



An Roinn Sláinte
Department of Health

The National Carers' Strategy

Recognised, Supported, Empowered

Fifth Progress Report, 2017

Introduction

Vision Statement

Carers will be recognised and respected as key care partners. They will be supported to maintain their own health and well-being and to care with confidence. They will be empowered to participate as fully as possible in economic and social life

The National Carers' Strategy, which was published in 2012, sets the strategic direction for future policies, services and supports provided by Government Departments and agencies for carers. It is a cross-departmental Strategy that sets out:

- guiding principles;
- goals and objectives addressing priority areas (income support, health, information, respite, housing, transport, training, employment, children and young people with caring responsibilities); and
- a Roadmap for Implementation containing 42 Actions to be achieved on a cost-neutral basis in the short to medium term.

This is the fifth Progress Report on implementation and covers the period January-December 2017.

National Goal 1: Recognise the value and contribution of carers and promote their inclusion in decisions relating to the person they are caring for

Objective 1.1: Strengthen awareness and recognition of the role and contribution of carers at national, regional and local level

Action	Department	Update for 2017
1.1.1 Promote a better recognition of the role and contribution of carers at a national level	Business, Enterprise and Innovation	The Workplace Relations Commission will continue to encourage employers and employees to provide flexible workplaces that meet the needs of both employers and employees and supporting employment rights, which includes Carer's Leave.
	Children and Youth Affairs	<p>The implementation capacity for local Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC) is complete with full national coverage with 27 CYPSCs established, 26 co-ordinators in post and 1 National Co-ordinator for CYPSC. Each CYPSC develops its own 3 year <i>Children and Young People's Plan</i> (CYPP) and identifies priorities for their area which includes the supports needed for young carers. As part of this process, CYPSCs are creating an age profile of young carers.</p> <p>Where there are existing organising structures related to young carers, CYPSCs are engaging with these groups to capture the expressed needs of this seldom heard cohort of young people.</p> <p>It is expected that further actions relating to this target group will be given attention through each CYPP in 2018 under Outcome 3 of <i>Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures</i> and through the Prevention, Partnership and Family Support Programme (PPFS).</p> <p>Galway CYPSC and Donegal CYPSC have formulated actions to respond to need. For example, Donegal CYPSC continues to support the work of the county's Young Carers' Interagency Implementation Group, raising awareness of the needs of young carers in Donegal and providing tangible supports to them. Young carers who have participated report having increased access to mainstream services, increased levels of self-confidence and improved health. Supports include individual support and advocacy, respite, self-care and mindfulness training, first aid, cookery and other seasonal activities.</p>
	Employment Affairs and Social Protection	<p>The Department of Employment and Social Affairs (DEASP) continues to provide annual reports on <i>Statistical Information on Social Welfare Services</i> including information relating to illness, disability and caring.</p> <p>The Dormant Accounts Action Plan 2016 included a provision for €0.5 million for training and support services, centred on coping with the transition from care.</p>
Education and Skills	The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) continues to consult with parents of special needs children as part of its National	

		<p>Consultative Forum. A new Forum was established in 2017 for the period 2017 – 2018, to coincide with the NCSE Council. The Forum met twice in 2017.</p> <p>As part of the SOLAS/Education Training Board (ETB) business planning process, SOLAS requested ETBs to set out how training needs identified by carer organisations can be/ will be addressed at local level.</p>
	Health	<p>The <i>Programme for a Partnership Government</i> acknowledges the ongoing drafting of primary legislation for a new Transport Support Scheme to assist those with a disability. Work on the policy proposals for the new Scheme is at an advanced stage. The proposals seek to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a firm statutory basis to the Scheme's operation; • There is transparency and equity in the eligibility criteria attaching to the Scheme; • Resources are targeted at those with greatest needs; and • The Scheme is capable of being costed and is affordable on its introduction and on an ongoing basis. <p>It is hoped to bring a General Scheme and Heads of Bill seeking Government approval to the drafting of the Bill for the new Transport Support Payment shortly.</p> <p>TILDA is a nationally representative longitudinal study of the health, economic and social circumstances of approximately 8,000 Irish adults aged 50 and over. It is based in Trinity College Dublin and four waves of data collection have been completed since 2010. The Department of Health has provided €12 million in funding for TILDA since 2009, and in 2016 agreed to provide a further €10 million to enable the study to continue for the period 2017-2022. TILDA collects data on informal care provision and receipt of care by participants that can be linked to other health, economic and social data to examine risks and outcomes for participants.</p> <p>IDS-TILDA is the intellectual disability supplement of the main TILDA study. Wave 2 of IDS-TILDA included a Carer's Self Completion Questionnaire for carers of older adults with an intellectual disability living within family settings. The Department of Health provided funding of €300,000 between 2010 and 2015 for Waves 1 and 2 of IDS-TILDA, and has agreed to provide further funding of €600,000 for Wave 3 between 2016 and 2018.</p>
	Health Service Executive	<p>The Carers' Strategy, carers and carer representative organisations are given recognition through the provision of supports and funding to national and local carer groups who advocate on behalf of carers.</p> <p>The Health Service Executive (HSE) Multi Divisional Carers' Strategy group continues to support the process to progress the actions in the Carers'</p>

