlight another year of stability and careful stewardship. We continued to secure critical funding from the HSE, the Dept. of Social Protection and the Dept. of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht. We delivered, a planned but modest, year-end deficit.

#### Strategic Plan 2025-2030

In 2024, we crafted our new Strategic Plan 2025-2030 - which was approved by our Board in early 2025 - drawing on lessons learned from the 2019-2024 period. While our vision has expanded — envisioning "An Ireland in which the role of family carers is fully recognised and where family carers are adequately supported" - our core raison d'être remains unchanged: to enhance the wellbeing of family carers.





Our CEO, Liam O'Sullivan, provides further details of this plan within this Annual Report.

**Board Changes and New Joiners** 

In 2024, we bid farewell to Mary Shovlin, who stepped down from our Board after years of valued service, and we welcomed three new members: Michelle MacDonagh, Secretary in August; Carmen Elise Pocknell, who has brought valuable expertise to our Research Committee; and Ronan Conboy, a welcome addition to our Financial, Quality, Audit and Risk Committee (FQARC). Their fresh perspectives and commitment have already begun to make an impact.

**Acknowledging Community** Our **Looking Ahead** 

I would like to sincerely thank my fellow Board members for their dedicated service to Care Alliance Ireland's mission. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our CEO, Liam O'Sullivan, for his unwavering leadership and 20 years remarkable contributions to the organisation. Personally and professionally, it has been a privilege to collaborate with him in advancing Care Alliance Ireland's vision.

On behalf of the Board and Liam, we are deeply grateful to our donors, stakeholders, partners, members, staff, and volunteers for their unwavering support and invaluable contributions to the success of Care Alliance Ireland

throughout 2024.

As we conclude our 30th year, we look forward with optimism and renewed purpose. With strong foundations and a clear path ahead, we are well-positioned to build on our successes and embrace the opportunities that the next five years will bring.

Together, we will continue to stand alongside family carers — guiding, supporting, amplifying their voices.

Thank you for being part of this journey.

Elen Gebrenedhin

Elen Gebremedhin Chairperson, Care Alliance Ireland





#### CEO REPORT

As we celebrated our 30th year, it's time to take stock and reflect on our work, our focus and our impact. Our work has shifted, most particularly over the past five years, and currently direct supports to family carers represent the majority activities. This our was somewhat opportunistic but also strategic. When Covid-19 hit, face-to-face services for family carers shut overnight, and we as an organisation, with staff enthusiasm and skills, Board and funder support, decided to enter the space of direct supports, albeit in an online format. How glad we are that we did this, as it took several years before there was a full restoration of the more traditional face-to-face supports. Truth be told, some family carers don't want to go back to those supports - virtual seems to work for them - allowing them to continue to care at home while also having the flexibility to access various supports virtually from the comfort of their own home - and they remain highly engaged in our ever-expanding suite of online offerings.

We do of course signpost family carers to the more traditional supports and trusted sources of information, and increasingly, organisations are reaching out to us as they signpost their own clients to our virtual supports. This collaboration as it should be.

Our focus of activity was traditionally on the picture - seeking opportunities to influence policy and practice, and this important work, led by Zoe Hughes, continues to be a cornerstone of our organisation's purpose. We believe in the power to gradually effect change, incrementally, sometimes systemically. The submissions we continue to make year on year do slowly begin to influence government priorities, resource allocation and how things are done administratively. Language can be powerful and the more we learn about family carers in both public discourse and in policy documents, the more confident we are that family carers' position in our society will become stronger and more visible.

Covid-19 in some senses brought about a revolution in virtual supports. And thanks to Dr Rosemary Daynes-Kearney's recently published PhD, we have a sound evidence base for the impact these types of supports can have, especially if they are professionally run, with tight moderation and safeguards. That is how we run our Online Family Carer Support Project; with over 9,000 members, it is led by Tara O'Connor and a great team of volunteers. We are delighted to be entering 2025 with a significant boost in grant income for this project from the Department of Health/HSE.





Our work in employment-ready projects, led by Amy Lavelle, is now entering its fifth year. Thanks to another round of Dormant Accounts Funds (DAF), we welcome assisting a new cohort of family carers as their journey back to paid employment, training or education begins, with Re-emerge 2. Recruitment for two new team members for this project was completed in early 2025.

Thankfully, cost-of-living pressures eased somewhat in 2024, and real but modest income gains were secured for some family carers. Costof-living measures also helped. Timely access to health and social care services remains a challenge for many despite some innovative funding models being piloted. Further research from Healthy Ireland published at the end of 2024 reminded us and the country as a whole that the prevalence of family carers is only increasing over time.

General Election 2024 was positive in that all the political parties specific major gave commitments to improving the situation of family carers. The new Programme for Government, announced in early 2025, gives us hope that these commitments will be honoured.

Impact is a curious beast, easy to claim, difficult to quantify and contentious to attribute. We do however need to demonstrate impact and our Annual Report makes efforts in this regard. Storytelling is also powerful and our report shares stories from two of our volunteers and from key staff in our projects.

Our new Strategic Plan 2025-2030 gives expression to our values, our priorities and how we seek to measure our impact.

As ever I want to pay tribute to our wonderful staff team, our volunteers and our Board of Directors. Effective operations and service delivery takes time, resources and a highly skilled and committed team. Good governance does not happen by accident. It takes effort, patience, accountability, transparency and a true commitment from the Board to review and challenge each and every new or updated policy. Having said that, it's worth the effort, and validating of course to win awards, again.

Liam O'Sullivan

Liam O'Sullivan, CEO







22q11 Ireland

**Ability West** 

Acquired Brain Injury Ireland









**ADHD Ireland** 

Age Action

Age and Opportunity

**ALONE** 









Alzheimer Society of <u>Ireland</u>

Anam Croí

Arthritis Ireland

Avista









**Baile Mhuire** 

**Ballinasloe Social Services** 

Ballyfermot Star

**Barnardos** 









Bergerie Trust CLG

**Bloomfield Care** <u>Centre</u>

**Bodywhys** 

Breffni Family Resource Centre









**Brothers of Charity** 

Cairdeas

CareBright

Carlow Day Care Centre







Cheshire Foundation in Ireland

Ciúnas



Clann Resource Centre



<u>Clarecare</u>



Comhchoiste Ghaeltacht Uibh Ráthaigh



Cope Foundation



Cork Cancer Care **Centre** 



Cork Mental Health Foundation and Housing Assoc



**CRC** 



Cystinosis Ireland



Debra



**Donegal Carers** <u>Association</u>



**Downstrands Family** Resource Centre



<u>Drogheda Community</u> <u>Services Trust</u>



Dyspraxia DCD <u>Ireland</u>



**Enable Ireland** 



Epilepsy Ireland



Festina Lente CLG



Fethard and District Day Care Centre



**GROW** 



Hand in Hand



**Headway Ireland** 



Hope Cancer Support Centre



<u>Huntington's Disease</u> Assoc Ireland



Inclusion Ireland



Irish Cancer Society

Irish Cancer Society







<u>Irish Heart</u> Foundation

<u>Irish Hospice</u> <u>Foundation</u>

Irish Kidney Association



<u>Irish Lung Fibrosis</u> <u>Association</u>



<u>Irish Motor Neurone</u> <u>Disease Association</u>



<u>Irish Red Cross</u> <u>Society- National Office</u>



<u>Irish Society for</u> <u>Mucopolysaccharide</u> <u>and Related Diseases</u>



<u>Irish Wheelchair</u> <u>Association</u>



Jack and Jill Children's Foundation



Kare Social Services



Kells People's Family Resource Centre



Kerry Respite Centre



Kinship Care Ireland



<u>LauraLynn Irish</u> <u>Children's Hospice</u>



Lus na Gréine FRC



Mental Health Ireland



Migraine Association of Ireland



MS Ireland



Muscular Dystrophy Ireland



<u>Parkinson's</u> <u>Association of Ireland</u>



Polio Survivors Ireland



<u>Prader Willi Syndrome</u> <u>Association Ireland</u>



Purple House Cancer Support



Rare Ireland



Rehab Group



Roscommon Disability Support



Rosses CDP



Senior Line - Third Age Ireland



Shine



Sisters of Mercy



<u>South Tipperary</u> Autism Support Group



Special Needs Parents Network Donegal



**Special Olympics** <u>Ireland</u>



<u>Spina Bifida and</u> <u>Hydrocephalus Ireland</u>



Spinal Injuries **Ireland** 



St Luke's



St Michael's House



St. Aidan's Day Care **Centre** 



St. Andrew's Resource Centre



St. Catherine's Association



St. Hilda's Services



Stewarts Care



<u>Sunbeam House</u> <u>Services</u>



Tabor Lodge



The Cystic Fibrosis Association of Ireland



The Irish ME/CFS <u>Association</u>



<u>Tús Nua Artane Family</u> Resource Centre



**WALK** 



Western Alzheimers



Western Care **Association** 



Westgate Foundation



**Wexford Community** Services Council

# **Directors' Report**

The Directors present their Annual Report together with the Audited Financial Statements of Care Alliance Ireland for the year ended 31st December 2024. The organisation is a registered charity and hence the report and results are presented in a form which complies with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014 and FRS 102. Although we are not obliged to comply with the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP), the charity has for a number of years prepared SORP-compliant audited accounts and notes.

The main activities of the charity are charitable.

#### The content of the Directors' Report is set out under the following headings:

Our Origins Our Stakeholders and Service Users The Context for Family Carers in Ireland Why We Exist (Our Purpose) Year in Review - Goals and Achievements Our Objectives Our Staff and Volunteers Developments and Plans for the Future Financial Review 10 Risk Management Structure, Governance and Management

# **Our Origins**



Care Alliance Ireland was set up in 1995 by a small number of organisations which felt that the voice of the family carer was insufficiently articulated by existing condition-specific organisations. Over the years we have carved out our niche, increased our membership, and pioneered a number of initiatives in the areas of research, policy, carer awareness, online family carer support interventions, and return-to-employment projects. We are delighted to be a go-to organisation for many government departments, researchers and not-for-profit organisations interested in family carer issues.

# **Our Stakeholders and Service Users**



#### Our stakeholders include the following:

- Family Carers
- Staff of Care Alliance Ireland
- Volunteers/Board of Directors
- State Funders
- Philanthropic/Corporate Organisations
- Government Agencies
- Member Organisations
- Collaborators
- Suppliers / Contractors
- Potential Member Organisations
- NGO Alliances
- **International Carer Organisations**
- Third Level Researchers
- **Politicians**
- Carmichael Centre





# **Engagement Methods with Stakeholders**

Phone calls

**Newsletters** 

**Webinars** 

**Podcasts** 

**Journal Articles** 

**Individual Emails** 

**Postal Correspondence** 

**Group Emails through Mailchimp** 

**Press Releases/Media Interviews/Op Eds** 

Attendance and presentations at in person events

Social Media - LinkedIn, Facebook (NationalCarersWeek)



# SUCCESS FOR US IS



O1 Whe

When we and other organisations excel at supporting family carers

02

When statutory health and social care agencies do the same

03

When family carer support interventions are accessible, reach large numbers, and are of high quality and impactful

04

When family carer support practice and interventions are informed by a critical eye and robust research evidence

05

When family carers are adequately supported financially and otherwise as partners in care

# The Context for Family Carers in Ireland

# Who is a Family Carer?

Someone who provides regular, unpaid support for a friend or family member with a long-term illness, health problem or disability

Family caring does not exist in a vacuum from society, politics or economics. Family carers continue to be squeezed; as our society ages and life expectancy continues to increase, these phenomena co-exist with a public narrative that seems to value ever higher levels of formal employment-participation rates. These challenges place further pressures on those who either choose or are forced to provide unpaid family care – out of circumstance, love and/or a sense of duty.

Family carers and organisations that seek to support them need to be strongly represented – by family carer self-advocates, by politicians, by accidental activists, by policy influencers, by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and by organisations such as Care Alliance Ireland.

As we reported in our 2023 report, data from the 2022 Census pointed to a 53% increase in those reporting as providing family care, compared to the previous data from 2016.

In December 2024, the Healthy Ireland Survey further validated this relentless increase in reported family caring. It found that **14%** of the population aged 15 and over report that they are carers. The proportion identifying as carers has increased steadily over recent years **from 9%** in 2019 (the last time an in-depth measurement of this area was conducted in the Healthy Ireland Survey) **to 10%** in 2022, and **12%** in 2023.

Those aged between 45 and 54 (23%) and 55 and 64 (19%) are the age groups most likely to report being a carer. Women (16%) are more likely than men (11%) to say they are a carer. Among women aged between 45 and 54, 29% say they are a carer; this compares to 17% of men in the same age group.

Almost a quarter **(24%)** of carers provide **around-the-clock care** for someone they live with. This is highest among those aged 65 and over, with **41%** of carers in this age group providing 24-hour care.

Half (50%) of all carers provide care to a parent or parent-in-law, 14% to a child, 8% to a spouse/partner and 22% to another relative. The majority (70%) of carers provide care to an individual aged 65+, with 27% providing care to an individual aged between 71 and 80 and 33% providing care to an individual older than 80.

We have large numbers of 'sandwich' carers supporting ageing parents while raising a young family; we also have many juggling paid work with significant family caring responsibilities. Thankfully, employers are increasingly recognising that large numbers of their employees are also family carers. Later in this report we detail some of the work we are doing in this area.



# FAMILY CARING IN IRELAND 2025

#### Who Is a Family Carer?

Someone who provides regular unpaid personal help or support to a family member, neighbour or friend with a long-term illness, health issue, an issue related to old age or disability (Central Statistics Office (CSO), 2022a)



#### **Who Cares?**

14% or 611 of the population aged 15 and over are providing family care (CSO, 2022b & Healthy Ireland, 2024) Calculated using most recent CSO population estimates, March 2025

Social Protection (DSP) Official, 2025)



What About Gender? 61% of family carers are women,

> 29% of women aged 45-54 identify as a carer (Healthy Ireland, 2024)

and 39 % are men.

(CSO, 2022)

€244 per week

is the additional cost of caring for an adolescent with a 'profound intellectual disability' (MacMahon. Boylan & Thornton, 2022)



carers receive the Carer's Allowance

131,089 carers receive the Carer's Support Grant

(Personal communication with Department of

What Is the Financial Contribution of Family Carers?



**How Many Home Support Hours are Provided Each Year?** 

(HSE, 2024; excludes Personal Assistance (PA) & Home Support Hours delivered through Disability Services)



160,000

overnight respite stays are provided for people with a disability (Health Service Executive (HSE), 2024

#### Who Are Carers Caring for?

care for a person with a physical illness or disability, including problems related to ageing (Healthy Ireland, 2024)



70%

care for a person aged 65+ (Healthy Ireland, 2024)

care for a child (Healthy Ireland, 2024)



of family carers report an ethnicity other than White Irish (CSO Request, 2024)



of family carers are LGBTO+

(FCI, 2024)



children aged 10-17 provide regular unpaid care

(FCI, 2023)

#### What Are Some Impacts of Caring?



of family carers report severe loneliness (FCI, 2024)

69% find it hard to make ends meet (FCI, 2024)

**41%** of family carers also have a long-term health condition (Healthy Ireland, 2024)

carers 38% Family carers higher probability of experiencing depression than the average population (Gallagher & Wetherell, 2020)

#### **Sources of Information**

CSO (2022a) Census 2022, Household Form. Question 23 CSO (2022b) Census 2022, Summary Results

CSO Request (2024) Private request through CSO using 2022 Census Data

Family Carers Ireland (FCI) (2021) 2022 Pre-Budget Submission Family Carers Ireland (FCI) (2023) Sharing The Caring: Young Carers' Experiences and Access to Supports in Ireland

Family Carers Ireland (FCI) (2024) The State of Caring 2024 Gallagher, S., & Wetherell, M. (2020) Risk of depression in family caregivers: Unintended consequences of COVID-19. BJPsych Open 6(6) E119

Healthy Ireland (2024) Healthy Ireland Survey 2024. Summary Report

Health Service Executive (HSE) (2024) HSF National Service Plan 2025

MacMahon, B., Boylan, H. & Thornton, R. (2022) Care at Home: Costs of Care Arising from Disability. The additional costs of a Minimum Essential Standard of Living for a household caring for an adolescent with a profound intellectual disability

Personal Communication (2025) (Department of Social Protection Official - February 26 2025)

#### Care Alliance Ireland

info@carealliance.ie

www.carealliance.ie

Care Alliance Ireland (LinkedIn)

Date of Publication: June 2025 Based on current population figures, this data suggests that there are well over half a million family carers in the Republic of Ireland. One estimate puts the value of family caring conservatively at over €20bn per year.

We have a National Carers' Strategy from 2012 that requires urgent review and updating. Unfortunately the new Programme for Government did not commit to such a review.

#### 2025 Programme for Government – Our Take On It

We are pleased to see the Programme include commitments to the abolition of the Means Test for Carer's Allowance, to the raising of core social welfare payments like Carer's Allowance and Benefit, and to various actions that if delivered would improve the lives of Ireland's disabled community and their families.

However, we are disappointed and concerned that the Programme is silent on actions for young carers, does not include a commitment to an updated or new National Carers' Strategy, and relies too heavily on vague terminology and commitments to merely 'review', 'examine' and 'endeavour to' make policy changes.

