



# Online Family Carer Support Project

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Presentation by  
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Care Alliance Ireland



**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

# Origin of the Project



- March 2020: COVID-19
- Services all ceased – many overnight
- Time of confusion and misinformation
- Care Alliance responded

## The Online Family Carer Support Project

# Initial Aims

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- Reliable, trustworthy information
- Facilitate peer support between family carers
- Signpost to services & other organisations





# Main Objectives


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- Increase the overall well-being of family carers in Ireland
- Reduce the negative impacts often experienced, such as  
loneliness and social isolation



# Facebook





Group by National Carers Week

## Family Carer Support Group (Republic of Ireland)

Private group · 3.9K members

Joined ▾

+ Invite

About

Discussion

Featured

Rooms

Topics

Members


Events

Media

More ▾

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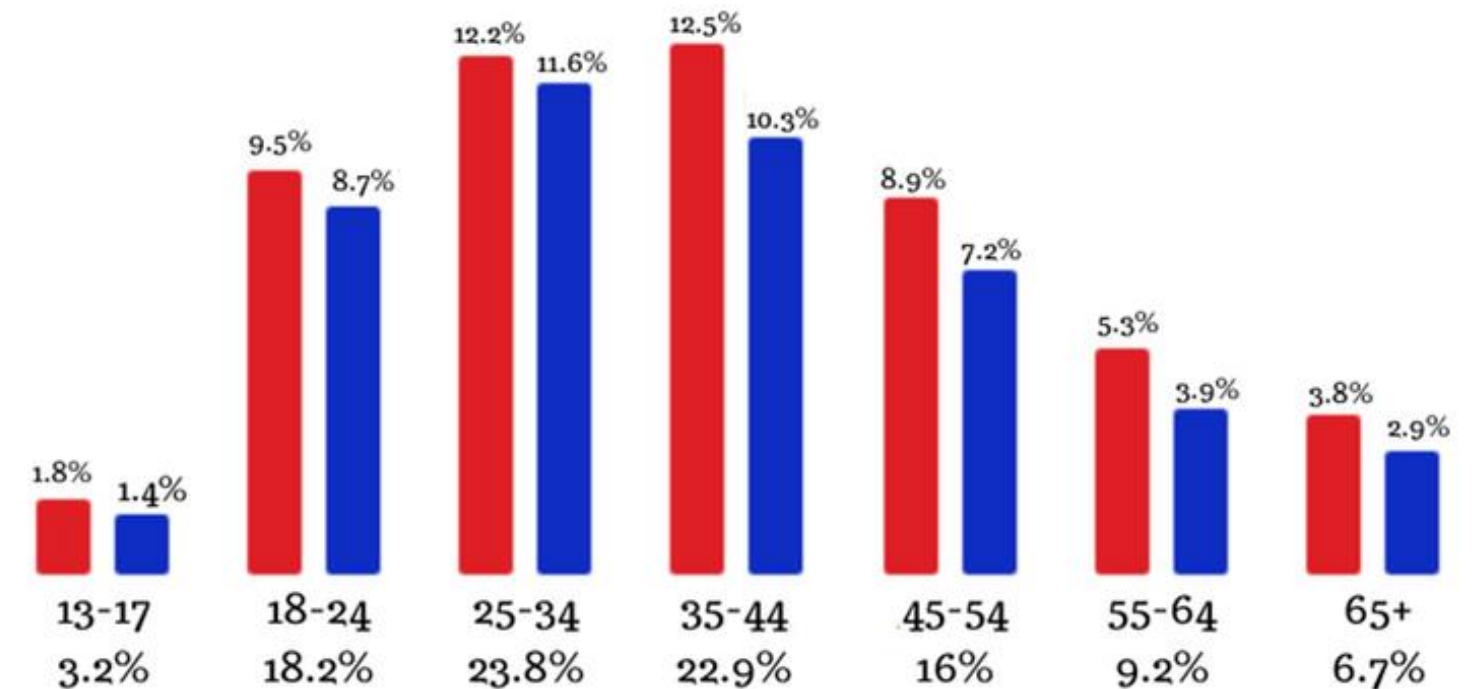
# Why Facebook?