		<p>Strategy. The group met four times in 2017.</p> <p>HSE healthcare teams are continuing to work in partnership with Family Carers Ireland in the acute care sector on developing and improving communication skills, patient information and overall service improvement.</p> <p>The HSE has been working in partnership with HIQA and the Department of Health to develop the National Patient Experience Survey Programme, which was implemented in 2017 across 40 acute hospital locations. Results were published in December 2017 with a further survey planned for 2018.</p> <p>The HSE subsequently invited Family Carers Ireland to be represented on the HSE’s National Patient Experience Survey Programme Oversight Group specifically in relation to the areas identified in the Patient Experience Survey undertaken in May 2017. FCI made a comprehensive submission outlining their proposed involvement in advancing the key recommendations of the survey. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a carers’ charter • Patient and family advisory councils • Carer-friendly hospital initiatives • Carer needs assessment • Carer-friendly hospital employers <p>Within the mental health services, there is now an Area Lead in each of the 9 CHO Mental Health Management Teams, leading on engagement with service users and families and carers. They are linking with existing groups (such as carers’ groups and consumer panels) and also establishing local forums to provide a platform for engagement within local services.</p> <p>During 2017, plans were progressed to establish quarterly Area Fora in each CHO by the end of Q1 2018. These will provide an opportunity for representatives from the local forums, local NGOs and mental health service managers to meet and share perspectives on developments in mental health services in their areas.</p>
<p>1.1.2 Ensure that carers’ needs are considered in the development of any policies that might affect them (such as the</p>	<p>Business, Enterprise and Innovation</p>	<p>The Workplace Relations Commission will continue to encourage employers and employees to provide flexible workplaces that meet the needs of both employers and employees and supporting employment rights, which includes Carer’s Leave.</p>
	<p>Children and Youth Affairs</p>	<p>The Department and Tusla participated in the 2017 Annual Carers Forum.</p> <p>Implementation of <i>Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures</i> is ongoing across government. Three annual reports are available on the Department’s website. A mid-term review of the implementation of <i>Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures</i> will be published in 2018. One of the key policy priorities</p>

<p>Review of Disability Policy – DOH), the National Positive Ageing Strategy and the Children and Young People’s Policy Framework 2012-2017 (forthcoming)</p>		<p>under Outcome 5 – ‘connected, respected and contributing to their world’ is the aim to ensure positive networks of family, friends and communities. The Government recognises in <i>Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures</i> that children and young people may experience difficulties maintaining friendships, education and employment due to the need for them to take on caring responsibilities within their families. The key Government activity in this area is to ensure children and young people are supported in their caring role.</p> <p>Through Tusla’s Parenting Support Strategy, Tusla considers the needs of young people in caring roles, first by highlighting the needs of children as carers through our evidence based <i>50 Key Messages</i> document. This includes a message about children as carers and a brief guide for practitioners in the delivery of support services and links to the community for young carers.</p> <p>104 Parenting Support Champions across Tusla and partners are being trained in the dissemination of the <i>50 Key Messages</i>.</p> <p><i>The Parenting Support Strategy</i> mandates commissioning through a needs analysis process to meet support and services for different parenting contexts, for example Tusla’s <i>National Parenting Commissioning Framework</i> (in draft) highlights the importance of including young people in caring roles when deciding on the provision of services. The Prevention, Partnership and Family Support Programme (PPFS) considers the needs of young people as carers through its guidance and commissioning of family supports & services.</p>
	<p>Employment Affairs and Social Protection</p>	<p>The Department regularly engages with groups representing carers. Carers’ representative groups were invited to the Department’s pre-budget and post-budget fora in 2017.</p> <p>The rates of all weekly payments, including those to people with disabilities and carers, were increased by €5 from March 2017 while, in December 2017, an 85% Christmas Bonus was paid to long-term recipients of a Social Welfare payment.</p> <p>Budget 2018 provides for a further increase, of €5, in weekly payment rates, extends the fuel season by one week, from 26 weeks to 27 weeks, and introduces a new Telephone Support Allowance of €2.50 per week for those in receipt of the Living Alone Allowance and the Fuel Allowance.</p> <p>The regular engagement of the Department with members of the Community and Voluntary Pillar of Society, including organisations representing carers, continues to provide an opportunity for these</p>