Our full review can be read at

www.carealliance.ie/userfiles/files/CAI PFGReview Feb2025.pdf

#### **Positives**

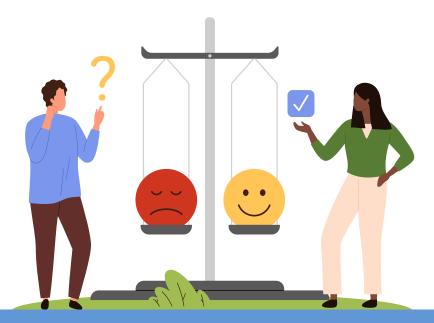
- Commitment to increase the income disregards for the Means Test for Carer's Allowance, with a view to the abolition of the Means Test for Carer's Allowance over the lifetime of the Government
- Commitment to increase weekly (Carer's Allowance/Carer's Benefit) and monthly (Domiciliary Care Allowance) carer payments
- Commitment to increase the Carer Support Grant
- Commitment to ensure parents who are aged 66+ and caring for children with lifelong disabilities retain the rate at which they are paid their Carer's Allowance and concurrently receive the State Pension
- Commitment to implement the revised Housing Adaptation Grant limits and eligibility criteria
- Commitments that, if implemented, would significantly increase appropriate housing for older and disabled people living in the community
- Commitments that, if implemented, would contribute to improved outcomes for children with disabilities in education settings
- Develop a new national policy on palliative care for children and increase funding to children's hospice care
- Work with the Law Society to create a solicitors' portal to simplify Enduring Power of Attorney applications

- Design a Statutory Home Care Scheme (we note that this does not commit to the implementation of the scheme, just the design of it)
- · Commitment to fully fund the Carers Guarantee.

#### **Concerns**

- The language used throughout the document is not concrete or robust. There are many
  commitments to 'review' schemes, to 'examine' issues (which we and other organisations
  have repeatedly highlighted as concerns), to 'endeavour' to deliver action items, to 'seek
  to' make a policy change, etc. We have concerns that this language does not commit to
  meaningful change, merely to considering it
- There is a general lack of ambition to seek new and innovative solutions to challenges faced by family carers, and the health and social care sector in general. Much of the language used in the Programme for Government highlights that this Government is a continuation of the policies and programmes of the past five years. For example, we see no firm commitment to expand the use of digital technologies in social care, with the bulk of actions in that space focused on physical health and telehealth solutions
- There is no commitment, nor mention, of a new and updated National Carers' Strategy (NCS). We believe an updated NCS is vital to progress and improve policy and interventions for family carers across all sectors of government. Without one, we are concerned that family care policy will continue to be focused on social protection and health, without due regard to the challenges faced every day in education, employment, mental health, etc. by family carers
- There is no mention of any actions regarding young carers, which is very concerning. We know from published research that there are 67,000 young carers in the Republic of Ireland.

There are also at least two current policy developments that we in Care Alliance Ireland are seeking to influence – namely the ongoing work of the Commission on Care for Older People, and the imminent introduction of home care regulations and standards. We are doing this through active participation in the ongoing and established consultative fora set up.



# Our New Strategic Plan 2025-2030

This Strategic Plan builds on our Strategic Plan 2019–2024 and is the result of both midterm and end-term internal reviews. We commissioned an external consultant to perform an independent consultation of our operations in late 2024. We learned that our team and our work are valued, our adherence to high governance standards is admired, and our lean operations are delivering considerable return on investment in terms of impact. Although our representative activities with stakeholders, submissions and research are well regarded, our engagement with member organisations is moderate. Furthermore, our clarity of purpose needs improvement and while our recent pivot into direct family carer support interventions is welcomed, it was noted that this should be reflected in our new Strategic Plan. The findings also indicate that we unnecessarily fly under the radar and we do not get sufficient credit for our work over recent years. We acknowledged the feedback and developed a Strategic Plan for 2025–2030, which our Board approved in March 2025.

#### **Our Why**

Family carers are people who provide **unpaid help with daily activities or other supports** to a family member, neighbour or friend with a disability, long-term illness or issue related to old age. Family carers provide the majority of care within our society.

Family caring can have considerable **benefits** for individuals, communities and societies as a whole. The intensity and duration of caregiving can create **challenges**, however. Further progress is required to achieve full appreciation of these benefits and challenges.

Family carers may experience **social, health and financial exclusion** associated with their caring responsibilities. Not every family carer experiences exclusion in the same way, with minority carers often feeling these impacts more strongly.

We believe unequivocally that all family carers **deserve to be recognised and supported** in their role.

#### **Our Values**

Our work is infused with three core values. We are **professional**, **collaborative and evidence-informed** in everything we do. In practice this means that we will maintain high standards of work; be transparent, open and honest in all our interactions; and value the contributions of all our stakeholders. We will seek to collaborate at all times as we believe this increases our collective impact. The existing and emerging evidence about what actions and interventions are effective in improving the situation of family carers will inform our work.

#### **Our Mission**

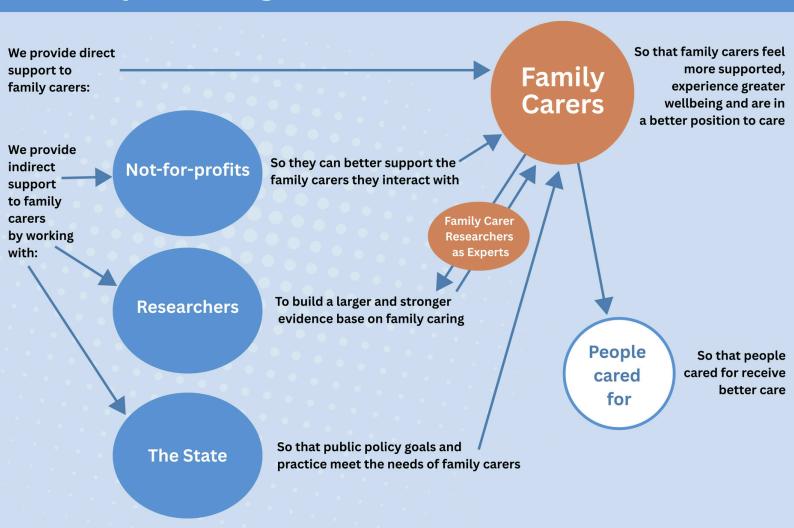
Care Alliance Ireland works to enhance the wellbeing of family carers so that they are better able to care for their loved ones. We provide direct support to family carers as well as indirectly supporting them by working with researchers, statutory actors and other not-for-profits.

#### Our Vision

An Ireland in which the role of family carers is fully recognised and where family carers are adequately supported.

#### **How We Make A Difference**

#### Theory of Change - Care Alliance Ireland - 2025



#### **Strategic Priorities**

We have formulated five Strategic Priorities, reflecting our work with our four primary stakeholder groups (family carers, not-for-profits, researchers and the State). The fifth is an enabling aim, ensuring we as an organisation are in a strong position to undertake our vital work. Each Strategic Priority has equal weighting.

During the period 2025–2030, Care Alliance Ireland will:

- 1. Offer responsive and inclusive support interventions to family carers
- 2. Make meaningful contributions to the family caring research agenda
- 3. Influence public policy to improve the lives of family carers
- 4. Work with other not-for-profits to effectively support family carers
- **5.** Be a well-known, financially viable, well-governed and high-performing organisation

01

#### Offer responsive and inclusive support interventions to family carers

#### **Objectives:**

- 1.1 Provide a professionally moderated and safe online support group for family carers
- 1.2 Deliver intensive employability supports to cohorts of current and former family carers
- 1.3 Signpost family carers to relevant resources and opportunities
- **1.4** Coordinate an annual National Carers Week that recognises the valuable role of family carers

**Desired outcome:** Family carers feel more supported, experience greater wellbeing and are in a better position to care.

#### Measured by:

- Positive feedback from family carers about our services
- Levels of participation in our online projects
- Engagement by current and former family carers in education/training/volunteering/employment opportunities
- Engagement by not-for-profits in National Carers Week annually

02

#### Make meaningful contributions to the family caring research agenda

#### **Objectives:**

- 2.1 Promote the need for ongoing resourcing of family carer research
- **2.2** Support early-stage researchers with their research
- 2.3 Be central to the delivery and/or dissemination of high-quality collaborative and accessible primary research that informs policy and service development for family carers
- **2.4** Produce thought-provoking and analytically rigorous research briefings and discussion documents
- **2.5** Create opportunities for successful collaboration in family carer research across the academic, statutory and not-for-profit sectors, both nationally and internationally

**Desired outcome:** Generation of a larger and stronger evidence base for family caring.

#### Measured by:

- Involvement in advocacy activities related to resourcing family carer research, and engagement with key philanthropic and statutory sources
- Meaningful engagement with early-career researchers
- Dissemination of research primarily through Open Access routes, and primarily guided by a Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) framework at every stage of the process – from design to knowledge dissemination – supported by a research advisory group
- Involvement in new research collaborations
- Engagement of a greater number and range of individuals with our Family Carer Research Group and our research dissemination events

03

#### Influence public policy to improve the lives of family carers

#### **Objectives:**

- **3.1** Use policy submissions, national representative opportunities and any other relevant means to influence and inform policymakers and implementers of policy about family caring
- **3.2** Provide robust up-to-date information about the family carer experience and agitate for evidence-informed solutions to address any associated exclusion

**Desired outcome:** Public policy goals and practice meet the needs of family carers

#### Measured by:

- Referencing of our research work and policy advice within national policy documents
- Publication and implementation, in a collaborative manner, of a new National Carers' Strategy that is funded and that includes ambitious but achievable goals for improving the lives of family carers
- · Inclusion of family carer issues in other emerging national policy documents
- Expansion of existing and new family carer support initiatives with dedicated budgets
- Delivery of more impactful and collaborative carer support services by a range of providers

04

#### Work with other not-for-profits to effectively support family carers

#### **Objectives:**

- **4.1** Increase the number of not-for-profit organisations that join our alliance
- **4.2** Provide opportunities for member organisations to collaborate with each other and with other stakeholders
- **4.3** Encourage the active participation of member organisations in all aspects of our work
- **4.4** Share relevant information with member organisations on an ongoing basis, including information about funding opportunities in line with our stakeholder engagement strategy

- **4.5** Provide guidance to not-for-profits on effectively supporting family carers, with a particular focus on online supports
- **4.6** Develop international links and participate in international networks to facilitate knowledge exchange

**Desired outcome:** Increased support to the family carers with whom our members interact **Measured by:** 

- Applications for and approvals of membership
- Engagement from member organisations, including greater numbers of member organisations contributing to our discussion documents and policy submissions and getting actively involved in National Carers Week
- Bidding by organisations and subsequent securing of funds to implement new interventions to support family carers
- Use by organisations of online carer support interventions

05

# Be a well-known, financially viable, well-governed and high-performing organisation

#### **Objectives:**

- **5.1** Continue to build sustainable funding sources and our unrestricted reserves to successfully implement our Strategic Plan
- **5.2** Implement exemplary governance structures and processes that provide a solid basis for the way we manage and deliver our work
- **5.3** Support the ongoing development of our staff and volunteers
- **5.4** Raise the profile of Care Alliance Ireland generally to all relevant stakeholder groups in line with our stakeholder engagement strategy

**Desired outcome:** A strong organisation making measurable progress in achieving its vision.

#### Measured by:

- Funding on a multi-annual basis, together with greater diversification of funding sources
- Engagement and performance of staff and volunteers
- Engagement by media and through social media
- Regarded as a leader in governance, management and operational delivery
- · Seen as the go-to organisation in family carer research, policy and online support

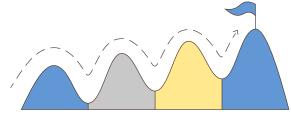
#### Translating the plan into action

Each year, we will establish an operational plan that will inform the work of our volunteers and employees. These annual plans will contain targets for each objective, and we will track our performance relative to our Strategic Priorities every year with a summary in our annual Directors' Report.

#### Reviewing the plan

We will undertake a mid-term review of the Strategic Plan 2025–2030 towards the end of 2027 and course-correct as necessary. We will then undertake an end-term review towards the end of 2030 in preparation for a new plan.

# Year in Review – Goals and Achievements



In 2024, we continued to deliver evidence-informed interventions directly to over 9,300 family carers, an increase of 27% compared to 2023. This was done primarily online, through our Online Family Carer Support Project and through our bespoke 'employment-ready' intervention, Re-emerge. We also delivered on our policy and research objectives through regular submissions, journal articles and specific collaborations.

#### **Our Impact**

Our organisation has been proud to contribute to the following impacts for family carers in recent years:

- In 2024, we secured the largest ever increases in eligibility for income supports (through higher income disregards, from June 2025) and higher levels of income support (Carer's Allowance, Carer Support Grant) and a commitment to the abolition of the means test for Carer's Allowance within the lifetime of this new government.
- In 2024, we reached approximately 1900 (25%) more family carers compared to 2023, with a total of over 9,100 participating in our Online Family Carer Support Project – thus contributing to a reduction in their level of social isolation.
- Our employment-focused project in 2024 continued to demonstrate an impressive positive impact across several domains including participants' employment opportunities, employment skills/employability, and overall wellbeing.
- Since 2021, 55 participants from our employment-ready projects have returned to paid employment.
   Approximately 100 participants have pursued further education.
- Our primary research (2016, 2018) and ongoing representations (through the Home Care Coalition) on home care have helped to achieve an increase in the provision of publicly funded home care (a near 60% increase in hours delivered since 2012). Homecare is a vital lifeline for family carers and those for whom they care.
- We secured significantly more references to Health and Social Care in the new national eHealth Strategy. This is expected to result in a less narrow, medically-focused and more holistic/social care/community-focused policy/plan. We have also secured representation on the Reference Advisory Group.
- Our work in facilitating our Family Carer Research Group has nurtured and progressed a more cohesive and impactful family carer research community across the country. New membership has brought a greater sense of solidarity and peer support. Membership of this research group now stands at 63.
- Our coordination of Carers Week annually raises societal awareness of the contribution made by Ireland's 500,000+ family carers; through this, many family carers feel more included in their communities.

### **Devising Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

How we agree on KPIs in any given year is a combination of art and science. Funding schemes often begin or end mid- year, thus complicating the preparation of annual organisational KPIs. When we pitch for new projects or draft content in an annual or multi-year Service Level Agreement, we have to strike a balance – to be ambitious but realistic, innovative but reliable – and ultimately to be able to report on our outputs and also on our impact and outcomes (which is much more difficult given the longer-term horizon required for such measurement).

At an operational level, we have project KPIs, individual staff KPIs and organisational KPIs. We see KPIs less as a north star metric and more as one of many ways that we keep focused on delivering on our mission. An overly KPI-focused approach risks missing other important, less quantifiable, impacts. We value how things are done, how we work with people, how we treat those we serve. These aspects of performance do not easily lend themselves to KPIs. KPIs are a useful measurement tool; however, the outcomes for family carers are ultimately what remains a key focus of our organisation.

Our primary mission is to improve family carers' lives and the supports available to them. We are gladdened to see some funders developing a higher value on outcome metrics which measure the tangible results of our activities as opposed to output measurements.

Our 2024 KPIs, however, remain output focused – for example, delivering a number of high-quality publications, submissions and newsletters, together with ongoing and new projects (see Table 1).

In 2022 we committed to devising multi-year performance targets. Work on this is continuing and is informed by many factors most significantly our new Strategic Plan, meaningful consultation with staff, volunteers and board members, a historical review of targets met/missed and the likely future macro funding environment. We aim to complete this work in 2025.

In keeping with the direction of our new Strategic Plan, we want to see - and to play an active part in delivering - incremental improvements in the supports available to family carers. This includes increasing the accessibility of supports, the number and range of supports, and the financial supports provided by the State. We will continue to work towards building consensus among our members and other organisations about what success would look like over a five- to ten-year timeframe.

Below we report on outputs related to the funding we receive under the Scheme to Support National Organisations (SSNO). We also report below on KPIs associated with HSE funding and Dormant Accounts (Department of Social Protection (DSP)) funding.

#### **2024 KPIs**

In summary, in 2024 we delivered fully on 16 of our 21 targets, or 76% (76% in 2023, 74% in 2022).

Our Online Family Carer Support Project again massively exceeded its planned reach, as people continue to join in large numbers and barriers to entry to the project are low, with no waiting lists. Enhanced public (HSE) funding in 2025 for this project will begin to catch up with this significantly increased reach.

We set challenging new membership targets for 2024 and exceeded them and will refocus our efforts in 2025 to seek out greater opportunities for ongoing engagement with all our members.

We continue to work collaboratively with others across the research space. As always we work to ensure successful outcomes to funding bids; in 2024 a significant international/collaborative bid in relation to young carers was made to the prestigious Wellcome Trust. The bid got to the second round but was ultimately unsuccessful. We have recently submitted a revised bid and are hopeful of a successful outcome. Given the significant intensity of policy matters that came up throughout 2024 (the Gender and Care Referenda along with EU, local and national elections), our resources were concentrated primarily on collaborative policy work, rather than primary research proposals.

# COLLABORATION

Collaboration is at the heart of the work of Care Alliance Ireland

#### **RESEARCH COLLABORATION**

- PPI Ignite @UL
- Academic papers
- Family Carer Research Group
- Research consultations with member organsiations



#### **POLICY COLLABORATION**

- Social Policy Network
- HSE National Patient Forum
- Home Care Coalition
- Joint submissions
- Collaboration on Budget asks and general policy positions
- YesYes Referenda Collaboration

In respect of the Re-emerge project, our back-to-work goals were met shortly after the iteration of the project ended. Re-Emerge 2 has ambitious targets for 2025-2026.



# RE-EMERGE2

THE NEXT CHAPTER IS FOR YOU

### Are you a family carer hoping to return to paid employment/education?

Re-emerge 2, a project delivered by Care Alliance Ireland, offers free practical, emotional and physical supports to family carers considering a return to paid employment/education.



