

Position Title: Project Assistant (Full-time, 12mths, Fixed-term Contract) (Online Family Carer Support Project)

Reports to: Project Manager

Care Alliance Ireland (CAI) is the National Network of Voluntary Organisations supporting family carers. Our vision is that the role of family carers is fully recognised and valued by society in Ireland. We exist to enhance the well-being of family carers by supporting our member organisations in their direct work with family carers. We do this by providing information, developing research and policy, sharing resources, and instigating opportunities for collaboration. We also deliver two specific projects that directly support family carers, namely the return to Employment project (Re-Emerge 2) and the Online Family Carer Support Project.

POSITION SUMMARY: Applications are invited for the post of Project Assistant (full time, 35 hours per week).

The primary aspect of this role will be to support the project manager in delivering and developing an existing nationwide online project focussing on engaging and supporting family carers through an online carer support group and associated activities therein. This project is a collaboration with ten volunteers and other organisations, that seeks to positively impact on family carers wellbeing and deliver an associated reduction in their sense of isolation and loneliness. The position offers an exciting opportunity for a suitably qualified individual to work on a major national project, funded by the Health Service Executive (HSE) to support the implementation of the National Carers Strategy.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

- This person will be responsible for supporting the project manager in leading the development and delivery of the operational and administrative requirements of the project. This will include directly working on many of the core operations (post moderation, organising monthly online quizzes, distribution of occasional prizes, organising occasional online content matter expert events, bi-monthly book club, weekly online drop-in); office administration, occasional (1 or 2 per year) volunteer training events and participation in monthly team meetings (See Appendix 1; Project Operations Infographic).
 - To undertake such other duties as might be reasonably assigned from time to time in consultation with the Project Manager. In 2025 this will likely include working on National Carers Week, that takes place annually in June.
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PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential qualifications, skills and experience:

- Third level education
- High level IT skills in particular use of online conference and social media facilities including but not limited to Facebook groups, Zoom, Microsoft Office Suite and Google Workspace
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Excellent organisational skills including a proven ability to work to deadlines
- Fluent speaker and writer of English
- Ability to demonstrate initiative within a small team
- Have good time management and organisational skills

Desirable qualifications, skills and experience:

- Have experience of the voluntary sector
- Previous experience in the field of family caregiving
- Have knowledge, empathy and understanding of the rights and needs of family carers

TERMS

This is a full-time position (35 hours per week). This role can be performed largely remotely but will require the applicant to be available to work in the office in Dublin 7 or attend in person meetings up to two days per month, averaged over 12 months, at the request of the Project Manager.

You will need to have access to a private working space with reliable high-speed internet. Home office equipment will be provided. Work will largely be delivered between the hours of 9am to 5pm, however, it is expected that the individual will be available for evening/weekend work (approximately one evening every two weeks and one weekend every four), with full time back for these hours worked. Evening and weekend work is likely to include online group/post moderation (with manager available on-call) and co-delivering online events. This is a 12-month fixed-term position beginning in March 2025, with the possibility of this role becoming permanent. Salary will be €34,000. There is an employer pension contribution of 5% and 5 weeks of annual leave. There is no salary scale with this post. There is a dedicated training budget with this role to support with continuing professional development.

This job description is intended as a summary of the primary responsibilities and qualifications for this position. The job description is not intended as inclusive of all duties an individual in this position might be asked to perform or that may be required to do either now or in the future.

Please send CV & cover letter by email (Please reference 'Full-Time Project Assistant' in email subject header) only to tara@carealliance.ie by Wednesday 29th January, 2025. It is intended to undertake virtual interviews on the week beginning February 10th, 2025.

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Appendix 1

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



Links

Group Link URL

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

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 of caree)

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:**
 - 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-Infomal/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 (11)
- 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 document
- Ensure sustainability / finances

Engagement Data

- Jan 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 / isolation
- 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