	<p>groups to represent the needs of carers.</p> <p>The Department also meets with stakeholders to ensure that they are informed of relevant policy developments within the Department and with the National Carers' Strategy Monitoring Group to discuss actions proposed by the group.</p> <p>The Department continues to host the Annual Carers' Forum, last held in April 2017.</p>
<p>Education and Skills</p>	<p>The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) continues to engage with groups of stakeholders in the development of its policy advice.</p> <p>As part of the Comprehensive Assessment of the <i>Special Needs Assistant (SNA) Scheme</i>, the NCSE has consulted with 35 stakeholder groups to obtain views on what works well in the SNA scheme and to consider any concerns stakeholders might have. Groups consulted included parents, students, schools, advocacy groups and Government officials. Over 330 responses to a public call for electronic submissions were received. NCSE Council members have discussed the work carried out to date at their meetings, invited experts to present presentations to inform their views, and visited ten schools (mainstream and special) to see how the scheme works on the ground.</p> <p>Following the presentation of an interim report on the SNA comprehensive review to the Minister in May 2017, the NCSE established an NCSE-led working group, comprising relevant stakeholders, to assist in developing a proposal for an improved model for providing care supports, having regard to the significant amount of State investment in this area.</p> <p>The working group's term of reference is to identify and develop a proposal for a model of support to provide better outcomes for students with special educational needs who have additional care needs.</p> <p>A cross-departmental working group was also established to develop proposals in relation to the need for nursing supports in schools for children with complex medical needs.</p> <p>The report of the NCSE Working Group will be informed by the Report from the Working Group on Nursing Supports for students with complex medical needs.</p> <p>The full report of the SNA Scheme Comprehensive Review is due to be submitted in spring 2018 and work is ongoing to meet this deadline.</p> <p>Following on from the research project commissioned by SOLAS to examine</p>

	<p>barriers to participation in further education and training FET), which included an invitation to carer stakeholder groups to participate and contribute, SOLAS have now published the findings from the research.</p> <p>As part of the annual further education and training service planning process, funding applications from the Educational Training Board (ETB) sector to SOLAS are required to provide details on existing and new initiatives to address barriers to participation in FET.</p> <p>Work continued on the implementation of the first <i>Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy</i> in FET 2016-2019 to build on capacity and good practices in technology-enhanced learning, and to support increased flexibility for all learners, including those who are carers, and to expand access to learners. Progress in 2017 included the development of <i>Technology Enhanced Learning Action Plans</i> in each ETB to provide for infrastructure, pedagogy and CPD, as well as the development of a content sharing and management infrastructure to facilitate sharing and development of learning resources among all teachers. The strategy creates a framework for ETBs to offer a greater number of training programmes online, supplementing those offered through eCollege, the national online learning service (www.ecollege.ie) which planned online provision for almost 9,000 learners in 2017.</p>
Health	<p>A number of working groups have been established to support the implementation of a multi-year project to reform disability services, in line with the recommendations in the report of the <i>Value for Money and Policy Review of Disability Services in Ireland</i>. One of these working groups, People with Disabilities and Community Involvement, aims to strengthen existing national and local consultative processes to build a participation framework which will be designed to meet the changing needs of service users with the purpose of enabling persons with disabilities, carers, families and the wider community to have a meaningful role and voice in service design and delivery. A report entitled <i>Effective Participation in Decision-Making; Planning for Ordinary Lives in Ordinary Places</i> has now been completed by the Working Group, which is chaired by Inclusion Ireland and will be forwarded to the Transforming Lives Steering Group in Quarter 2, 2018.</p> <p>In December 2017, the Department announced an additional €10 million had been secured to enhance respite care in the disability sector. €8 million will be used to provide twelve new dedicated respite houses, which will come on-stream in 2018. One house will be located in each HSE Community Healthcare Organisation area, with an additional three in the Greater Dublin Area. In addition, a further €2 million extra funding will be used for innovative respite solutions, such as Home Sharing and extended day services.</p>