**CVs & INTERVIEWS** 



1:2:1 MENTORING



**IT TRAINING** 



**SUPPORT WITH FINDING EMPLOYMENT/EDUCATION** 



**CONFIDENCE BUILDING** 



The project is offered completely online and is open to all family carers in the Republic of Ireland. Maximum time commitment is 4 hours per week. Joining this project will not affect your carers payment if you are in receipt of one. The programme runs from April 2025-April 2026.

For more information please email reemerge@carealliance.ie, call Amy on 085 2683589 or visit www.carealliance.ie/Reemerge









This project was approved by Government with support from the Dormant Accounts Fund



Area of Work	Key Action	Outputs	Target	Delivered	Explanation
Advocacy	Coordinate National Carers Week in June 2024	Number of events delivered in collaboration with partners	70	c.70	Excludes those delivered by non-partner organisations, c.160 events delivered in total. 72% face to face, 28% virtual
		Partners for the Week	11	11	One new partner
		Number of family carers receiving merchandise	500	c. 1,050	Key partners together with additional CAI- led care pack distribution supported enhanced delivery
	Represent the sector at relevant fora	Fora	5	6	New opportunities emerged
Compliance	Continue to demonstrate good example in the area of governance	Continue to be fully compliant with Charities Regulator Governance	1	1	

Area of Work	Key Action	Outputs	Target	Delivered	Explanation
		Be on Good Governance Award Shortlist	1	1	Won award in our category
Research and Policy Development	Produce relevant, evidence- informed and analytically rigorous discussion and briefing papers	Publications	3	2	Made an operational decision to shift some focus to podcasts to maximise our reach
	Make considered and comprehensive submissions to various government departments and statutory agencies involving member inputs		10	7	Collaborative research bid to Wellcome Trust shortlisted
	Collaborative research projects		1	1	Focus on caring referenda

Area of Work	Key Action	Outputs	Target	Delivered	Explanation
Networking	Coordinate Family Carer Research Group	Meetings	3	2	Focus on organising research seminar
		Participants	35	23	
		New participants	10	11	
	Membership	New members	4	11	Reflecting successful membership development initiative
		Active two-way engagement with membership	50%	40%	More collaboration with members on external interest groups
Specialist Supports	Provision of expert advice to member organisations andothers, including state bodies	Consultation	8	>12	
Information Provision	Produce and disseminate appealing newsletters ( Care Alliance Exchange)	Editions	3	3	c.17% increase in readership per Mailchimp data

Area of Work	Key Action	Outputs	Target	Delivered	Explanation
Direct Family Carer Supports	Online Family Carer Support Group	Number of family carers actively involved in the project (over 90- day period)	7,000	>9,100	Open-door enrolment policy and word of mouth facilitates increased membership
		Detailed engagement levels (over 90- day period – Q4 2024)	Per 2021 baseline data	602 posts 8,779 comments 17,735 reactions	Sustained level of engagement – 97% retention year on year
		New projects/ initiatives	1	1	
	Re-Emerge	No. of participants actively engaged	80	83	
		No. of participants progressing to employment	12	12	Large numbers entering further education

In 2025, we will continue to support even larger numbers of family carers through our online mediums. Thanks to a successful application to the 2024 Dormant Accounts Funds, we will deliver another project to support family carers who are considering returning to the paid workforce.

In 2025 we again look forward to responding to opportunities afforded to us to influence the development of carer-relevant policies and to progress our agenda through submissions, discussion papers and new collaborations.

#### **Project Focus - Re-emerge**

The Re-emerge project was delivered over an 18-month period and concluded in June 2024. The project supported 83 family carers seeking support with a return to employment and education.

Re-emerge was the fourth project of its kind delivered by Care Alliance Ireland. Over the years we have been fortunate to develop a network of collaborators and contractors who have been key contributors to the success of the project. Fellow Irish non-profit organisations offered workshops to Re-emerge participants within their areas of expertise. We had holistic therapies and Yoga delivered by the Ciúnas Centre, exercise programmes by Siel Bleu, bereavement and loss talks by the Irish Hospice Foundation, nutrition and cooking courses by Empower.ie (HSE) and a 'Supporting the Supporter' programme delivered by Mental Health Ireland. Private contractors delivered on a range of topics from menopause to home organisation.

Collaboration is at the core of Care Alliance Ireland's ethos and the Re-emerge project is further evidence that collaboration is both meaningful and impactful.

"I realised how important it is for me to look after myself in every which way & I'm important (even if it is only for myself & kids)."

- "I have changed my life style. It worked! It was hard at the beginning but the consistency of the habit made me keep doing exercise regularly."
- "I loved these workshops because they covered all areas of an holistic approach to wellbeing."

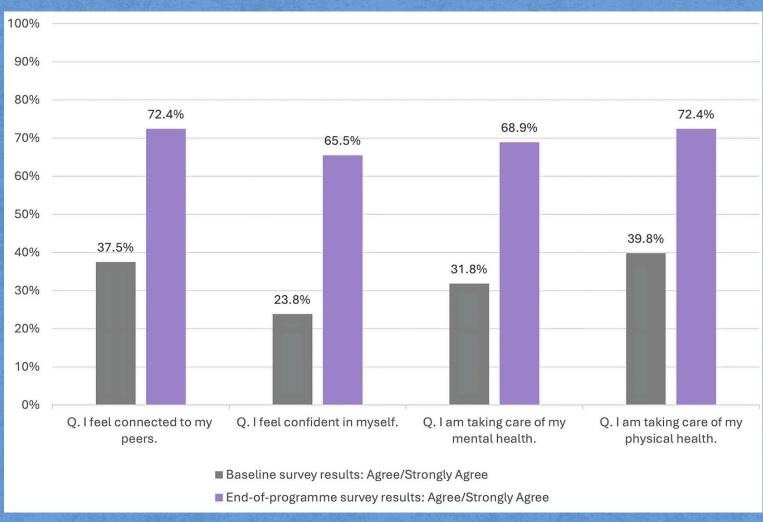
In addition to the range of employment-focused workshops and support with CV and interview preparation, and job and course sourcing, the participants availed of a range of individual supports. We were able to provide essential IT equipment to a small group of participants to allow them to participate in the project and to access remote education opportunities. Re-emerge staff and external contractors offered one-to-one employment coaching and mentoring and participants who expressed a need for mental health supports were linked with appropriate mental health providers.

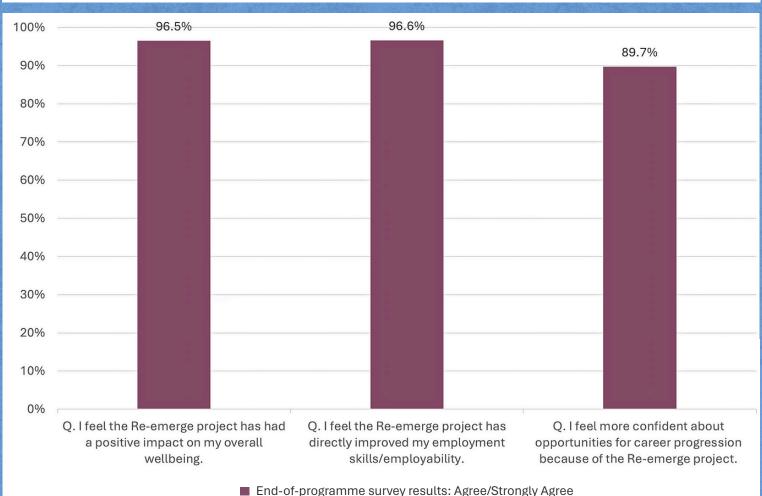
Pobal has consistently shown support and open-mindedness with regard to the range of resources required to support family carers in this transition back to employment. With Pobal's support we were able to financially support participants with access to weight-management programmes, holistic therapy and niche training opportunities.

Upon completion of the project, we are delighted to reflect on its success and in particular, the individual impact the project has had on the family carers who took part.

Evaluation is an important factor in determining whether the project goals are being met. We conduct a baseline, interim and end-of-project survey, and contract an external evaluation consultant to undertake an interim and end-of-project focus group. We also had a fantastic group of family carers and former project participants who led an unbiased steering group.

#### **Key Re-emerge Participant Evaluation Data**





#### Some feedback from Re-emerge participants include:



Overall, during this project, 16 Re-emerge participants re-entered education and 12 participants returned to paid employment.

We have witnessed countless personal victories ranging from taking the step to update their CV to opening their own business.

Re-emerge is about meeting family carers where they currently are and tailoring the support accordingly.

We are excited and fortunate to continue this work in 2025 with the support of the Dormant Accounts Fund, Pobal and the Department of Social Protection.







# 6 Our Objectives



In 2024, we continued to work with our growing membership base in a range of ways. This included specific collaborations on issues of joint concern, policy submissions, political representations, National Carers Week, signposting members' services, and general relationship development.

Our membership of 100 represents a wide range of not-for-profit service-provider and advocacy organisations. It includes most of the large 'disability' providers, many local family resource centres and most condition-specific organisations. It also includes some local daycentre services, mental health organisations, addiction organisations and homecare providers.

In 2024, we embarked on a significant membership development initiative which resulted in 11 organisations joining our alliance.





















We now report in greater detail on how we achieved our objectives, with reference to the five priorities outlined in our Strategic Plan 2019–2024.

## **Priority 1:**

#### **Work with Member Organisations and Other Stakeholders**

#### **Member Organisations**

In 2024, we continued our work to engage with our member organisations, and thanks to our successful membership development initiative we met our goal in late 2024 of having 100 members. The challenge in 2025 will be to drive new and meaningful engagement with those organisations who have invested trust in us through their membership. As mentioned in previous reports, this work is done across the small staff team in the absence of having a specific membership development officer.

#### **Other Stakeholders**

In 2024, we continued to collaborate with a range of organisations that operate in the not-for-profit and/or statutory world of health and social care, and family carer support more specifically. This included PPI Ignite @ UL, officials in the HSE, Domiciliary Care Allowance carers section officials in the Department of Social Protection, the Home Care Coalition, the Commission on Care for Older People, the Yes Yes Referenda campaign, the Anti-Poverty Policy Network (informal), the HSE Patient Forum and the Social Policy Network.



Members of the Home Care Coalition – Campaigning for improvements in the Delivery of Home Care

We continue to work with member organisations and other groups across the sector to ensure that our policy work is in keeping with that of the sector more broadly, and to maximise our effectiveness and the effectiveness of our member organisations.

Through our work with University of Limerick (UL) on Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Ignite Phase II, in 2024 we collaborated with organisations and academic institutions across the country. The post-graduate module on PPI in research which we co-created with organisations and third-level institutions across the country in 2024 was rolled out and taught in a number of universities including Maynooth University and RSCI Dublin.

In 2024, we continued to collaborate with our European partners in advancing the situation of family carers. The European Care Strategy, published by the European Commission in July 2022, continues to gain traction, noting the new membership of the European Parliament and the new Commissioners. The visibility of care across the life-course is growing across the EU. Ireland has, for some time, been slightly ahead of many EU countries with regard to Carer's Leave, levels of income support payments and the existence of a National Carers' Strategy. We are part of the EU Parliamentary Group on Family Carers and continue to work towards further implementation of this Strategy in the Irish context.

We were pleased to work with our colleagues in Eurocarers throughout the year and to contribute to their most recent position paper - Supporting LGBTI Carers in Europe: Challenges, Key Lessons and Policy Insights. Our CEO attended the Eurocarers research subgroup meeting in November 2024, where a wide range of topics were discussed. Our CEO also prepared a poster presentation about the work of the Online Family Carer Support Project.

The fifth European Carers Day took place on 6th October 2024. The initiative is coordinated by Eurocarers, and brought together the leading carer advocacy organisations across Europe. The year's theme was Informal carers are partners in care. Care Alliance Ireland engaged in a modest social media campaign.

Throughout 2024 we engaged in ongoing collaborative work with a range of not-forprofit federations and alliances, including the Home Care Coalition and a loose coalition of organisations working in the area of gender equality and care.





One of the key care policy events which took place in 2024 was the joint referenda on Gender and Care. Care Alliance was a member of the Yes Yes Coalition, and supported a Yes vote for both referenda (although we were not formally campaigning). This followed a significant period of work on the topic, dating back to our invited presentation at the Citizens' Assembly on Gender Equality, our work with the Joint Oireachtas Committee that was formed following the Assembly, and our many submissions on the topic since 2020.

Ultimately, the referenda were unsuccessful, and we – along with our colleagues across the sector – spent time over 2024 reflecting on this outcome. We in Care Alliance stand behind our decision to support a Yes outcome in both referenda. However, we have worked with organisations, particularly in the disability sector, to better understand the differences in opinion and beliefs regarding the concept of care and why they had concerns about the proposed referenda. We will continue to work to understand the differences that may divide some aspects of our work with these organisations.

Our organisation is also represented on the Social Policy Network – a group of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that meets quarterly.

Throughout the first half of 2024, we worked closely with officials from both the Department of Health and the HSE in the creation of a new Digital Health Framework and Implementation Plan. This was published in 2024 and we seek to continue to influence the process through our participation in the Reference Advisory Group.

## **Priority 2:**

#### **Bring Cohesion to the Family Carer Sector**

No significant new national policies relating to family care were published in 2024, although we are looking forward to a new National Disability Strategy, the consultation process for which began at the end of 2023.



Zoe Hughes at Joint Oireachtas Committee on Disability Matters, 29th May 2024.

We continued to deliver on our representative function in a number of ways in 2024, most significantly through our annual pre-budget submissions to government, participation in a number of representative fora (for example, the National Patient Forum, the Social Policy Network and the DFI Policy Officers' Forum), and policy-related submissions (on topics such as the Draft Policy for Patient Voice Partners in the Irish Health and Social Care Sector (DoH), the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Disability Matters re disability-inclusive social protection, and the ESPEN Act review).

Active engagement by our members on our submissions and policy documents continues to improve. Some of this work includes surveys of members in preparation for broad policy issues (e.g. Budget preparations). Some is the result of informal discussions at interest group meetings, individual email and phone contact with relevant member organisation policy officers. However, it remains a challenge to engage smaller groups and those who see family care issues as somewhat peripheral to their core work.

Funders, with the notable exception of the SSNO scheme, are extremely reluctant to resource policy and research personnel, preferring to fund direct services to clients. This can mean that the dedicated resources our member organisations have to meaningfully engage with us on these issues can be very limited. Very few of our member organisations have dedicated policy or research staff. Our role is to make it easy for them to engage and share their knowledge and for us to collectively make considered and impactful submissions.

#### **Project Focus - Carers Week 2024**



The Partner Organisations for National Carers Week 2024

The 18th National Carers Week (NCW) took place in Ireland from Monday 10th June through to Sunday 16th June. This year brought together 11 partner organisations to provide a week of recognition, appreciation and visibility to family carers across the country. We were delighted to welcome our newest partner, Muscular Dystrophy Ireland, on board with us this year.

In the region of 160 events took place, an increase of 28 (21%) compared to last year. Approximately 45 of these were online and 115 were face to face. A significant number of collaborative events were organised with almost two-thirds of event organisers reporting being involved in collaborative events.

Similar to previous years, merchandise was purchased and distributed through seven partner organisations, nine non-partner event organisers and through Care Alliance Ireland (via postal distribution, primarily for online competitions), to well over 1,000 family carers across the country. There were also a number of giveaways organised through our Online Family Carer Support Group. Approximately €9,500 worth of merchandise was distributed to family carers across the country. The care packs were made up of items similar to previous years as well as a few new additions. The packs generally included lip balm, a toiletry bag, trolley coins, soap leaves, candles, Wicklow-made soap, notebooks, chocolates and popcorn. Family carers who received merchandise, event organisers and partners reported high levels of satisfaction with the merchandise.

















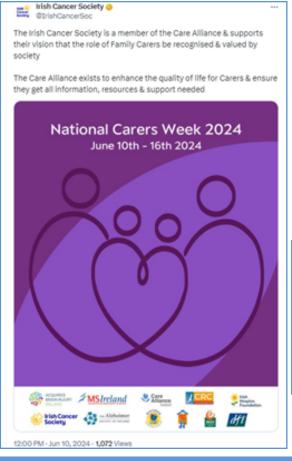


Along with our partners, Care Alliance Ireland ran a number of events during National Carers Week including a poetry reading; we also launched our new Caring Researchers podcast and we delivered a live information session about our Online Family Carer Support Group, which was streamed on the NCW Facebook page. An online art workshop was delivered through the Online Family Carer Support Group. Care Alliance Ireland also facilitated two corporate events, with Aviva and Pfizer, during the week, and one with a government department (Department of Foreign Affairs) the week after.

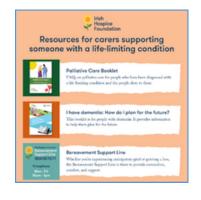




Most partners used the week to put out carer-related promotional videos or posts about their existing resources and activities available to support family carers.













Some groups organised promotional videos acknowledging the role of family carers.



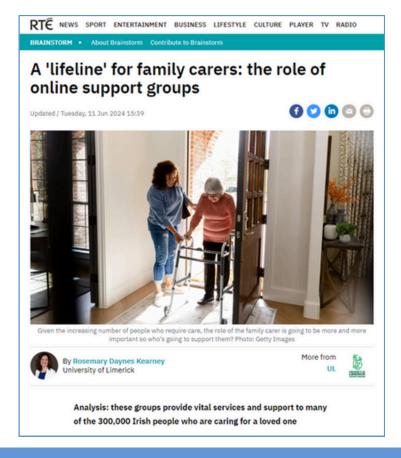








On the Tuesday of the Week, research detailing the impact of online carer support groups was profiled on RTÉ's brainstorm.







Just under half of event organisers reported new engagement with family carers as part of the week, while one-third of family carers reported new engagement with support organisations.