- Set up speed and cost
- Go where the carers already are

 Facebook users in Ireland  
December 2021 

 3 609 400

 54%  
Women  46%  
Men



## Not just a “Facebook group”

A professionally moderated, fully funded support group that happens to use the Facebook platform

# Operations



Peer  
Support &  
Advice

Professional  
Guidance &  
Referrals

Activities

- **Members**
- **Volunteers (former & current family carers)**

- **Social Workers**
- **Policy & Research**
- **Psychologists**
- **Wellness**

- **Book Club**
- **Gardening Club**
- **Quiz Nights**
- **Coffee morning**
- **Educational Talks**
- **Competitions**



# Volunteer Moderators

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- Team of 12 volunteers
- Mix of current/former family carers and professionals
- All posts are pre-moderated, all comments read
- 7-day week rota
- Assist with the various activities we offer





# “Mods & Vols” Group

- Discuss challenging issues
- Appropriate responses
- Resources
- Monthly Zoom meetings
- Volunteer Support



## FC Support Group Moderators and volunteers

Private group · 15 members



Joined ▾

+ Invite

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# Activities: All Online

## Book Club



## Coffee Morning



## Quiz Nights



## Crafty Carers



## Chair Yoga



## Competitions & Giveaways



## Gardening Club



## Information & Educational Talks







# Quotes From Members

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*"You have no idea how much this has brightened my day, these last few weeks have been rough enough and I'm even getting teary writing this as it's just perked me up so much. Thank you so so much. This page is amazing and I'm so grateful and thankful to be part of it xx"*

*"It's not often I'm left speechless but I was when I took in the post just now. I cannot express what your thoughtfulness means to me. I sat staring at the card and box with tears of gratitude in my eyes. Joining The Carers group is one of the best things I've ever done for myself. In a time of unprecedented isolation it gave me company and even better new friends"*

*"Thank you for the lovely card. Thank you to the whole team for everything you guys do, you go way above and beyond what is expected of you. I don't post often or interact as much as I would like, but just reading everyone's posts and knowing the activities are there for when I can do them is a major lifeline for me. Xx"*

# Book Club

- Every 2 months
- Approx 120 books sent to family carers
- Zoom Book Club discussion night



*"Just been to my first Book Club Zoom and it was WONDERFUL ☺ I have never been in a Book Club before and really enjoyed discussing the book and getting other suggestions for reading, chatting about lots of other stuff too! can't wait for the next one 💕"*



# Garden Club



*"I love this garden club! I never planted seeds before I joined, now I've grown flowers and even veg! More importantly, someone is always there to chat to"*

*"Thank you so much. It has made a huge difference to my life, and I've made so many friends through Carers in Bloom"*





# Calendar 2022



*"Absolutely amazing, gorgeous meaningful calendar. Thank you."*

*"We are so delighted to have received one, my mam had the biggest smile on her face looking at all the beautiful photos."*



**'Forgotten Ireland'**

Geraldine M Byrne

## SEPTEMBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Take one step at a time, it's going to be ok.  
- Bernadette







# Christmas Card 2022





# Art Classes

## ACRYLIC PAINTING CLASSES

FOUR WEEK NATURE INSPIRED  
PAINTING CLASSES VIA ZOOM



SUITABLE FOR COMPLETE  
BEGINNERS - INTERMEDIATE

ALL PAINTING MATERIALS SUPPLIED

TUESDAY 26TH APRIL 8PM-9PM

TUESDAY 3RD MAY 8PM-9PM

TUESDAY 10TH MAY 8PM-9PM

TUESDAY 17TH MAY 8PM-9PM

*"Tk you so much for such a lovely class  
and for all the help and advice."*

*"The most enjoyable 90 minutes  
I completely forgot all my stresses.  
Such a gift thank you...."*