		<p>The National Dementia Strategy emphasises the need to support people with dementia and their carers. The three strands of the €27.5 million National Dementia Strategy Implementation Programme, co-funded by the HSE and the Atlantic Philanthropies, contain measures to support both people with dementia and their carers (through 1. the provision of dementia specific intensive homecare packages, 2. upskilling of GPs and primary care teams to diagnose and manage dementia, including a PREPARED website with a directory of local services and supports, and 3. the <i>Dementia Understand Together</i> information and awareness campaign). The Dementia Strategy Monitoring Group includes a representative of carers for people with dementia.</p> <p>The Department of Health previously secured Dormant Accounts funding in 2016 to enable the continuation of a number of innovative community supports initiatives for people with dementia and their carers in Kinsale, Mayo and Blackrock-Stillorgan. During 2017, activities funded included carer events and a befriending service using volunteers who provide respite for family carers. Another project which received funding enables the HSE to provide for the national roll out of assistive technology supports for people with dementia and their carers. In 2017, the Department of Health secured further Dormant Accounts funding to develop post-diagnostic supports for people with dementia and their carers.</p> <p>At an international level, the Department of Health, with support from the HSE, Family Carers Ireland and the Care Alliance, contributed to the work of the British-Irish Council Social Inclusion Work Sector on carers (2016-2017), which will culminate in a BIC Ministerial meeting in early 2018 and will focus on the exchange of information and good practice in supporting carers.</p>
	Health Service Executive	<p>The HSE continues to engage with carer organisations at local, regional and national level to discuss operational and common issues.</p> <p>The role of carers is acknowledged and considered in patient engagement structures across the HSE.</p> <p>The role of carers is included and outlined in the National Healthcare Charters for adults and children.</p>
	Housing, Planning and Local Government	<p>The Department is supportive of consultation as appropriate in relation to policy development and implementation.</p>
	Justice and Equality	<p>The new <i>National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017 – 2021</i> was launched by the Minister of State on 14 July, 2017. The Strategy reflects broad and</p>

	<p>extensive consultations with interested parties, including carers of persons with disabilities.</p> <p>The Disability Awareness Funding Programme launched by the Department in July 2015 continued in 2017, with the awarding of seven grants. The programme aims to raise awareness of disability and is open to applications from carers and other associations and bodies supporting people with disabilities.</p> <p>The Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015 was signed into law on 30 December 2015. New administrative processes and support measures, including the setting up of the Decision Support Service within the Mental Health Commission, must be put in place before the substantive provisions of the Act can be commenced. A high-level Steering Group comprised of senior officials from the Department of Justice and Equality, the Department of Health, the Mental Health Commission and the Courts Service is overseeing the establishment and commissioning of the Decision Support Service (DSS) and this work is ongoing. The Director of the DSS was appointed on 2 October 2017.</p> <p>The Act provides a modern statutory framework to support decision-making by adults with capacity difficulties, including those with mental health difficulties. The specific decision-making supports available to persons under the Act are decision-making assistants, co-decision-makers and decision-making representatives who will be supervised by the Director of the DSS.</p> <p>Under the Act a person may appoint a decision-making assistant – typically a family member or carer – through a formal decision-making assistance agreement to support him or her to access information or to understand, make and express decisions. Decision-making responsibility remains with the person. A person can also appoint a trusted family member or friend as a co-decision-maker to make decisions jointly with him or her under a co-decision-making agreement. Decision-making responsibility is shared jointly between the person and the co-decision-maker. For the small minority of people who are not able to make decisions even with help, the Act provides for the Circuit Court to appoint a decision-making representative. A decision-making representative will make decisions on behalf of the person but must abide by the guiding principles and must reflect the person’s will and preferences where possible. The Act also provides for forward planning with enduring powers of attorney and advance healthcare directives that allow someone with capacity to plan ahead for circumstances in which they may not have capacity in the future.</p>
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1.1.3 Build on the work begun in Census 2011 to establish a comprehensive statistical profile of Family Caring in Ireland	Children and Youth Affairs	The Department has conducted an analysis of both the 2011 and 2016 data on young carers. This is due for publication shortly. See action 2.2.4
1.1.4 Continue to convene an annual carers forum to provide carers with a voice at policy level	Employment Affairs and Social Protection	The Department continues to host the Annual Carers' Forum and invites representation from the Department of Health, the HSE, the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, the Department of the Environment, the Department of Justice and Equality, the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs, Tusla, the Department of Finance, and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.
1.1.5 Support national organisations representing the interests of carers	Employment Affairs and Social Protection	<p>The Dormant Accounts Action Plan 2016 included a provision for €0.5 million for training and support services, centred on coping with the transition from care.</p> <p>This measure provides funding for training programmes, information provision and support services for family carers following the end of their caring role. The purpose of this measure is to focus on the transition from caring and to help carers cope with the emotional and psychological aspects of the transition, and to plan for a life after caring. The measure also supports the dissemination of resource information and initiatives that reduce the social isolation experienced by carers at the end of their role.</p> <p>The measure, which is administered by Pobal on behalf of the Department, commenced in December 2017.</p>
	Health	Carer organisations have received support through National Lottery grants awarded by the Minister for Health.
	Health Service Executive	<p>The Health Service Executive (HSE) Multi Divisional Carers' Strategy group continues to support the process across the service divisions to progress the actions in The Carers Strategy.</p> <p>The HSE provides grant aid to carer organisations at both national and local level through Section 39 grants, National Lottery Grants, and support for the annual Carers Week.</p>
1.1.6 Promote more proactive	Education and Skills	The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) has published a number of information booklets for parents and guardians with special