There were high levels of social media engagement. The 28-day reach was 84k, with 5.7k interactions. Solid levels of radio, print and online media coverage, both nationally and locally, were observed again this year.

Partners gave very positive feedback in relation to how they were supported by the Care Alliance Ireland/National Carers Week team, with 'Professionalism', 'Communication', 'Press Releases and Connection with Media Requests' receiving 'Excellent' as the most common response in each category.

In 2025, we will continue to lead on National Carers Week and look forward to welcoming new partners.

## **Priority 3:**

#### **Provide Up-to-date, Relevant Information**

We are increasingly being invited to present at various events and to provide what is described as 'expert input' into policy discussions. We recognise that the experts are people who are providing care; however, through our consultation and engagement with carers and our member organisations we believe that we are able to advocate meaningfully for carers.

Most of these inputs in 2024 were led and delivered by our Senior Policy & Research Officer. Examples include:

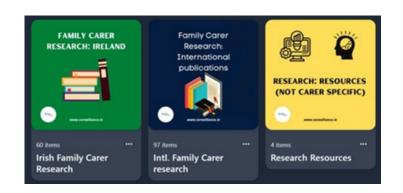
- the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Disability Matters
- multiple discussions with member organisations
- meeting with an Taoiseach and relevant Ministers in advance of both Budget 2025 and release of campaign manifestoes for General Election 2024
- NGO policy officer collaboration in advance of Budget 2025.

Throughout 2024 we continued to update our research repository through the Wakelet platform, which now has over 400 items <a href="https://wakelet.com/@careallianceireland">https://wakelet.com/@careallianceireland</a>

Our volume of internal publications was lower than our target, as we made a decision to reallocate some resources from print to digital media to launch our Caring Researchers podcast; however, their collective overall impact remains high. Our podcast highlights the work of researchers in the sector, along with the work of Care Alliance Ireland and can be found on most podcast provider platforms, and via the Spreaker platform: <a href="https://www.spreaker.com/podcast/caring-researchers--6179334">https://www.spreaker.com/podcast/caring-researchers--6179334</a>

Our Senior Policy & Research Officer, along with colleagues in the University of Limerick, coauthored a peer-reviewed journal article published in 2024: 'Understanding the evolution of trust in a participatory health research partnership: A qualitative study' (Gilfoyle, M., MacFarlane, A., Hughes, Z., Salsberg, J.) <a href="https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38031384/">https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/38031384/</a>. In addition, our Senior Policy & Research Officer was included among the authors of the NESC@50 book celebration: 'Ireland at a Pivotal Moment', reflecting on where family carer policy could develop the next 50 years. The book is available https://www.nesc.ie/news-events/news/launch-of-nesc50-commemorative-book/.

#### https://wakelet.com/@careallianceireland





Examples of sections on our Wakelet platform



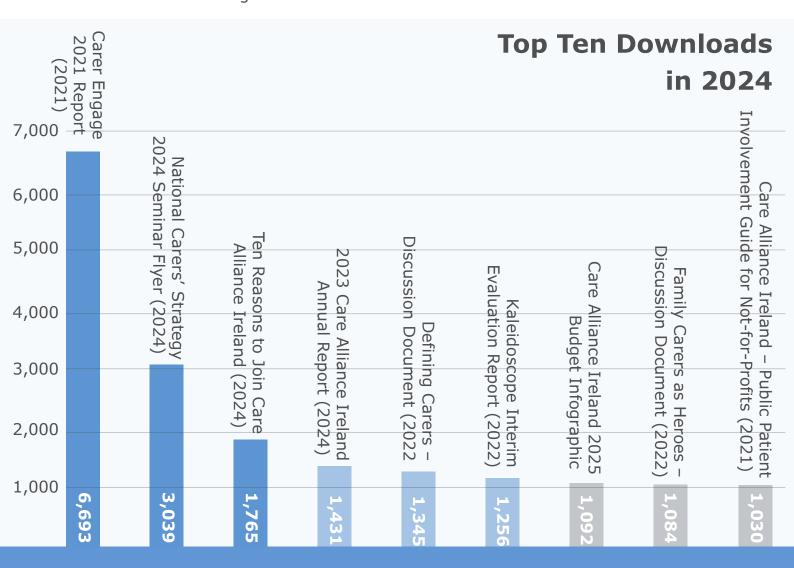


At our AGM in September, Tara O'Connor, Project Manager, presented on the work of the Online Family Carer Support Group under the title '4 Years On'. The slides from that presentation are here <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ecCO8AQp">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ecCO8AQp</a> Ck

Informed by the emerging feedback from our formal stakeholder consultation, we set up a LinkedIn organisational profile (Care Alliance Ireland) in late 2024 and began strategic posting. Supported by the LinkedIn profiles of staff and other individuals, our reach and engagement through this platform began to become material. We intend to continue with this strategy in 2025.

Twitter (X)'s future as an effective way of communicating with our stakeholders is far from clear. While we remain on the platform, and continue to post occasionally, it has become less of a focus for our online communications. Our number of followers remained constant over the year (c. 3,600), but our frequency of posting was significantly reduced compared to previous years as was our likely reach.

Our main website <a href="www.carealliance.ie">www.carealliance.ie</a> continues to be a significant medium through which information is accessed and shared. In 2024, Awstats reports that there were over 34,000 unique users, up 49% on the previous year, with a reported average of 2 minutes spent on the website (down from 2.5 minutes in 2023). We don't fully understand why there was such a year-on-year reported increase in unique visitors and are not confident that bots/AI are not part of the apparent increase in traffic and overall traffic volume. We continue to liaise with our web providers and others to better understand the data. This also raises questions about the true frequency of downloads of some of our key publications and thus we report below on these download figures with that caveat.



## **Priority 4:**

#### **Drive the Research Agenda on Family Caring**

We continued our partnership with University of Limerick (UL) and other third-level institutions, state agencies and NGOs in the area of Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) in research.

The Family Carer Research Group continued to grow, with two meetings and a research and policy event in 2024. We were delighted to welcome more than 15 new participants to the Group. We know from feedback that they value the opportunity to meet up, share worries and challenges and support each other on their research journey. Regular communications and links between researchers continue to encourage collaboration across members.

We were pleased in December 2024 to host a policy and research seminar to discuss the diversity of family care in Ireland, and the need for a new National Carers' Strategy. Over 50 attendees registered to take part, with speakers from across the disability community, Irish Traveller community, town planning and online social supports sectors. The event is available to watch back on our YouTube channel:

https://www.youtube.com/@CareAllianceIreland/videos.

We continue to assist researchers, students, the media and the general public with queries in relation to family carers, both by email and telephone. We receive occasional calls from individual family carers and we advise and redirect as appropriate. All member organisations and over 400 other organisations and individuals involved in supporting family carers received regular communications from us, primarily in electronic format, on issues relating to support, practice, policy and research.

As always, our Senior Policy & Research Officer dealt with many requests from students for advice and support on family carer-related research topics at both undergraduate and post-graduate level throughout the year.

Care Alliance Ireland continues to be a leader in the sector in considering and addressing research gaps. We have ongoing contact with senior academics across a number of third-level institutions regarding their family carer research proposals and projects. This includes:

- advice and discussion in advance of project planning
- involvement in the Family Carer Research Group
- facilitating joint funding bids between members where research interests align
- reviewing funding bids and applications and
- other activities as relevant and as opportunities arise

During 2024 we undertook regular reviews of new international family carer research, policy and practice resources, and disseminated these as appropriate.

We continue to collaborate with the University of Limerick (UL) in the area of evaluating online carer support groups. We use the emerging research into what makes online groups work to inform our delivery of our own online projects, and also to argue for enhanced funding. We were delighted to see the UL PhD publication by Dr Rosemary Daynes-Kearney, which explored the meaning and impact of online carer support groups. We actively supported this PhD by facilitating the recruitment of interviewees.

In 2025, led by our Senior Policy & Research Officer, and with the oversight of the Research Committee, we will explore additional primary research opportunities both in Ireland and internationally.

## **Priority 5:**

#### **Resourcing and Governance**

Our income in 2024 continued to reduce as expected by 18%. This was due to the scheduled ending of our employment-ready project Re-emerge in July 2024. Thankfully, as we have built up some modest reserves, we were in a position to retain a key staff member from this project who, among other things, led our membership development initiative in the second half of the year.

While there was a delay in the announcement of a new round of funding under the Dormant Accounts Funds 2024 (Carers Measure), we did secure the maximum amount of €250,000 under this new round and for a longer period (2 years). This will materially boost our income in 2025 and 2026 for the delivery of Re-emerge 2. This was our sixth successful application and represents a 100% success rate under this funding measure.

Multi-annual funding from the HSE continues to be elusive; however, HSE funding did increase modestly in 2024, largely reflecting the public pay deals agreed in late 2023 and associated agreement with Section 39 organisations. In October 2024 we received confirmation of a further €60k increase in funding for our Online Family Carer Support Project for 2025 and beyond. From 2025 the project is being funded annually to the tune of €170k by the HSE under the Carers Guarantee Fund. We also receive a small amount of other funding for general operations (€30k p/a). We look forward to this level of funding being increased again beyond 2025 in recognition of the significantly increased planned project reach as well as ongoing and higher project and staffing costs due to inflation.

As we have successfully diversified our income in recent years, and secured new streams of income in 2025 and beyond, our Board of Directors is satisfied with the short - to medium-term financial stability of the organisation.

High-quality project design, evaluation and delivery, and high-quality and timely reporting to funders provide a level of reassurance with respect to the continuity of such funding sources.

The Scheme to Support National Organisations (SSNO) provides three–year core funding, €91k annually, and is key to our operations. We have been a successful applicant under this scheme continuously since 2008, and we repeatedly score highly in the funding assessment process and in respect of the total amount awarded triennially.

This multi-annual funding enables us to plan strategically, to offer a level of security to staff and to be ambitious in our activities. The current funding scheme runs from July 2022 to December 2025 and supports core staff funding. Unfortunately, the level of funding has not increased in the past decade. We look forward to inputting into the current review of this scheme and are hopeful that the next round of funding will increase to reflect the significant increases in costs faced by all organisations over the past five years







In 2024 we created two new policies. A new Risk Management Policy was approved, detailed later in this report. A new Conflict of Interest and Loyalty Policy (and log) specifically for staff was approved, and its introduction attempts to acknowledge the reality that some staff may engage in external work. This is particularly important for our organisation where we have a long tradition of facilitating part-time employment.

In 2024 we also updated three existing policies. Following intensive review by the strengthened Finance, Quality, Audit and Risk Committee (FQARC) a number of material changes were made to the Finance Policy. Approval and authorisation levels remained at the 2022 approved levels, while the Visa card limit was increased to better reflect its variable use for specific projects over each calendar year. Credit controls were tightened to minimise outstanding debtors and a specific threshold for pre-approval of expenses was introduced. Soft copies of receipts are now deemed sufficient. Processes for financial reporting to the FQARC are now detailed. A more comprehensive investment policy was approved including minimum current account balances. Specific tolerances for budgets were approved to give the CEO greater clarity on reporting and approval expectations. Expectations in relation to variance reporting were also detailed.

An updated Data Protection Policy was also approved as was an updated Health and Safety Statement and Policy.

#### **Company Governance Handbook**

Our CEO, with active input from the FQARC, began a comprehensive review of this handbook, with some material changes proposed at the November 2024 board meeting. These changes included:

- A new overall framework informed by the principles and standards of the Charities Governance Code and supporting guidance documents.
- Removal of organisational chart, governance calendar and list of members.
- New references to Risk Register, Business Continuity Policy, recruiting charity Trustees, new legislation (Charities Act 2024), and process for use of AOB now included.
- Agreement to recommend carving out the Board's Terms of reference, for flexibility to facilitate more frequent reviews.
- Addition of a detailed section on membership applications, resignations and renewals.

Further work on this handbook is continuing into 2025.

In November 2024 we were delighted to be the winners in our category of the Good Governance Awards, having previously won the award three times. We received excellent feedback, which we have used to further improve the quality of our 2024 annual report.



Diarmaid O'Corrbuí (CEO Carmichael Ireland), Liam O'Sullivan (CEO Care Alliance Ireland), Ronan Conboy (Board Member Care Alliance Ireland) and Michelle Mac Donagh (Board Member Care Alliance Ireland) at the 2024 Good Governance Awards, 21st November 2024.

Our scoring by the assessors reached 90%, and the number of SORP non-compliance issues identified by the assessors was minimal.

We are fully committed to being 100% compliant with all regulatory requirements and following best-practice governance principles. We welcome the opportunity to be fully transparent in relation to all activities of Care Alliance Ireland, take on feedback and strive to evolve our business model, risk framework and internal controls to deliver on these objectives as required, with a philosophy of continual self-improvement. As a small organisation, regulatory and funder requirements can place administrative demands on our organisation but we fully recognise this is an issue for all charities in Ireland, and it helps strengthen our governance arrangements. We anticipate entering the Good Governance Awards again in 2025.

Each year we make regular reports to funders on lobbying activities and compliments and complaints, as well as activity reports.

## **An Appreciation**

## Martin Ryan, Former Board Member

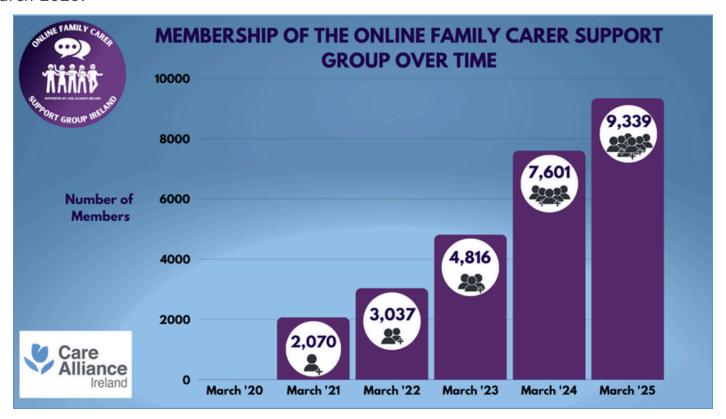
Martin passed away in early April 2024. Martin served as a Director from September 2019 to December 2022, and spent time as our Treasurer. During that period he was immensely supportive to our CEO and board in improving how we report on our finances – and played a significant role in our organisation being shortlisted for the Good Governance Awards in 2020. Martin was easy to work with and held on to his lovely Tipperary brogue. We were all saddened to hear of his passing. Our sympathies to his wife and extended family.





#### **Project Focus – Our Online Family Carer Support Project**

The Online Family Carer Support Project continues to go from strength to strength and as the project nears the fifth anniversary of its founding we are close to reaching a milestone of 10,000 members. We are currently supporting just over 9,300 family carers from every county in Ireland. The image below shows the growth of the project since its founding in March 2020.



The power of peer support is seen every day in our online group, where family carers share their experiences, and advise and support each other. Members continued to stay engaged and active throughout 2024, with the number of posts submitted increasing by nearly 30% in comparison with the previous 12-month period. With a member retention rate of 97%, members are staying engaged with the group even after their caring has come to an end, sharing their advice and invaluable experience with fellow family carers.



As the name suggests, all of our activities are 100% online, making it much more accessible for family carers to engage. Some of the regular activities offered through the year were our Zoom Quiz Nights, Book Club, Garden Club, Zoom Art Classes and weekly Coffee Morning, to name but a few. Our variety of online activities all share the same aim - to provide an opportunity for family carers to connect, no matter where in the country they may be. We also welcomed speakers from organisations such as Parkinson's Ireland, Tabor Group and Family Carers Ireland to share details of the services they can offer to family carers.

Numerous care hampers were distributed to family carers throughout the country in addition to hundreds of packets of flower and vegetable seeds to be planted by our Garden Club members. Images of some of these events throughout 2024 are below.

## **Garden Club Seed Giveaway**



## **Zoom Quiz Night**



## Weekly Zoom Coffee Morning



## **Online Art Classes**

Online Family Carer Support Group



## ACRYLIC PAINTING CLASSES

Eight week painting classes delivered via Zoom. Suitable for complete beginners - Intermediate. All painting materials supplied for new members.

- Week 1 Tuesday 13th August
- Week 2 Tuesday 20th August
- Week 3 Tuesday 27th August
- Week 4 Tuesday 3rd Sept
- Week 5 Tuesday 10th Sept
- Week 6 Tuesday 17th Sept
- Week 7 Tuesday 24th Sept
- Week 8 Tuesday 1st October ALL CLASSES WILL BEGIN AT 8PM

Dr Rosemary Daynes-Kearney from UL completed her PhD research in 2024, looking into the impact of online support groups on family carers, and looking specifically at our online support group. Ms Daynes-Kearney's findings were very positive and indicate that being a member of our online support group is indeed beneficial for members and does help to decrease the social isolation and loneliness experienced by many family carers. The main themes that Dr Daynes-Kearney found in her research (image below) closely echoed the comments and messages that we regularly receive from members - that they finally feel they have found somewhere where they are truly understood.



## **Main Themes in the Research**



### The group are a Tribe and the Tribe gets it

Invisibility as a common experience

My Tribe understands I am more than just a carer

Just being part of the Tribe can be enough

### The Tribe is a lifeline and life-changing

Sharing knowledge, experience and support made me feel visible

Our connection relieves experiences of loneliness and social isolation

The leadership of group moderators helped create the Tribe identity



## Some quotes from members of the group:



### **QUOTES FROM MEMBERS**



"The only place outside of my household where I feel that I really belong. The only place I go actually. I don't have to give any back story or talk about anything. I can just be, there is no demand at all on me and it is a safe haven. Invaluable.