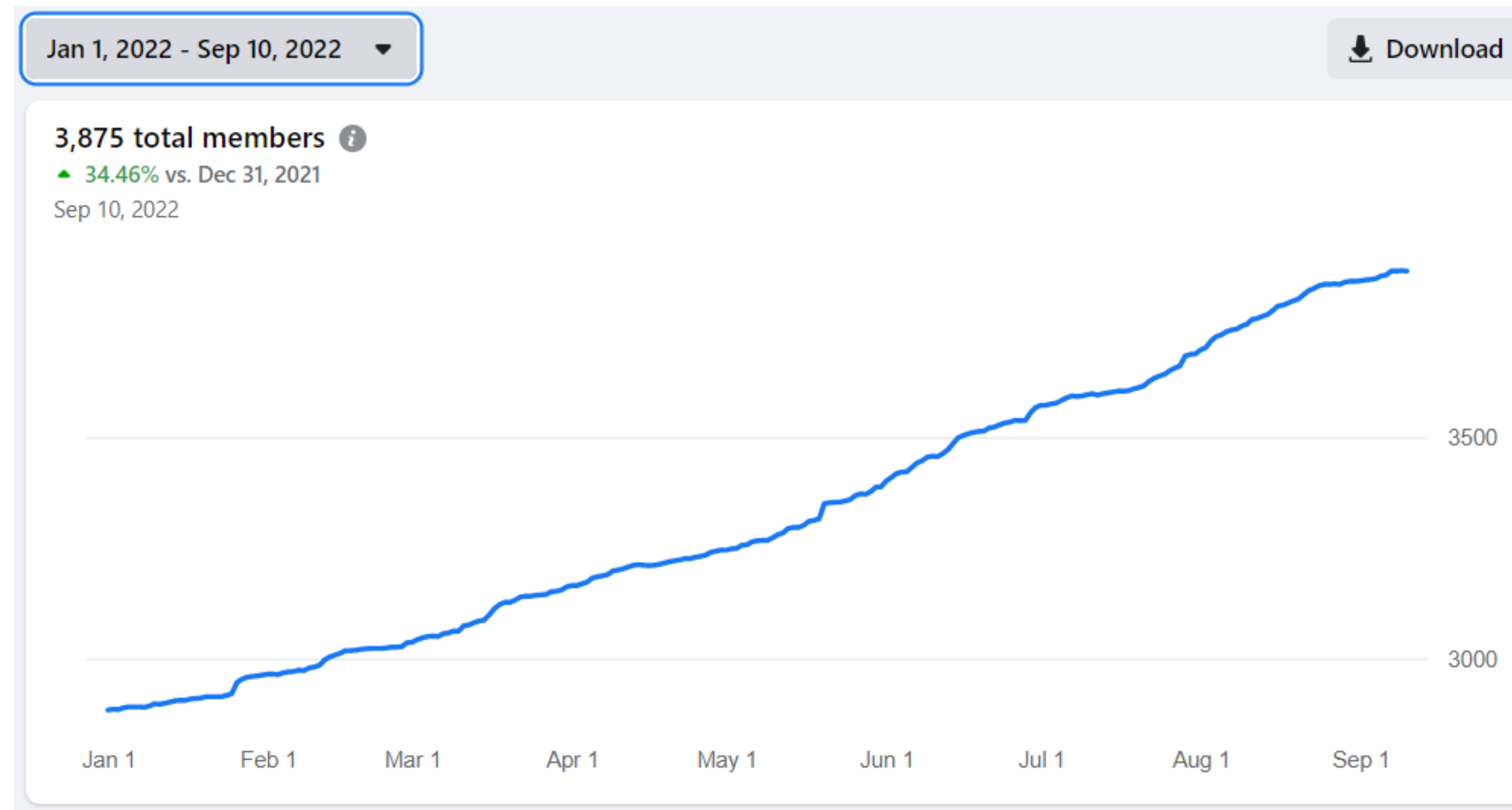
*"Thanks for tonight really enjoyed it  
can't wait for next week"*

