

**Care Alliance Ireland – Reflection on the Programme for Government****2025**

Further to the publication earlier this year of the new Programme for Government, we in Care Alliance Ireland have taken the time to review its content and note the following important references and commitments to family caring. We also detail below some concerns we have.

In summary, we are pleased to see the programme include commitments to the abolition of the Means Test for Carers Allowance; to the raising of core social welfare payments like Carers Allowance and Benefit; and to various actions that if delivered would improve the lives of Irelands 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.

We look forward to working with officials, Ministers, our colleagues, and other stakeholders towards the implementation of these measures - and more - over the lifetime of this new Government.

The full Programme for Government can be read [here](#).

## **Care Alliance Ireland notes on Programme for Government**

### **Positives**

- Commitment to increasing the income disregards for the means test for Carers Allowance; with a view to the abolition of the Means Test for Carers Allowance over the lifetime of the Government (P. 100)
- Commitment to increase weekly (Carers Allowance/Carers Benefit) and monthly (Domiciliary Care Allowance) carers payments (P. 100)
- Commitment to increase the Carer Support Grant (P. 100)
- 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. (P. 100)
- Commitment to implement the revised Housing Adaptation Grant limits and eligibility criteria (P. 45)
- Commitments that, if implemented, would significantly increase appropriate housing for older and disabled people living in the community (P. 46)
- Commitments that, if implemented, would contribute to improved outcomes for children with disabilities in education settings (P. 69, 70)
- Develop a new national policy on palliative care for children and increase funding to children's hospice care. (P. 90)


- Work with the Law Society to create a solicitor's portal to simplify enduring Power of Attorney applications. (P. 93)
- Design a Statutory Home Care Scheme (P. 96) *(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 (P. 97)

## 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 & 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 5 years. For example, we see no firm commitments to expand the use of digital technologies in social care, with the bulk of actions in that space focussed 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 focussed 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.

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