Bravo to the staff, & all the volunteers what an amazing group ye have created & what a wonderful support, comfort & safe place it is for all & any of us. Knowing it's here, is huge, no matter how alone or physically isolated you are in your caring role, here there is always a kind word, sage advice & camaraderie, such a gift ..."

"I would just like to say Thank You 🛡 as since I have found you, I have had a beautiful experience in speaking with the kindest and caring people, people who know and understand like myself the work anxiety stress and sometimes heartbreak that being a family carer can be. Thank you so much



The infographic below shows more detail on the full suite of interventions and activities that make up the Online Family Carer Support Project.

#### Family Carer Online Support Project Jan 1st - Dec 31st 2024



#### **Group Link URL**

https://www.facebook.com/groups/FamilyC arerOnlineSupportGroupIreland/

#### Video explaining how to join Facebook and join the group

https://youtu.be/9Trsk6mF4Ko

#### Promotional video

https://youtu.be/mEAg-xJORAY

#### Safeguarding

- 1. Consult team
- 2. PM/Phone call/Zoom to family carer
- 3. Consult local Mental Health Service
- 4. Contact Gardai

#### Objectives

Mitigate the possible negative impact of family caring, reducing the risk of:

- Isolation
- Anxiety
- Reduced quality of life & wellbeing

This is achieved through a professionally moderated online platform, using peer support and a variety of online activities.

#### Application

Inclusion / Participation criteria:

- Must be willing to use Facebook
- . Live in the ROI & aged 18+
- Provide unpaid care to family / friend or neighbour
- Agree to rules of group (NB respect privacy

#### Participant Recruitment (Family Carers)

- Facebook
- 95 NGO member orgs of Care Alliance
- · Word of mouth (v. important)

#### **Application Process**

- 1. Apply to join the group through Facebook (private group)
- 2. Answer 3 screening questions (per inclusion criteria above)
- 3. Application considered by CAI staff / volunteers
- 4. Request approved or refused If questions are not answered in full, applicant is private messaged, asking to resubmit the request to join and answer all questions



#### Members of Group

(9,075)

#### Volunteers and Moderators

- Private FB online 'Mods/Vols' group
- Peer support for volunteers
- Monthly zoom meeting for volunteers
- Discuss practice issues/dilemmas
- Discuss group posts/tone/engagement
- Information/policy updates
- Moderation training

#### Activities

- Posting messages (Core Activity) c 6 p/d:
  - Comments / discussion (c 154 per day, c 336 reactions) – anonymous posts facilitated, NB / GDPR
  - Peer support 'I am not alone' Information

  - Dilemmas
  - Top Tips
  - Positivity Posts
  - Cooking Posts

#### Pinned posts / threads:

- Remembrance Petitions
- Research
- Accessible places

#### 1-2-1 Input/Casework core activity c125 clients:

- o PM's / phone calls / e-mails variable levels of engagement
- Refer to carer support orgs / SW Mental Health Services

#### Educative Inputs

- Video pre-records
- 'Subject matter Expert'
- Live Q&A's

#### **Zoom Quizzes**

Monthly-Informal/Fun

#### **Book Club**

- Bi-monthly
- Distribute Books
- Weekly Online Drop In
- Informal Competitions
- Regular Books/Gifts/Care Packages Gardening Club - 'Carers In Bloom'
- Online Art Classes
- 'Crafty Carers' Group



#### Resourcing

- Volunteers (11) & Staff (1)
- Current and former family carers
- Health and Social Care professionals (8) (Some identify in more than one group)
- 7 day and on-call rota

#### Roles Of Staff / Volunteers:

- Screen membership applications
- Share informational documents within group
- Approve / reject suggested posts
- Welcome new members
- Monitor / moderate posts / comments
- Communicate / reiterate / values
- Share other NGO's relevant posts
- Consider new activities
- Protocols regularly updated
- Ensure sustainability / finances

#### **Engagement Data**

- Ian 1st Dec 31st 2024
- 2,101 posts
- 56,361 comments
- 122,611 reactions
- 0 complaints
- 1000's of positive comments and feedback

#### Feedback / Efficacy

- Extensive positive qualitative feedback
- 97% member retention over 12 months
- Key impacts / processes emerging peer support - possible improvement in QOL / anxiety /
- Long-term efficacy / meaning University of Limerick PhD
- Consultation via School of SW, Indiana University (Dr D. Wilkerson)

#### Reflections

- Volunteer strength
- Tight moderation
- Peer support
- Evolution of group purpose A very social Social Media
- Managing risks of GDPR breaches
- Project evolving post Covid19



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# Our Staff and Volunteers



Staff, volunteers and board members availed of appropriate training opportunities that arose during the year. Specifically, our Senior Policy & Research Officer is nearing completion of her Doctorate in Social Science (at UCC). Other staff secured further qualifications in Counselling and Psychotherapy from PCI College, while others completed a course in Mentoring for Professional Development (UCD). One staff member continues to undertake a QQI Managing People programme.



Liam O'Sullivan - CEO



Zoe Hughes - Senior Policy & Research Officer



Tara O'Connor - Project Manager - Online Family Carer Support Group



Amy Lavelle - Project Manager - Re-emerge 2 Project

#### The Care Alliance Ireland Staff Team at 2024 year end

In 2024 governance courses undertaken by directors included Company Secretary training, a Lobbying Returns seminar, a briefing on updates to the Charities Act, Directors Duties, Role of Directors, Chairing for Impact, and an Institute of Directors course. In 2025, led by the Chair, there will be an expectation that each director undertake at least one training course relevant to their role on the Board.

In addition to our Board of Directors, all of whom are volunteers, Care Alliance Ireland was supported by other volunteers, including current and former family carers. These volunteers (approximately 15) support our work through their participation in and active moderation of our Online Family Carer Support Project, our steering groups, publicity events and other fora.

In our Online Family Carer Support Project, we recruit volunteers who, through participation in the group as family carers themselves, have demonstrated real empathy and understanding of family caring. Our volunteers are supported with regular check-ins by the project manager, monthly online meetings, training opportunities and occasional face-to-face meetings with other volunteers. We are fortunate to have them.



## Staff Profile Anne Marie Gillooley

After reading last year's wonderful profile on the very tenured and experienced Zoe, I felt slightly hesitant about writing a staff profile on precisely my 3rd day of working in Care Alliance. I will take the advice that I know I will be sharing with many participants within the Re-emerge 2 project and will tackle that sneaky imposter syndrome and remind my inner naysayer that fresh perspectives are completely valid and worth hearing too.

I am originally from Donegal and have been living in Dublin now for around 20 years. I live with my husband John, my 7-year-old son, 3-year-old daughter and 2 aged but adorable Shih Tzus. I completed my degree in Psychology but have worked for most of my adult life within Customer/ Technical Support type roles, managing large and diverse teams, managing recruitment and onboarding, supporting development, achieving on KPIs and budgets, acting as a point of escalation for customers and generally doing whatever was necessary to support the smooth running of the department and the wellbeing of my team.

I have been out of the paid workforce for almost 5 years, originally as I had returned to complete my Masters in Education and then because I had the joy of welcoming my daughter and being able to stay at home with her. In that time, I have found myself increasingly engaged in volunteer work on a number of different projects. Primarily I am involved with stillbirth and baby loss support charities. My first son Max was stillborn at term in January 2015. In the midst of the grief of that experience, I found support, solidarity, advice and friendship through the work of charities like Feileacain and NILMDTS Ireland. I now proudly give back to both of those charities, administering online support and coordinating online workshops for Feileacain and as a volunteer photographer and board chairperson in NILMDTS Ireland. Four years ago, my sister had her own experience of needing to engage with the charity sector when her son Eddie was born with Down Syndrome. She found support, understanding and friendship through her engagement with Donegal Down Syndrome. As a thank you to them last summer I organised a calendar fundraiser. I photographed 47 wonderful people with Down Syndrome and supported the sponsorship and sale of what went on to be a wonderful and very successful calendar. I also worked with an amazing team in 2024 in organising a fundraising clothing sale, art auction and wine tasting event in aid of Médecins sans Frontières to support their vital work in Gaza.



## Staff Profile Anne Marie Gillooley

When my daughter started ECCE last September, I started to look at part time work opportunities. I applied exclusively for roles within the charity sector. I have been so inspired by volunteering within the sector, by the can-do attitudes I encountered, by the human desire to support each other and the impact of the work. When I met Liam, Amy and Tara within Care Alliance I immediately felt that this would be an ideal fit for me. The whole team's passion for supporting family carers, their personal and professional knowledge, their enthusiasm and ambition really spoke to me. I will be working on Re-emerge 2 with Amy and Jacqueline, supporting family carers in re-engaging with educational and employment opportunities.

I have some experience in the reality of family caring, of the importance of it, of the emotion and challenges it can bring. I also have personal experience of the loss of confidence that comes from being out of the workforce for any reason and the daunting experience of tentatively nudging that door back open.

I am so looking forward to recruiting and assisting our participants over the course of this project, of being a voice of support and encouragement, of reminding them, like I sometimes have to do with myself, of their ability, their value and their incredible worth.

Anne Marie Gillooley

# Capturing a Volunteer's Contribution Deirdre's Story

Having taken on the role of a carer while recovering myself from a serious medical event highlights the often life-changing events that can bring an individual on this unexpected journey. To discover initially the Online Family Carer Support Group felt like a haven where my experiences & feelings were not only understood, but validated, lessening feelings of being alone with caring that at times could be challenging. It was also a treasure trove of practical guidance signposting me to appropriate supports or information because realistically when you become a carer there is no welcome pack, with a how to & where to guide re supports & entitlements unfortunately!

To receive an unexpected gift box had the power to magically transform your day because it was a beautiful concrete reminder that you as a carer were seen & valued.

It is this core value & appreciation & care that for me as a volunteer has helped me navigate often challenging times. To be able to share your insights, knowledge, signpost a member towards appropriate information or support is very rewarding & also there is so much knowledge & experience within the group.

There are so many core experiences that as carers we share no matter the nature of each member's caring & this group is run so professionally & the care, support, warmth, due diligence & oversight that is there 24/7 is unique in my opinion & what makes it such a special & valuable place.

It has been a place where my voice has been heard when as a carer in the real world it is often challenging to be heard & has helped to remind me that my knowledge & experiences from my previous working life can be helpful as can my insights & experience as a carer & has certainly given me back so much more than my words can convey other than a deep appreciation that it exists.



In 2023 we undertook a brief survey among our volunteers, and calculated the financial value of the work of our regular volunteers in 2023 as being at least €93,800. Using similar methodology, available on request, we redid the survey for 2024 and estimate their contribution in monetary terms to be in the region of €136,000 in 2024.

In 2025, in consultation with our auditors, and mindful of Charity SORP guidelines, we will consider whether or not this figure is appropriate to include in our financial statements in

future years.



#### **Our Staff**

Our staff are with the organisation for an average of ten years and are highly qualified and skilled at delivering on our objectives. Their skills include project management, analysis, design, communication, report writing, online moderation, mentoring and the facilitation of collaboration. The majority have extensive and ongoing family caring experience. Two of our staff have professional qualifications in Social Work. Other qualifications within the current team include: Social Sciences, Science, Counselling and Psychotherapy, Early Education, Music, Community Development, Social Research, Implementation Science, HR, Group facilitation and Mindfulness.

All staff positions, roles and brief biographies are published on our website. Collectively our staff have demonstrated an ongoing openness to learning and continued professional development. A culture of sharing and mentoring is encouraged by the leadership of the organisation. Being small and nimble as an organisation requires all staff to be flexible in taking on occasional or temporary tasks that may not necessarily be core to their job description. They all do this with grace and enthusiasm.

Our current (March 2025) staff team numbers seven (5.8 whole-time equivalent). We also make use of talented part-time contractors in discrete but valuable aspects of our projects. All staff undertake performance appraisals, are provided with regular support and supervision and partake in monthly virtual team meetings and informal weekly virtual coffees. All staff currently work from home and meet other staff in person in our offices in the Carmichael Centre occasionally. We provide competitive salaries and dedicated training budgets and offer good employment terms and conditions. Salary increments are not part of any staff employment contracts and levels of and changes to remuneration are based on funds available, performance objectively measured and sectoral norms. Any proposed changes to the CEO's remuneration are considered by the Finance, Quality, Audit and Risk Committee and approved by the Chair.

# Developments and Plans for the Future



A review of our Strategic Plan 2019–2024 was completed in mid- 2024 and following an independent consultant review we began working on a new Strategic Plan 2025–2030 in late 2024. This was considered by the Board and approved in March 2025, as detailed earlier in this report.

The new Strategic Plan is clear on how we will know we are making progress in our key strategic priorities. We will continue to put more effort into capturing outcomes.

A large part of our work now involves delivering specific online supports to individual family carers. This is clearly reflected in our new Strategic Plan and, in consultation with our stakeholders and the Charities Regulator, will likely inform changes to our Constitution scheduled for 2025.

We will continue to create opportunities for successful collaboration and engagement in research across the academic, statutory and not-for-profit sectors, both nationally and internationally.

Working in and leading a not-for-profit organisation like Care Alliance Ireland is often highly rewarding and offers many opportunities for developing innovative practices. However, as mentioned in our 2023 report, we also want to provide more security to staff on short-term contracts and to be confident that income generated fully reflects the true cost of delivering impactful services. We made significant progress on these issues in 2024, with an additional permanent appointment made and full cost recovery now on track with our Online Family Carer Support Project.

We look forward to further progress being made in relation to additional staff funding for Section 39 and other voluntary organisations. We will continue to engage with relevant departments to implement the findings of the Independent Review Group relating to the role of voluntary organisations in publicly funded health and personal social services.

#### **Events Since the End of the Year**

Activities from January to March 2025 advanced the targets established in our new Strategic Plan and we are confident of meeting the majority of our goals.

Details of all our activities and projects continue to be communicated through our website/newsletter/social media channels (now including LinkedIn) and reported to our funders at required intervals.

In June 2025, the Board updated its Reserves Policy. See Reserves Policy section further below for more detail. The Board also made a decision to re-designate some historical cumulative reserves from the restricted reserves fund to the unrestricted reserves fund, after careful consideration and independent advice. This adjustment is further detailed in the 2024 annual financial statements including in Notes 14 and 15.

Based on multi-year and annual rolling funding agreements, as well as successful securing of new project funds and unrestricted funds over the past number of years, the Board is of the view that the organisation will continue to be able to sustain and build its reserves gradually and to operate solvently into the coming years.

No financial impairments emerged over 2024 and we do not expect any in 2025.

Since 2020 we have demonstrated that there is a large pool of family carers who were underserved by existing and traditional supports. Such family carers will continue to want to participate in a range of online supports, and will benefit from these. We are delivering well on this. Online support is largely accessible, more environmentally friendly and indeed may suit the needs of a wider group of family carers.

We look forward to continued government and philanthropic support for our projects into the future.

## **Financial Review**

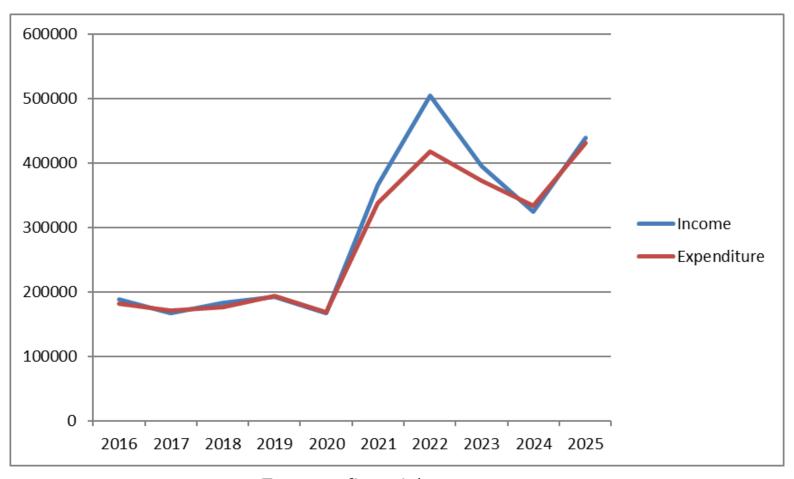


Significant surpluses in 2021, 2022 and 2023 provided our organisation with a level of security going into 2024 and a modest planned deficit of approximately 3% of income was considered appropriate by the Board. Having the flexibility to utilise small amounts of our reserves in 2024 was key to enabling us to drive forward with our Membership Development initiative, progress work on a new Strategic Plan, and invest additional staffing resources into our Online Family Carer Support Project, in the knowledge that in 2025 additional funds for the project would be forthcoming.

The results for the year show a net operating deficit of €9,308 for 2024 (for 2023 there was a surplus of €22,227). Our organisation's income for 2024 was €324,822 ( 2023 €394,783) and our expenditure was €334,130 (2023 €372,556).

With the approval of the Board, having adjusted downwards mid-year the income and expenditure projections, largely to reflect the delays in the new DAF project, there were no material year-end variances to the final approved budget.

A 37% increase in projected income in 2025 (versus 2024) is almost exclusively due to significant increases in HSE funding and the beginning of a Dormant Accounts Funds (Work Ready – Re-emerge 2) project. A modest budget surplus of €9k for 2025 was approved by the Board in November 2024.



Ten-year financial summary – Income and expenditure 2016–2024, and 2025 projections

Like 2024, 2025 will represent another year of successful ongoing diversification of our income streams. While diversified, the Board is acutely aware of our dependency on state agencies for funding. Our assessment is that there is little opportunity to secure meaningful amounts of trading income, and for us to engage in direct public fundraising would require a significant initial outlay, is unlikely to generate material net funds, risks diverting our focus, and could undermine our relationship with our member organisations.