<p>approaches to the identification of carers and to addressing their needs among staff and organisations that are likely to encounter individuals in caring situations (e.g. health and personal social service providers, and particularly primary care team members, community and education professionals)</p>		<p>educational needs, covering topics such as choosing a school, post-school education and training, the Special Needs Assistant Scheme, as well as a number of information booklets on the different categories of disability.</p> <p>The NCSE is finalising a new booklet for parents and carers on the implementation of the new model for resource teachers which will be published shortly.</p> <p>The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) continued to provide a frequently asked questions section for parents on its website. http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/neps_parent_leaflet.pdf This provides information to its clients by explaining how it operates in schools and the nature of its direct intervention with pupils, including those with caring responsibilities.</p> <p>Following on from the research project commissioned by SOLAS to examine barriers to participation in further education and training (FET), which included an invitation to carer stakeholder groups to participate and contribute, SOLAS have now published the findings from the research.</p> <p>As part of the annual FET service planning process, funding applications from the Educational Training Board (ETB) sector to SOLAS are required to provide details on existing and new initiatives to address barriers to participation in FET. See also 1.1.2.</p> <p>The Professional Development Service for Teachers has produced two resources on ‘Personal Safety’, one each for junior and senior cycles. Both provide up-to-date advice in line with other policy developments in recent years. Caregiving is identified as a core area relevant to personal safety, and within that it is explained that ‘It should be borne in mind that some young people themselves are carers in circumstances where a parent is ill or unable to look after themselves. This should be acknowledged by the teacher’.</p> <p>These guidelines are directed at both students in need of care, and those who are carers themselves in certain circumstances. Subsequently, great emphasis is placed on reminding students of the support structures within the school, and to help them identify trusted adults to whom they could talk if they needed to.</p> <p>These booklets are supported by online resources, and by CPD in important aspects of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum. The content set out in these booklets aims to promote more proactive approaches to the identification of carers and to addressing their needs.</p> <p>Guidelines were launched by the National Council for Curriculum and</p>
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		<p>Assessment in January 2017 to reinforce key SPHE messages further. The Guidelines show most clearly that such important issues are as much part of an overall wellbeing 'package' for students as they are for delivery in any individual subject space. Wellbeing is a new area of learning introduced to all first year students from September 2017, as part of the implementation of the new Framework for Junior Cycle.</p>
	<p>Health Service Executive</p>	<p>The HSE Services for Older People are continuing to progress the Single Assessment Tool (SAT). See section 2.1.3.</p> <p>During 2017, the HSE continued the development of a specific Carer Needs Assessment Tool as part of the Inter RAI Single Assessment Tool. A final draft of the Carers Needs Assessment tool was piloted across 9 countries (including Ireland) and was concluded in Q4 2017. In Ireland adult family carers and their care recipients (older people) living in the community were randomly selected from Carer Organisation membership lists and Home Care services lists, and invited to participate in testing the assessment tool.</p> <p>CHOs continue to report proactive responses to support the identification of carers through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Partnering and granting aid to relevant stakeholders to support identification of carers - Primary Care Teams, Public Health Nursing, individual Disciplines identify and support individual Carers in their day to day work - The use of Behavioural Family Therapy (BFT) for service users, family members and carers as part of the National Mental Health Clinical Care Programme - Dedicated Carers Support Departments - Information Sharing at Clinical Team Meetings and/or case Discussions/Family Meetings - Carer involvement in care planning for service user (with consent from service user) takes into account the carer and family situation - Advising Carers on entitlements, local support groups and support services (including respite services) available - Availability of leaflets/posters (literature) in Health Service Executive centres - The creation of a local database of carers collated through the HSE Carers Department where they are in operation - Public meetings through Advancing Recovery Ireland initiatives - Participation in the DCU "Co-Operative Leadership Learning Service Improvement Leadership for Mental Health Service Users, Carers, and Service Providers" - Active involvement in the Age Friendly Cities and Counties Programme