*"Absolutely Love this class, so  
zen and relaxing!!"*

# Engagement



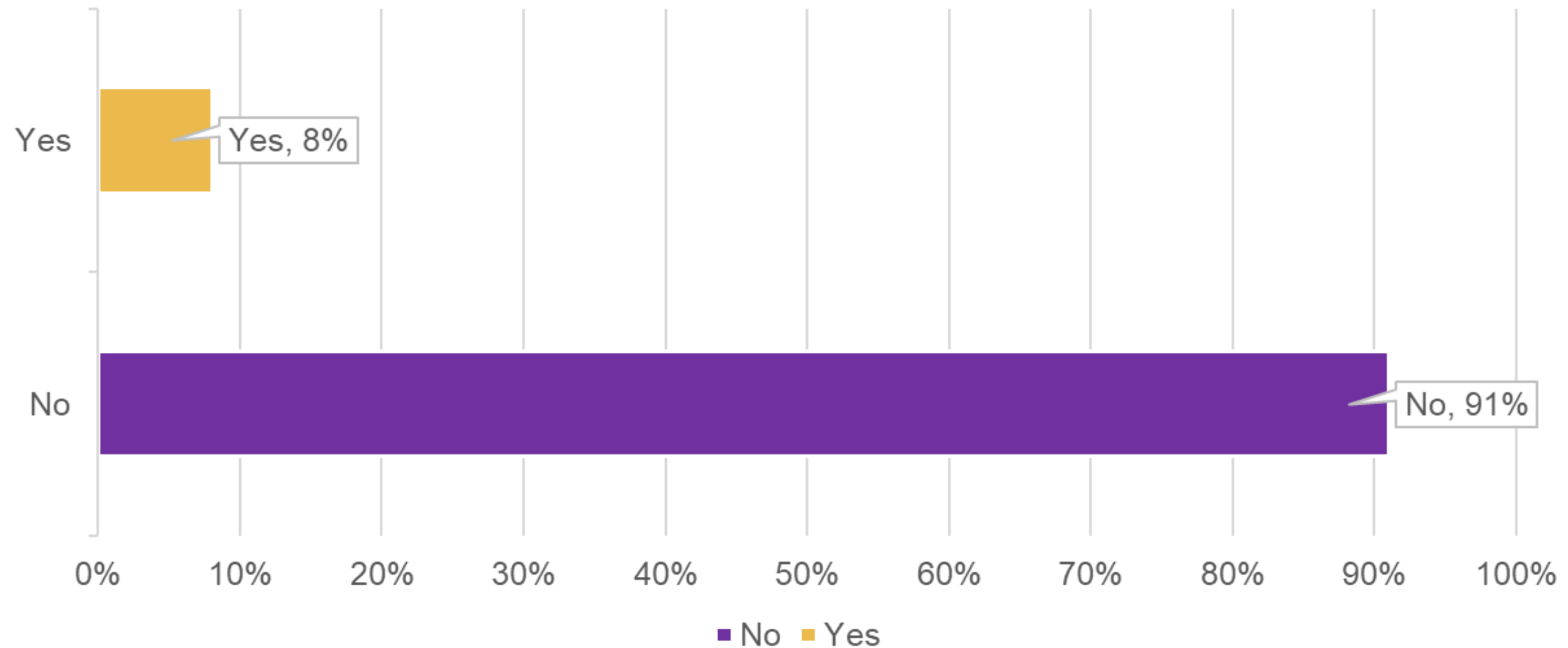
- Currently 3,875 members
- Membership continues to increase
- Retention rate of 96% versus traditional face-to-face, where drop out rate can be as high as 50%
- Extremely high engagement levels – 91% of members are “active”





# Member Poll

We asked: "Prior to Covid-19 were you involved in any face to face support groups?"



n=474



# Online Family Carer Support Group

Member Activity September 2021 - September 2022



The Power of Peer Support





# Collaboration

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- Signpost and refer family carers to other organisations as appropriate
- Joint courses/activities
- Always open to collaborating with other organisations

# Research

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- PhD Research Project with The University of Limerick
- Rosemary Daynes-Kearney is investigating the impact of online support groups for family carers:
  - Why are they important?
  - What works well?
  - Who uses them?



# Research

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- PhD comprises of 3 linked studies:
  1. A qualitative, in-depth interview study with members of the Online Family Carer Support Group
  2. A quantitative survey made available to wider online support groups, and abroad
  3. A revised model of best practice for delivery and implementation for our online support project

**Publication due Summer 2023**





# Funding

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- Initial funding in 2020 by the Community Foundation of Ireland and The National Lottery
- HSE recurring funding granted
  - Recognition of the value the project provides
  - Project is sustainable for the future



# Questions?

Website: [www.carealliance.ie](http://www.carealliance.ie)

Find us on Twitter: [@CareAllianceIrl](https://twitter.com/CareAllianceIrl)

Contact: [tara@carealliance.ie](mailto:tara@carealliance.ie)

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/FamilyCarerOnlineSupportGroupIreland>



**Thank you for your time and attention!**