Our 2024 three biggest funders were:

- The Health Service Executive (HSE) (44%)
- The Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht (via Pobal) (28%)
- The Department of Social Protection (24%)

Other sources of income in 2024 included the Carers Week partner contributions, consulting fees and membership fees.

On the expenditure side, staff costs were the biggest outlay (70%), followed by project expenditure (21%).

We note with interest the National Policy on Philanthropy but have yet to identify any specific suitable opportunities. We are actively exploring some significant international philanthropic opportunities, mindful of the need to hold onto our core vision and mission.

Deferred income at the beginning of 2024 was significant at €53k.

This was largely due to a significant portion of a grant received from Pobal/DSP in December 2023 for the delivery of the remainder of an employment-ready project in 2024. At the end of 2024 we had no deferred income.

In 2025, with the Board's approval, we plan to implement a new membership fee structure. There has been no increase in the membership fees since our founding 30 years ago and with the growth of our member base, and several of our larger member organisations, we now believe it is time to introduce a new system whereby larger organisations would be charged a higher fee commensurate with their resources, while the membership fee for volunteer-led organisations with minimal income would remain as is. It is anticipated that this change in fee structure will more accurately reflect a relatively fairer financial contribution our members can make to help us achieve our objectives and grow our unrestricted income over time

## 10

## 10 Risk Management







The Board recognises and regularly reviews the major risks to which we could be exposed. Our Risk Register, the operations of which, together with specific risk examples, are detailed comprehensively in the 2023 Annual Report, was reviewed and updated several times in 2024 and bolstered by a Risk Management Policy which was approved by the Board in November 2024.

The Risk Management Policy has five objectives and a clear process. The objectives are to:

- **Promote a risk-aware culture:** Encourage all staff, volunteers and stakeholders to identify and report potential risks.
- Protect CAI's assets: Safeguard CAI's financial and intangible resources, reputation, members and stakeholders.
- **Ensure sustainability:** Enhance CAI's ability to achieve its goals and strategic objectives and deliver sustainable value.
- Improve decision-making: Integrate risk considerations into strategic planning and operational activities.
- Comply with legal and regulatory requirements and best practices: Meet all relevant legal and regulatory obligations and ensure that CAI operates in accordance with practices prescribed by the Companies Act 2014 and Charities (Amendment) Act 2024.

#### The process encompasses the following steps:

- Risk Identification: Regularly identify potential risks across all areas of CAI's operations. This will involve consultation with staff, volunteers, beneficiaries and other stakeholders.
- Risk Assessment: Analyse the likelihood and potential impact of identified risks. This
  will involve considering the severity of the consequences and the probability of
  occurrence.

- **Risk Response Strategies:** Develop and implement strategies to manage identified risks.
- **Risk Monitoring and Review:** Continuously monitor the effectiveness of risk management strategies and review the Risk Register on a regular basis. This will involve tracking the progress of risk mitigation actions and updating risk assessments as needed.

Throughout 2024, all risks deemed to have a residual risk of medium 1 or high were assessed in detail and in each case a risk response strategy (avoid, mitigate, transfer or accept,) was adopted. For example, the Board mitigated the risk of there being inadequate skills on the Board by adopting an active and ultimately successful recruitment drive for three new Directors, bringing additional technology, research, change management and governance skills to the Board's skills mix, and continue to consider the appropriate and complementary skills required of its Directors to maximise Board performance.

Succession planning was also discussed in 2024 with agreed mitigation actions but ultimately with the Board accepting some of the inherent risks in being a small not-for-profit organisation. Reputational risks, data breaches and non-compliance with GDPR were also risk topics of discussion within the Board meetings during 2024 (with an updated Data Protection Policy approved in June 2024). In 2025,the FQARC will continue to have further deliberations on the composition of the Risk Register, and continue to challenge ourselves that we are focusing on the key current and emerging risks within the organisation and implementing the appropriate strategies to reduce our residual risks.

Overall, the Directors are satisfied that a comprehensive set of policies and procedures are in place, and the right risk culture, to mitigate exposure to major risks.

#### **Reserves Policy**

The Board of Directors has set a Reserves Policy that seeks to target reserves at a minimum at four months' expenditure based on the previous year's audited accounts. As of 31st December 2024 Care Alliance Ireland had reserves of €111,713 (just over 3.5 months' expenditure).

As an organisation we are committed to continuing to build up unrestricted reserves over the coming years by securing a modest level of additional unrestricted income from a range of sources. Restrictions placed by some funders make this a challenge, as does our practice of not seeking public donations.

The purpose of building such reserves is to maintain resiliency and deliver on our objectives going forward in a sustainable manner. We believe this is in line with best practice and demonstrates financial responsibility, accountability, and sustainability.

In June 2025, the Board updated its Reserves Policy to provide more detail on the purpose and use of our reserves, as well as the classification and treatment of such reserves in our management accounts. The Policy also outlines our new approach to allow a modest percentage of grant income from certain funders to be classified as unrestricted income in order to support our resiliency and sustainable value objectives.

For more detail, please refer to CAI's updated Reserves Policy which can be found within our Finance Policy <a href="here">here</a> on our website.

#### **Investment Policy**

In early 2024 we took advantage of higher interest rates that were available on mediumterm deposit accounts and placed some of our reserves into such an account to earn a better return on a portion of those assets.

Following a review of our investment policy in 2023, the Board does not consider it prudent to place its surplus funds in other asset classes beyond medium-term deposits.

#### **Donations and Legacy Income**

It is our view that we are unlikely to receive legacy income. For this reason, we do not currently have a legacy income policy.

#### **Donated Facilities/Goods/Services Policy**

The level of donated facilities and goods is minimal and does not warrant a policy.

As detailed earlier we do estimate the contribution of our volunteers; the assumptions we use and the methodology utilised to generate these estimates is available on request.

#### **Deferred Income Policy**

The charity recognises deferred income where the terms and conditions have not been met (so a multi-year project runs past the organisation's financial year end) or uncertainty exists as to whether the charity can meet the terms or conditions otherwise within its control. Income is then deferred as a liability until it is probable that the terms and conditions imposed can be met. Some of the grants received are subject to performance-related conditions or time periods. When these performance-related or other conditions are met, the deferred income is released to income in the Statement of Financial Activities. As mentioned previously, there was no deferred income carried over in 2024.

#### **Membership Fees**

These are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities of the year in which they are receivable.

#### **Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG)**

Our Environmental Sustainability Policy, approved in 2019, seeks to actively reduce any negative impacts our activities have on our planet. This policy addresses issues such as carbon footprint, and specifically promotes online service delivery, virtual meetings, the use of public transport, remote working, minimal flight travel, use of ICT, sustainable Carers Week merchandise, reducing our use of paper, and vegetarian refreshments as the default for meetings.

One new action we took in 2024 was to purchase a carbon offset following the one set of flights undertaken by a staff member. Following our assessment we were happy to engage the services of Green Sod Ireland by way of an agreed donation to them, following their own assessment of our credentials. We are aware that carbon offsetting is somewhat controversial and not a true solution to the climate emergency.

It represents an initial effort, while collectively as a society we seek to identify and operationalise more robust ways of mitigating our environmental impact.

It is also significant that our two direct family carer support interventions are delivered almost exclusively remotely. While not necessarily comparable to face-to-face supports, it is reasonable to assume that the carbon footprint of delivering these virtual services is significantly lower, for both the organisation and the service user.

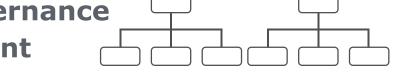
As reflected in our updated Strategic Plan, how we deliver services is not a values-free issue. We endeavour to be professional, collaborative and evidence-informed in everything that we do. For example, we try to pay suppliers, in particular small ones, as soon as possible, and almost always within 30 days. We treat our staff and volunteers well and we try to be transparent in all that we do. Again, as evidenced by our winning the Good Governance Awards multiple times, we believe that we are continuing to improve the overall governance of our organisation. We have become clearer about who our stakeholders are, and our new Strategic Plan better reflects the work we currently do.

#### **Appointment of Solicitors**

In light of the small size of the organisation and its low risk profile, the Board has taken the view that there is no need to have named solicitors appointed at this stage. Should there be a need in the future, the Board will appoint appropriate solicitors accordingly.



## Structure, Governance and Management



We are registered as a charitable company limited by guarantee. We are a public benefit entity. In the event of Care Alliance Ireland being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to €1 per member. Care Alliance Ireland has a constitution and is a registered charity (CHY 14644, Charity Registration No: 20048303). Care Alliance Ireland's goals and approaches are guided by its charitable objectives as laid out in these documents.

Our Board of Directors met five times in 2024, entirely remotely. Our AGM in September was also held remotely, with high attendance levels.

The Board of Directors, elected and co-opted under the terms detailed in the Company Governance Handbook, has overall responsibility for strategic development, in close liaison with the CEO. Elen Gebremedhin is the Board Chairperson. Adele Spillane is the Treasurer. Michelle MacDonagh is the Company Secretary. Liam O'Sullivan, the CEO, manages the operations and is not a member of the Board.

The Board is responsible for providing leadership, setting strategy and ensuring control. It comprises seven independent non-executive Directors. Currently, three of the Directors have been nominated to the Board by our member organisations. The four others have been recruited through Board Match Ireland and other avenues. The majority of our Directors have direct experience as family carers.



Our Chairperson, Elen Gebremedhin, meeting with An t-Uachtarán Michael D Higgins at the Garden Party in July 2024 in Áras an Uachtaráin.

The Board's Directors are drawn from diverse backgrounds in not-for-profit organisations, business and the professions. They bring to board deliberations the significant business and decision-making skills developed in their respective fields, together with a broad range of experience and views.

Our three new Directors appointed in 2024 bring with them an additional range of skills. Having been co-opted by the Board during 2024, Ronan, Michelle and Carmen were formally re-elected at the September AGM. Ronan brings 25 years' experience in the financial services industry and his skills lie in leadership, change management and engaging with government and regulatory agencies. Michelle brings her entrepreneurial experience as CEO of her own company, with skills in AI, data, analytics and enterprise performance management solutions. Carmen brings her ongoing research experience in dementia and related fields, with skills in psychology and neuroscience.

Elen as Chair since 2023 brings extensive experience from her consulting work, and her skills lie particularly in compliance, IT, project management, and diversity and inclusion. Adele as Treasurer brings skills in financial analysis and reporting, and corporate governance as an experienced non-executive Director.

### **Board of Directors (as of April 2025)**







Laura O'Philbin



Adele Spillane



Carmen Elise Pocknell



Michelle MacDonagh



Elaine Teague



Ronan Conboy

Updated biographies of all directors are available to view on our website <a href="https://www.carealliance.ie/organisation">https://www.carealliance.ie/organisation</a>

### **Board Recruitment**

The Chairperson manages a thorough director recruitment process, which includes review of CVs, a number of interviews and both written and verbal follow-up of references. The role of Chairperson and CEO are separate. The Directors are committed to maintaining the highest standards of corporate governance and believe this is a key element in ensuring the proper operation of Care Alliance Ireland's activities. Conflicts of interest and loyalty are considered through statements of interests and through standing items at board meetings. All Directors are required to sign a Conflict of Interests Compliance Statement in which they state that they are aware of their obligations as a member of the Board of Directors of Care Alliance Ireland. The Conflicts of Interest and Loyalty Policy was approved in 2017 and is scheduled for review in 2025.

Directors also undertake to furnish to the Company Secretary full particulars of their interests, which include their employment, all business interests and community involvement, including voluntary work for charities that might involve a conflict of interest or might materially influence them in relation to the performance of their functions as a member of the Board or their partiality. They also undertake to notify the Company Secretary of any changes to these interests.

In June 2024, following a detailed review, the Board confirmed our organisation's full

compliance with the new Charities Regulator Governance Code. It is intended that, following a further thorough assessment, full compliance will be re-confirmed in 2025.

There is clear division of responsibility between the Board and the CEO, with the Board retaining control of major decisions under a formal Schedule of Matters Reserved to the Board for Decision, while the CEO is responsible for implementing the strategy, and oversight and control of all day-to-day operations of the company within the authority delegated to him by the Board. For example, the Board considers applications for membership of Care Alliance Ireland, using five criteria.

#### These are:

- Are the applicant's Mission/Values/Aims/Objectives in keeping with those of Care Alliance Ireland?
- Does the organisation support or intend to support Family Carers?
- Is the organisation not for profit?
- Has the organisation supplied the following: Aims and Objectives (or equivalent), Recent Independent Accounts, Annual Report?
- Is the applying organisation likely to attract negative attention to itself and or the sector?

Care Alliance Ireland has a comprehensive process for reporting management information to the Board. This includes the Directors receiving a board pack one week in advance of each board meeting.

The pack includes at a minimum the meeting agenda, draft minutes of the previous board meeting, minutes of any committee meetings, and the CEO report. The latter details high-level organisational activities, with reference to the strategic objectives, key risks and opportunities, as well as updates on projects, staffing, client feedback, issues requiring decisions and horizon scanning. The pack may also include the latest management accounts tracking performance to budget and suggested revisions to policies for board consideration. While the focus at board meetings is on stewardship, governance, financial reporting and risk, the Board also invites staff members/speakers to present on occasions.

On appointment to the Board, Directors receive a formal induction programme and are provided with comprehensive briefing documents designed to familiarise them with Care Alliance Ireland's operations, management and governance structures. Our Corporate Governance Handbook stipulates that at the AGM those Directors who have served a three-year term shall retire from office. It also stipulates that all retiring Directors shall be eligible for re-election, provided that no Director shall serve more than two consecutive terms of three years.

There were three appointments to the Board in 2024 and one resignation. The average tenure on the Board is now just under two years, with a range between one and three years. We thank those Directors for their time and dedication to our organisation.

No current directors will have served a full 6-years term until 2028. Board attendance averaged 89% over the course of 2024 (2023 was 70%, 2022 was 68%). Occupying key roles, both the Chairperson and the Treasurer can report 100% attendance at meetings. The intention is to recruit at least one new Director to the Board in 2025 who would also be suitable to sit on the Research Committee.

The approach to recruitment will be sensitive to the need to ensure the Board continues to be representative of our member organisations, has a strong independent and objective voice and is cognisant of the benefit of board diversity and inclusion while being small enough to remain nimble. Individual skills, experience and commitment are also very important considerations.

A planned up-to-date board self-assessment process was delayed in 2024 to allow for meaningful feedback from directors who were only appointed in 2023 and 2024. The Directors agreed in our February 2025 board meeting to conduct our board assessment in 2025. Due to the size of the organisation currently, it was not proposed that an external board evaluation be undertaken.

#### **Board Attendance Rates 2024**

Name	Joined the Board	March	June (1)	June (2)	September	November	Total	Max Possible	Attendance Rate (%)
Elen Gebremedhin	Appointed May 2023	1	1	1	1	1	5	5	100%
Mary Shovlin	Resigned April 10th 2024	0	-	-	-	-	-	1	0%
Elaine Teague	Appointed July 2022	1	1	1	1	1	5	5	100%
Pierre-Yves Fioraso	Appointed July 2022	1	0	1	1	1	4	5	80%
Adele Spillane	Appointed September 2023	1	1	1	1	1	5	5	100%
Laura O'Philbin	Appointed Feb 2022	1	1	1	1	1	5	5	100%
Michelle MacDonagh	Appointed May 10th 2024	-	1	0	0	1	2	4	50%
Carmen Elise Pocknell	Appointed April 18th 2024	-	1	1	1	1	4	4	100%
Ronan Conboy	Appointed August 8th 2024	-	-	-	1	1	2	2	100%
Totals		5	6	6	7	8	32	36	89%

### **Committees of the Board**

We have two standing board committees, namely the Finance, Quality, Audit and Risk Committee (FQARC) and the Research Committee.

Both have clear terms of reference and their chairs report at each board meeting.

The role of the Finance, Quality, Audit and Risk Committee is to:

- Provide leadership and direction and oversee the risk management approach of CAI.
- Ensure that there is an ongoing review of the material risks facing the organisation and actions are taken to manage, and mitigate where possible, those material risks identified by the Committee.
- Ensure the implementation of robust financial management controls for CAI including the raising, collection, investment, borrowing and outlay of all monies required (including fundraising of monies raised for CAI).
- Oversee and monitor key risk indicators pertaining to Complaints/Compliments, Quality Measures, Staffing, HR, and Succession Planning. Quality measures include (but are not necessarily limited to) client feedback pre and post intervention client surveys and response times to member applications).
- Monitor standards in protecting and promoting the health and safety of employees and volunteers including oversight and management of CAI's Health & Safety Statement & Policy and mandatory training.
- Receive and verify assurances that the following are being managed effectively:
  - O Serious incidents/ accidents
  - O Serious complaints.
- Review, approve (where authorised to do so), monitor and oversee the implementation of a subset of company-wide policies, practices and procedures relating to the control, monitoring, management and documentation of employee, health and social care risk.
- Approve non-budgeted expenditure on a single item between €2,001 and €5,000 in line with the Finance Policy.

The Committee met five times in 2025. Chaired by the Treasurer, it has three other members, including the Chairperson of the organisation who is an ex-officio member. The CEO attends meetings. Attendance averaged 90% over the year.

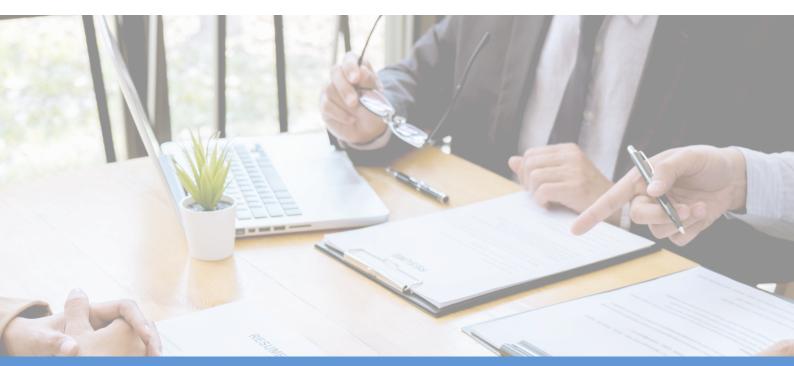


# FQARC Board Attendance 2024

Name	Feb 28	May 17	June 26	Aug 26	Nov 5	Total	Percentage Attendance
Adele Spillane (Chair)	1	1	1	1	1	5/5	100%
Elen Gebremedhin	1	1	1	1	1	5/5	100%
Elaine Teague	1	0	1	0	1	3/5	60%
Pierre-Yves Fioraso	1	1	1	1	1	5/5	100%
Ronan Conboy	-	-	-	-	1	1/1	100%

In 2024, the committee reviewed the contents and quality of the 2023 audit and recommended the Audited Financial Statements to the Board. In addition, the Committee reviewed and recommended updates to its Terms of Reference, and reviewed and recommended to the Board a new Finance Policy, a new Health and Safety Statement and Policy and a new Data Protection Policy. Further updates to the Risk Register were made and a Risk Management Policy was also recommended to the Board. The Committee also recommended a material change to the organisational budget mid-year and approved for recommendation to the Board a draft 2025 budget.

In 2025, in addition to making its regular reporting on financial and risk matters, and health and safety, the Committee plans to progress further policy reviews, including an updated Whistleblower Policy, an updated Reserves Policy, and a clear Treasurer role description, and also plans to complete the updating of the existing Governance Handbook.





# A note from our volunteer Treasurer – Adele Spillane

I joined the Board of Care Alliance Ireland in September 2023 and soon after took on the role of Treasurer and Chair of the Finance, Quality, Audit & Risk Committee. As Treasurer, I help ensure the proper stewardship of the charity's funds to advance its mission effectively. I am responsible for the oversight of the charity's financial management and work closely with the Board of Directors, CEO and other stakeholders to uphold the charity's financial sustainability.

This includes ensuring accurate and transparent financial reporting, monitoring cash flow and the integrity of the management accounts, approving key expenditures and overseeing the annual audit and budget processes as well as reporting to the Board.

In 2024, we continued to drive great improvements in our risk management framework and internal controls. This included:

- Upgrading our Risk Register and building out our Risk Management Policy
- · Updating our Finance Policy and the Terms of Reference for the FQARC
- Refining our Quality and Safety report
- Reviewing and approving/recommending to the Board of CAI: Health and Safety Statement and Policy, Data Protection Policy, Client Disclosure Policy and Conflict of Interest and Loyalty Policy (for staff).

In 2025, the FQARC's programme of work includes:

- Addressing feedback from the Good Governance Awards to increase the quality of our Directors' Report including clearer YoY performance comparisons, more detail on the movement, and performance versus target, of our reserves
- Updating our Reserves Policy and redefining our approach to accounting for unrestricted reserves
- Reviewing, and updating where necessary, our Conflict of Interest and Donations Policies as well as finalising updates to our Governance Handbook.

### **Research Committee**

The role of the Research Committee is to support Care Alliance Ireland's Strategic Priority 'Supporting primary and applied research on family caring and the role of family carers'. The Research Committee, with a membership of three Directors, is consulted regularly by the CEO on matters within its terms of reference. In 2024, the work of the Committee was conducted through emails rather than scheduling formal committee meetings. The committee also met with the Senior Policy & Research Officer to discuss how best to support the research function of the organisation. A report on the Research Committee's deliberations is presented at each board meeting. Any items that the Chairperson judges to require further full board consideration are considered at the next board meeting. The Board believes this method of operation for this committee is appropriate. In early 2025, membership of the committee was expanded and a schedule of specific dates for formal meetings was agreed.

# **Directors' Responsibilities Statement**

The Directors (who are also Directors of Care Alliance Ireland for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Directors' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and Irish/UK Accounting Standards (Irish/UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) as modified by the Statement of Recommended Practice 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' effective 1st January 2019.

Irish company law requires the Directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under the law the Directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the Companies Act 2014 and accounting standards issued by the Financial Reporting Council, and promulgated by Chartered Accountants Ireland, including FRS 102, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Ireland (Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland). Under company law, the Directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the charitable company as at the financial year end date, and of the surplus or deficit of the charitable company for the financial year, and that they otherwise comply with the Companies Act 2014.

In preparing these financial statements, the Directors are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- Observe themethods and principles inthe Charities SORP.
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent. State whether the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards, identify those standards, and note the effect of and reasons for any material departure from those standards.
- Prepare the financial statements on the going-concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The Directors are responsible for ensuring that the charitable company keeps or causes to be kept adequate accounting records which correctly explain and record the transactions of the charitable company; enable at any time the assets, liabilities, financial position and profit or loss of the charitable company to be determined with reasonable accuracy; enable them to ensure that the financial statements and Directors' Report comply with the Companies Act 2014; and enable the financial statements to be audited. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Directors are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the company's website. Legislation in Ireland governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

### **Declaration of Interests**

All members of the Board declare relevant interests on an annual basis. At the beginning of each board meeting, all Directors are invited to declare any conflicts of interest or loyalty in respect of agenda items as well as any updates to the register of interests.

### **Thanks**

We are very grateful to all our funders for both new and continued support. The following organisations and supporters provided grants and/or contracts that contributed to our success in the last year: the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht (via Pobal), the Department of Social Protection, and the Health Service Executive. We also thank Carmichael Ireland for their continued support and specifically for the provision of mentoring and shared premises.

# **Independent External Auditor**

The auditors, Strata Financial (incorporating Duignan Carthy O'Neill) Statutory Audit Firm have expressed their willingness to continue in office in accordance with the Companies Act 2014.

# **Accounting Records**

The measures taken by the Directors to secure compliance with the requirements of Sections 281 to 285 of the Companies Act 2014 with regard to the keeping of accounting records are the implementation of necessary policies and procedures for recording transactions, the employment of appropriately qualified accounting personnel with appropriate expertise, the provision of adequate resources to the financial function and the maintenance of computerised accounting systems. The company's accounting records are maintained at the company's registered office at Coleraine House, Coleraine Street, Dublin 7.

# **Statement on Relevant Audit Information**

In the case of each of the persons who is a Director at the time this report is approved in accordance with Section 332 of the Companies Act 2014:

- So far as each Director is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's statutory auditors are unaware, and
- Each Director has taken all of the steps that he or she ought to have taken as a Director in order to make himself or herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's statutory auditors are aware of that information.

This report was approved by the Directors:

Elen Gebremedhin

Our Hengebromahi

Director

Date: 23/06/2025

Addle Spulane

Adele Spillane

Director

Date: 23/06/2025

#### Opinion

We have audited the financial statements on pages 85 to 112 of Care Alliance Ireland for the year ended 31 December 2024 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, Statement of Changes in Funds, Statement of Cashflows and the related notes, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is Irish law and FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'.

This report is made solely to the company's members as a body in accordance with Section 391 of the Companies Act 2014. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the company's members those matters that we are required to state to them in an Auditors' Report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the company and the company's members, as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the Company as at 31st December 2024 and of its result for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland'; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014

#### Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) (ISAs(Ireland)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of financial statements in Ireland, including the Ethical Standard issued by the Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority (IAASA), and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

#### Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the directors with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

#### Other information

The directors are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual report, other than the financial statements and our Auditors' report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

### Opinion on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2014

Based solely on the work undertaken in the course of the audit, we report that:

- in our opinion, the information given in the Directors' Report is consistent with the financial statements; and
- in our opinion, the Directors' Report has been prepared in accordance with the applicable legal requirements.

We have obtained all the information and explanations which we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit.

In our opinion the accounting records of the Company were sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited, and financial statements are in agreement with the accounting records.

#### Matters on which we are required to report by exception

Based on the knowledge and understanding of the Company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Directors' Report.

The Companies Act 2014 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion, the disclosures of directors' remuneration and transactions required by sections 305 to 312 of the Act are not made. We have nothing to report in this regard.

#### Respective responsibilities

#### Respective responsibilities of directors for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Directors' Responsibilities Statement on pages 78 - 79, the directors are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the directors are responsible for assessing the Company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the management either intends to liquidate the Company or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to

### Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an Auditor's Report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the IAASA's website at: https://www.iaasa.ie/Publications/Auditing-standards. The description forms part of our Auditor's Report.

Elizabeth Murphy

for and on behalf of **Strata Audit** Statutory Audit Firm 3 Harmony Court Harmony Row Dublin 2

Date: 23 June 2025

# Statement of Financial Activities (Including Income & Expenditure) for the year ended 31 December 2024

# **Income and Expenditure**

		Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
_		Funds	Funds	Funds	Funds	Funds	Funds
Income From		2024	2024	2024	2023	2023	2023
	Notes	€	€	€	€	€	€
Donations and Legacies							
Donations and fundraising Income	2.24	-	-	-	-	-	-
Income from charitable activities							
Revenue Funding Grants	7	232,018	-	232,018	247,344	-	247,344
Projects	7	87,825	-	87,825	143,806	-	143,806
Other Income	7		4,979	4,979	-	3,633	3,633
Total Income		319,843	4,979	324,822	391,150	3,633	394,783
Expenditure On							
Expenditure on Charitable Activities	3	334,130	-	334,130	367,648	4,904	372,552
Total Expenditure		(334,130)	-	(334,130)	(367,648)	(4,904)	(372,552)
Surplus/(Deficit) on ordinary							
activities before interest		(14,287)	4,979	(9,308)	23,502	(1,271)	22,231
			Page 85				

# Statement of Financial Activities (Including Income & Expenditure) for the year ended 31 December 2024

# **Income and Expenditure (continued)**

	Notes	Restricted Funds 2024 €	Unrestricted Funds 2024 €	Total Funds 2024 €	Restricted Funds 2023 €	Unrestricted Funds 2023 €	Total Funds 2023 €
	Notes	E	E	E	E	E	ŧ
Surplus/(Deficit) on ordinary activities		(14,287)	4,979	(9,308)	23,502	(1,271)	22,231
Net Income/(Expenditure) for the year		(14,287)	4,979	(9,308)	23,502	(1,271)	
Net movement in funds		(14,287)	4,979	(9,308)	23,502	(1,271)	22,231
Reconciliation of funds Total funds brought forward Transfer between Funds	14	59,588 (59,588)	61,454 59,588	121,042 -	36,086 -	62,725 -	98,811 -
Total funds carried forward	15	(14,287)	126,021	111,734	59,588 ———	61,454	121,042

# Statement of Financial Activities (Including Income & Expenditure) for the year ended 31 December 2024

### **Income and Expenditure (continued)**

All activities are in respect of continuing operations.

There are no recognised gains or losses other than the results for the above two financial years.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 23/6/5 and signed on its behalf by:

(Denyse) Elen Gebremedhin

Director

Adele Spillane

Director

# A Company Limited by Guarantee and not having a Share Capital

# Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2024

		2024	2023
	Notes	€	€
Fixed Assets			
Tangible assets	9	989	1,268
		989	1,268
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Debtors	10	6,462	1,394
Cash at bank and in hand	11	114,157	187,647
		120,619	189,041
Creditors: amounts falling			
due within one year	12	(9,874)	(69,267)
Net Current Assets		110,745	119,774
Total Assets Less Current			
Liabilities		111,734 ======	121,042 =====
The Funds of the Charity			
Restricted Funds	14	(14,287)	59,588
Unrestricted Funds	14	126,021	61,454
Funds	15	111,734	121,042

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 23.4.25. and signed on its behalf by:

(Denyse) Elen Gebremedhin

Director

Adele Spillane

Director

# Statement of Changes in Funds for the year ended 31 December 2024

	Funds account	Total Funds
	€	€
At 1 January 2024	121,042	121,042
Retained surplus for the year	(9,308)	(9,308)
At 31 December 2024	111,734	111,734
In respect of prior year:		
	Funds	Total
	account	Funds
	€	€
At 1 January 2023	98,811	98,811
Retained surplus for the year	22,231	22,231
At 31 December 2023	121,042	121,042

# Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 31 December 2024

	2024	2023
	€	€
Cash flows from operating activities		
Net income/(expenditure) for the year	(11,039)	22,221
Depreciation	1,171	948
(Increase)/Decrease in debtors	(5,068)	14,918
Increase/(Decrease) in creditors	(59,403)	47,835
Net cash flow provided by/(used in) from operating activities	(74,339)	85,922
Cash flows from investing activities		
Interest received	1,741	-
Capital Expenditure	(892)	(640)
Net cash flow provided by/(used in) from investing activities	849	(640)
Change in cash & cash equivalents	(73,490)	 85,282
Cash & cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting year	187,647	102,365
Change in cash & cash equivalents in the year	(73,490)	85,282
Cash & cash equivalents at the end of the reporting year	114,157	187,647
	·	

# Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

### 1. Statement of Compliance

These financial statements have been prepared in compliance with FRS 102, 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland', Charities SORP (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2014.

Care Alliance Ireland is incorporated in the Republic of Ireland. The company is a company limited by guarantee and was incorporated in Ireland on 21 August 2008. The companies registered number is 461315 and its registered office is located at Coleraine House, Coleraine Street, Dublin 7, D07 E8XF. The nature of the company's operations and its principal activities are set out in the Director's Report.

# Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

#### 2. Accounting Policies

### 2.1. Basis of preparation of financial statements

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with accounting standards generally accepted in Ireland and Irish statute comprising the Companies Act 2014, and the Charities SORP (FRS 102). Accounting Standards generally accepted in Ireland in preparing financial statements giving a true and fair view are those published by Chartered Accountants Ireland and issued by the Financial Reporting Council.

Care Alliance Ireland is constituted under Irish company law as a company limited by guarantee and is a registered charity and has adopted and reported its performance in accordance with the format provided for in the Charities SORP and in particular reports its performance for the financial year in the format of the SORP's Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA).

Companies Act 2014 which became effective in law on 1 June 2015 and from that date applied the format and content of financial statements requirements appropriate for a company trading for the profit of its members to a company that is a not for profit organisation. In order to provide information relevant to understanding the stewardship of the directors and the performance and financial position of the charity, Care Alliance Ireland has prepared its financial statements in accordance with the formats provided for in the Charities SORP (FRS 102) consistent with the prior year.

The directors consider the adoption of the SORP requirements is the most appropriate accounting to properly reflect and disclose the activities of the organisation. Had the Companies Act format and content of financial statements requirements suitable for a company trading for the profit of its members been presented instead, a profit and loss account with related notes showing items such as Turnover and Cost of Sales would have been reported along with a "profit" on ordinary activities before taxation.

Care Alliance Ireland is a non-profit organisation and involved solely in running a charity at Coleraine House, Coleraine Street, Dublin 7.

# Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

#### 2.2. Judgments and key sources of estimation uncertainty

The preparation of these financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of policies and reported amounts of assets and liabilities, income and expenses.

Judgements and estimates are continually evaluated and are based on historical experiences and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

The company makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below.

The directors have prepared budgets and cash flows for a period of at least twelve months from the date of the approval of the financial statements which demonstrate that there is no material uncertainty regarding the company's ability to meet its liabilities as they fall due, and to continue as a going concern. On this basis the directors consider it appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis. Accordingly, these financial statements do not include any adjustments to the carrying amounts and classification of assets and liabilities that may arise if the company was unable to continue as a going concern.

#### 2.3. Company name

The company received approval under section 1180(1) of the Companies Act 2014 to omit the word 'Company Limited by Guarantee' from its name.

#### 2.4. Functional and presentation currency

Items included in the financial statements of the company are measured using the currency of the primary economic environment in which the company operates ("the functional currency"). The financial statements are presented in euro, which is the company's functional and presentation currency and is denoted by the symbol " $\in$ ".

# Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

#### 2.5. Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets under the cost model are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation and any accumulated impairment losses. Historical cost includes expenditure that is directly attributable to bringing the asset to the location and condition necessary for it to be capable of operating in the manner intended by management.

The company adds to the carrying amount of an item of fixed assets the cost of replacing part of such an item when that cost is incurred, if the replacement part is expected to provide incremental future benefits to the company. The carrying value amount of the replacement part is derecognised. Repairs and maintenance are charged to income or expenditure during the period in which they are incurred.

Depreciation is provided on all tangible fixed assets at the following annual rates calculated to write off the cost less residual value of each asset over its expected useful life on the straight line basis, as follows:

Office Equipment - 20% Straight Line Computer Equipment - 25% Straight Line

The assets' residual values, useful lives and depreciation methods are reviewed, and adjusted prospectively if appropriate, or if there is an indication of a significant change since the last reporting date.

Gains and losses on disposals are determined by comparing the proceeds with the carrying amount and are recognised within 'other operating income' in the Statement of Financial Activities.

### 2.6. Going concern

Care Alliance Ireland is reliant on continuing support from government bodies in the form of annual recurring grants, multi-annual grants and once off project grants to ensure that the Company remains in operation for the foreseeable future.

The directors are satisfied that the organisation will continue to receive these grants, and secure other sources of income and have prepared a budget for 2025 which show that the company will continue as a going concern.

# Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

#### 2.7. Trade and other creditors

Trade and other creditors are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade payables are recognised initially at the transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

#### 2.8. Financial instruments

A financial asset or a financial liability is recognised only when the company becomes a party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

The company only enters into basic financial instruments transactions that result in the recognition of financial assets and liabilities like trade and other accounts receivable and payable.

Debt instruments like accounts receivable and payable are initially measured at present value of the future payments and subsequently at amortised cost using effective interest method. Debt instruments that are payable or receivable within one year, typically trade payables and receivables, are measured, initially and subsequently, at the undiscounted amount of the cash or other consideration expected to be paid or received.

Cash consists of cash on hand and demand deposits. Cash equivalents consist of short-term and medium-term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash that are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value.

# Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

#### 2.9. Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the company has a present legal or constructive obligation as a result of past events; it is probable that an outflow of resources will be required to settle the obligation; and the amount of the obligation can be estimated reliably.

Where there are a number of similar obligations, the likelihood that an outflow will be required in settlement is determined by considering the class of obligations as a whole. A provision is recognised even if the likelihood of an outflow with respect to any one item included in the same class of obligations may be small.

Provisions are measured at the present value of the expenditures expected to be required to settle the obligation using a pre-tax rate that reflects current market assessments of the time value of money and the risks specific to the obligation. The increase in the provision due to passage of time is recognised as a finance cost.

#### 2.10. Government grants

Grants are accounted for under the performance model as permitted by FRS 102. Grants under this model are recognised in income as follows:

- (a) A grant that does not impose specified future performance conditions on the recipient is recognised in income when the grant proceeds are receivable.
- (b) A grant that imposes specified future performance conditions on the recipient is recognised in income only when the performance conditions are met.
- (c) Grants received before the revenue recognition criteria are satisfied are recognised as a Liability and usually referred to as deferred income.

#### 2.11. Pensions

Pension benefits for employees are met by payments to defined contribution executive pensions.

The regular cost of providing retirement pensions and related benefits is charged to the Statement of Financial Activities over the employees' service lives on the basis of a constant percentage of earnings. The benefits made are into a defined contribution plan. The assets of the fund are held separately from the company in independently administered funds.

# Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

#### **2.12.** Income

Income represents the total of grants, donations and as well as membership fees and other small miscellaneous income items related to the year.

Income is received by way of donations, gifts, grants and fund-raising events and are included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities as soon as they are received. Income collected from fund-raising events is included in the Statement of Financial Activities as soon as it is credited in the bank. Donations, legacies and gifts are shown as other income in the Statement of Financial Activities.

#### 2.13. Taxation

The company is exempt from taxation due to its charitable status, charity number 20048303 (CHY number 14644).

### 2.15 Deferred Income Policy/ Income Recognition

The charity recognises deferred income where the terms and conditions have not yet been met due to timing issues, or uncertainty exists as to whether the charity can meet the terms or conditions otherwise within its control. Income is then deferred as a liability until it is probable that the terms and conditions imposed can be met. Some of the grants received are subject to performance related conditions or time periods. When these performance related or other conditions are met the deferred income is released to and recognised as income in the statement of financial activities.

#### 2.16 Investment Policy

The Board's Investment Policy is to keep surplus cash in short and medium-term deposits the latter of which are defined as being fixed deposit accounts that are 3 months or greater. The Board does not consider it prudent to place its surplus funds in other asset classes.

#### 2.17 Research and Development

For the purposes of reporting, no material research and development, as understood under accounting rules, has taken place in 2024.

#### 2.18 Other matters

No political donations were either made or received in 2024. No financial or other fiduciary transactions with directors took place in 2024.

# Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

#### 2.19 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised when a legal or constructive obligation exists as a result of a past event, a transfer of economic benefits is required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure includes any VAT which cannot be recovered and is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates. All expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis.

- Cost of charitable activities comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries together with related support costs.
- Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include finance, IT, administration and governance.

#### 2.20 Debtors

Short-term debtors are measured at transaction price, less any impairment. Loans receivable are measured initially at fair value, net of transaction costs, and are measured subsequently at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less any impairment.

#### 2.21 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents are represented by cash in hand and short and medium term deposits with financial institutions. These are highly liquid investments that mature in no more than six months from the date of acquisition and that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value.

In the Statement of Cash Flows, cash and cash equivalents are shown net of bank overdrafts that are repayable on demand and form an integral part of the Company's cash management.

#### 2.22 Employee Benefits

The charity provides paid holiday arrangements to employees. Holiday pay is recognised as an expense in the period in which the service is received.

# Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

#### 2.23 Fund Accounting

The following funds are operated by the charity:

#### - Restricted Funds

Restricted funds include grants and other income which can only be used for specific purposes. Such purposes are within the overall objectives of the charity.

#### - Unrestricted Funds

Unrestricted funds are general funds that are available for use at the Board's discretion in furthering any organisational objectives and have not been designated for other purposes. Such funds may be used to finance working capital or capital expenditure requirements.

#### 2.24 Donations and Legacy Income

It is our view that we are unlikely to receive significant donations or legacy income in the near future. For this reason, we do not currently have a donations and legacy income policy.

#### 2.25 Donated Facilities/Goods/Services Policy

It is our view that the level of such services is small overall, and as such does not warrant a policy. We will keep this under review as one of our projects does currently involve intensive volunteering by a large number of people.

# **Notes to the Financial Statements** for the year ended 31 December 2024

#### **Expenditure** 3.

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This includes:		
	2024	2023
Project Expenditure	€	€
Carers Week	11,743	19,820
Online Family Carer Support Project	23,565	41,083
DAF - Family Carer Training	27,962	21,427
Admin Contractor Support	165	-
Publications	455	105
Research & Evaluation	4,465	-
Website costs	720	
Total Project Expenditure	69,075	82,435
Legal, Professional, Administration & Employment Costs		
Wages & Salaries	198,091	215,561
Employer's PRSI Contributions	21,859	23,820
Staff Pension Costs	10,545	11,333
Board Development & Governance	954	711
Meetings	208	377
Rent	7,216	7,216
Insurance	1,860	1,699
HR Partnership Programme	2,448	2,244
Printing, Postage & Stationery	1,732	596
Telephone & Fax	954	1,040
Computer Costs	1,026	878
Ukraine	-	4,366
Death in Service	1,088	1,133
Travelling and subsistence	535	254
Accountancy & Payroll Fees	6,993	8,539
Audit & other professional fees	4,172	4,904
Bank Charges	142	196
Staff Development	448	1,695
Office supplies	1,698	1,253
Subscriptions	1,915	1,354
Depreciation	1,171	948
	265,055	290,117

# Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

Total Expenditure	334,130	372,552

Due to the small size of the organisation it is not considered necessary or practical to detail fundraising, support and or governance costs. As the organisation grows the board of directors will reconsider this approach.

4.	Interest receivable and similar charges	2024 €	2023 €
	On bank balances	1,741	(10)

# Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

### 5. Employees

### **Number of employees**

The average monthly numbers of employees (excluding the directors) during the year were:

	2024 Number	2023 Number
All employees	5	5
Employment costs	2024	2023
	€	€
Wages and salaries	198,091	215,561
Employers social insurance contributions	21,859	23,820
Pension costs	10,545	11,333
	230,495	250,714

The Board Director's renumeration for 2024 was €Nil (2023 : €Nil).

The Board of Director's expenses for 2024 was €40 (2023: €NIL)

The most senior staff member is the CEO. He was paid a whole-time equivalent salary of €77,625 (€62,100 based on four day per week employment in 2024) His total remuneration including Salary and Pension in 2024 was €65,826 (2023: €63,524). This excludes Employers PRSI costs.

Employment benefits breakdown (including Employer Pension, excluding Employer PRSI)

Up to €60,000 - 4 employees

From €60,000 - €70,000 - 0 employee

From €70,000 - €80,000 - 1 employee

Total employer pension contributions were €10,545 in 2024.

# Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

### 6. Auditors Remuneration

	2024	2023
	€	€
Statutory Audit Fee	4,172	4,904
	4,172	4,904

The 2022 audit fee was underestimated when accruing for it in the 2022 accounts leading to an increase in the 2023 audit fee. This amount explains the decrease between 2023 and 2024. Notwithstanding this adjustment, the charity's audit fees increased by CPI of 2% relative to the 2023 audit fees

# Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

7.	Grant Funding	2024	2023
		€	€
	HSE - Core Funding and CFI Online Carers Support	141,017	150,015
	Pobal - Scheme to Support National Organisations (SSNO)	91,001	91,000
	Pobal - DAF Family Carer Training	78,235	124,765
		310,253	365,780

The HSE core funding of €31,009 is an annual recurring grant for the delivery of specific services (information, representation, research support, submissions, collaboration) detailed in a service agreement.

€110,008 in other HSE funding relates to supporting the work of the Online Carer Support Project (Carers Guarantee), also detailed in a service agreement.

The Pobal grant is a three year (2022-2025) grant for the delivery of specific services (advocacy, research and policy development, networking, specialist support, information provision) detailed in a grant agreement.

Other Projects	2024	2023
	€	€
Carers Week	9,590	8,041
National Lottery	-	6,329
Ukraine Project	-	10,000
Research Seminar	-	1,000
	9,590	25,370

Membership Fees, contained in other income, are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities of the year in which they are receivable

#### Expenditure

All expenditure is charged in the period to which it relates.

# Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

### 8. Pension costs

Pension benefits for employees are met by payments to individual defined contribution Executive Pensions. Pension costs amounted to €10,545 (2023 - €11,333). The assets of the fund are held separately from the company in independently administered funds.

# 9. Tangible assets

	Fixtures, Furniture & Fittings	Office Equipment €	Computer Equipment €	Total €
Cost	•	·	_	
At 1 January 2024	896	89	8,034	9,019
Additions	-	-	892	892
At 31 December 2024	896	89	8,926	9,911
Depreciation				
At 1 January 2024	896	89	6,766	7,751
Charge for the year	-	-	1,171	1,171
At 31 December 2024	896	89	7,937	8,922
Net book values				
At 31 December 2024			989	989
At 31 December 2023	-		1,268	1,268

All tangible fixed assets are unrestricted.

# Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

10. Debtors:	amounts falling	due within on	e vear
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	2024	2023
	€	€
Income Receivable	5,000	-
Prepayments and Other Receivables	1,462	1,394
	6,462	1,394

Care Alliance Ireland has recognised 2% of a new DAF Carers measure Grant in the amount of €5,000 in the year, to match the proportion of performance related tasks associated with this contract to 31 December 2024. Income receivable and prepayments have been stated at their recoverable amount.

11.	Cash at Bank and in Hand	2024	2023
		€	€
	Current Account	34,101	169,333
	Deposit Accounts	80,056	18,314
		114,157	187,647
12.	Creditors: amounts falling due	2024	2023
	within one year	€	€
	Pension	1,253	1,420
	Other taxes and social security costs	3,434	5,613
	Accruals	5,187	8,800
	Deferred Income (a)		53,434
		9,874	69,267
	Other taxes and social security costs include:		
	PAYE & PRSI	3,434	5,613

<sup>(</sup>a) The above deferred income comprise of monies received in respect of specific projects where the performance related tasks have not been completed at year end. See breakdown on note 16.

# Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

2023
€
-
2,234)
2,234)
_

Financial assets measured at amortised cost comprise accrued income.

Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost comprise accruals and deferred income.

No transaction costs have been deducted.

# Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

#### 14. Reserves

The Board of Directors currently has a reserves policy that seeks to target reserves at a minimum of four four months' expenditure based on the previous year's audited accounts. As of 31st December 2024 Care Alliance Ireland had reserves of €111,734 (three and a half months' expenditure).

As an organisation we are committed to continuing to build up the reserves over the coming years by securing a modest level of additional unrestricted funding from a range of sources. Restrictions placed by many funders make this a real challenge, as does our practice of not seeking public donations.

The Board of Directors, following careful consideration of the matter, and seeking independent advice, have made a once off adjustment to the historical reserves of the company, effective 31 December 2024. This adjustment redesignated reserves from the restricted reserves fund to the unrestricted reserves fund. This decision followed a detailed quantitative analysis of the charity's management accounts which led to the Board's view that the classification of reserves, over time, has not been treated consistently from 2015 through to 2023. Consequently, amounts in restricted reserves have been overstated, with unrestricted reserves understated. In 2025, the Board updated its Reserves Policy to provide more detail on the purpose and use of our reserves, as well as the classification and treatment of such reserves in our management accounts. This adjustment is further detailed below in Note 15, and has been reflected in the Charity's audited financial statements within the Balance Sheet and Statement of Financial Activities.

# Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

#### 15. Reconciliation of movements in funds

Closing Reserves allocated as follows:

	Opening Surplus 01/01/24	Transfer between Reserves	2024	Closing Surplus 31/12/24
	€		€	€
Restricted Funds	59,588	(59,588)	(14,287)	(14,287)
Unrestricted Funds	61,454	59,588	4,979	126,021
	121,042	<del>-</del>	(9,308)	111,734

	Opening Surplus 01/01/23	2023	Closing Surplus 31/12/23
	€	€	€
Restricted Funds	36,086	23,502	59,588
Unrestricted Funds	62,725	(1,271)	61,454
	98,811	22,231	121,042

The Board of Directors, following careful consideration of the matter, and seeking independent advice, have made a once off adjustment to the historical reserves of the company, effective 31 December 2024. Further information is contained in Note 14.

# Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

#### 16 Deferred Income

This includes:

	2024	2023
DAF - ICT RET	-	53,435
	<u> </u>	53,435

Deferred income at year end comprises of €Nil (2023: €53,435).

#### 17. Capital commitments

The company had no capital commitments at 31 December 2024.

#### 18. Contingent liabilities

As outlined, the company has received government grants for revenue purposes. Should these grants not be used for the purpose specified, the grants will become repayable in whole or in part.

As at the 31 December 2024 Care Alliance Ireland estimates that there is no amount due for repayment.

#### 19. Related Party Transactions

The company has a policy of reimbursing directors for travel and other approved and legitimate expenses incurred during the course of carrying out their duties. During the year ended 31 December 2024 the total expenses reimbursed to Directors amounted to €Nil (2023: Nil). €Nil was reimbursed in 2024 to the CEO of Care Alliance Ireland.

No other related party transactions took place during the year.

#### 20. Ultimate parent undertaking

The company is controlled by its Members and the Board of Directors.

# Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

### 21. Post Balance Sheet events

There have been no significant events affecting the company since the year-end.

# 22. Key management personnel compensation

The CEO is considered to be Key Management. The total employment costs of the CEO including Salary, Pension, and Employer PRSI in 2024 was €72,704. (2023: €70,148).

# 23. Analysis of changes in net funds

	Opening balance €	Cash flows €	Closing balance €
Cash at bank and in hand	187,647	(73,490)	114,157
Net funds	187,647	(73,490)	114,157

# Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024

#### 24. Details of Grant Funding

Care Alliance Ireland received restricted grant funding from The Department of Rural and Community Development, administered through Pobal, for the Scheme to Support National Organisations (SSNO). The 2022-2025 grants awarded will be up to €273,000 of which €91,000 was awarded in respect of 2024. The grant has been awarded to assist with staffing and core overhead costs and is not capital in nature.

Care Alliance Ireland received restricted grant funding from The Department of Rural and Community Development, administered through Pobal, for the period from January 1st 2024 to December 31st 2024. The grant is for the Dormant Accounts Funds- 2022 - Carers and Persons with a Disability. The total monies that was awarded in respect of the grant was €198,000 of which €19,800 was in respect of 2024. The grant was awarded to assist with staffing, project and core overhead costs and is not capital in nature.

Care Alliance Ireland received restricted grant funding of €141,017 from The Health Services Executive, for the period from January 1st 2024 to December 31st 2024. The grant is for Core Funding (Older Persons Services), and to deliver an Online Family Carer Support Project (Carers Guarantee) The grant was awarded to assist with staffing, project and core overhead costs and is not capital in nature.

Care Alliance Ireland is compliant with relevant Department of Public Expenditure and Reform circulars including 13/2014.

# Detailed Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 December 2024

Supplementary information relating to the financial statements, not forming part of the audited financial statements

# Detailed Trading Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 December 2024

	2024 €	2024 €	2023 €	2023 €
Income				
HSE - Core Funding and CFI Online Carers Su	ıpport	141,017		150,015
Pobal - Dept of the Environment (SSNO)		91,001		91,000
National Lottery		· -		6,329
Pobal - DAF Family Carer Training		78,235		124,765
Carers Week		9,590		8,041
Ukraine Project		-		10,000
Research Seminar		-		1,000
Membership Fees		1,750		1,950
Research income		1,000		_
Other Income		488		1,673
		323,081		394,773
		323,001		334,773
Expenditure				
Wages and salaries	198,091		215,561	
Employer's PRSI contributions	21,859		23,820	
Staff pension costs	10,545		11,333	
Board Development & Governance	954		711	
Meetings	208		377	
Rent	7,216		7,216	
Insurance	1,860		1,699	
HR Partnership Programme	2,448		2,244	
Online Family Carer Support Project	23,565		41,083	
DAF - Family Carer Training	27,962		21,427	
Printing, postage and stationery	1,732		596	
Evaluation/ Research Bids	4,313		-	
Publications	455		105	
Ukraine	-		4,366	
Death in Service	1,088		1,133	
Policy and Research	152		297	
Telephone	954		1,040	
Website Costs	720		375	
Computer costs	1,026		503	
Office Supplies	1,698		956	
Carers Week	11,743		19,820	
Travelling and subsistence	535		254	
Accountancy & Payroll fees	6,993		8,539	
Audit fees	4,172		4,904	
	Dago 11/			

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# Detailed Trading Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 December 2024

	2024	2024	2023	2023
	€	€	€	€
Bank charges	142		196	
Staff Development	448		1,695	
Admin Contractor Support	165		-	
Subscriptions	1,915		1,354	
Depreciation (Computer Equipment)	1,171		948	
		(334,130)		(372,552)
		(11,049)		22,221
Bank deposit interest	1,741		10	
		1,741		10
Net Surplus for the year		(9,308)		22,231