		<p>There are support groups and information groups offered to carer/family members, as well as the establishment of Mental Health Engagement Fora (led by the area lead for engagement).</p> <p>The HSE dedicated carers' webpage details the support services available to carers – www.hse.ie/carers.</p> <p>To further develop the carers' webpage, a meeting was held in 2017 with FCI, the Care Alliance and six family carers to review the carers' webpage and offer an opportunity to propose enhancements.</p>
<p>1.1.7 Promote carer self-identification initiatives and encourage carers to formally identify themselves to service providers</p>	<p>Health Service Executive</p>	<p>The HSE adopts a variety of approaches across the CHOs to encourage carers to formally identify themselves to service providers. The different approaches demonstrate the different requirements of carers across the different services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary care teams, supported by the public health nursing service, are pivotal to encouraging carers to self-identify • Network Specialist Teams and Services, e.g. Children's Disability Teams • Health Area Specialist Teams and Services, e.g. home care package coordinators/managers • Carer support groups • Parent/family fora within disability services • Carers are encouraged to attend Recovery Principles Training including Eolas and other programmes which are provided by mental health services • Consumer panels for mental health service users • Alzheimer cafes • Training courses for carers • Information literature in HSE centres, the HSE infoline and the online dedicated carers' webpage <p>Carers and family members participate in Mental Health Engagement structures to improve the responsiveness of Mental Health Services.</p> <p>The HSE is continuing to work in partnership with Family Carers Ireland and other relevant organisations to support carers.</p>

Objective 1.2: Including carers in care planning and decision making for those that they care for

Action	Department	Update for 2017
<p>1.2.1 Involve carers, as appropriate, as partners in care planning and provision by health and personal social service providers and particularly by the primary care team</p>	<p>Health Service Executive</p>	<p>The HSE acknowledges the importance of a partnership approach to care planning and provision while respecting the preferences of both carers and the person to whom they are providing care.</p> <p>Carer needs are discussed at primary care team clinical meetings, local placement forums or hospital / community MDT meetings (for home care) as part of the overall assessment and care planning processes.</p> <p>CHOs report that carers are involved in care planning and carers may attend such meetings where appropriate. It is important to note that carers' involvement in the care planning and decision making for those they care for, must be with the permission of the client.</p> <p>The Mental Health Division (MHD) continues to reach its aim to consistently involve carers in its service developments</p> <p>A MHD national initiative focussed on Advancing Recovery in Ireland (ARI) aiming to develop more recovery-orientated mental health services progressed during the reporting period. A Manager Partner in ARI, with a family carer background was appointed.</p> <p>In November 2017 the National Framework for Recovery in Mental Health (2018-2020) was launched after extensive consultation with family members, service users, mental health service providers and NGOs.</p> <p>Examples of current activities include recovery education and recovery colleges to support people's development, Learning Sets to share information on recovery initiatives, and Recovery Consultants to support recovery developments.</p> <p>To date there are 5 established Recovery Colleges based in Mayo, Galway/Roscommon, Midwest, South East, and North East with satellites into surrounding areas to allow for more accessibility to recovery education. A cross border CAWT recovery college initiative is also well under way.</p> <p>All recovery sites have active involvement from service users, family members / carers and service providers through service improvement/ recovery committees.</p> <p>There is a Family Recovery Guidance document which was developed</p>

		<p>in conjunction with family members.</p> <p>The provision of a Peer Support Worker Initiative who represent the lived experience for families and carers in the care planning process is also being progressed.</p> <p>In services for older people, Patient/Carer satisfaction surveys are undertaken in HSE residential care centres for older people.</p>
<p>1.2.2 Identify carers and their involvement in discharge planning, including their details provided in discharge letters to GPs</p>	<p>Health Service Executive</p>	<p>In the National Healthcare Charter the HSE commits that <i>“We will involve you and your family and carers in decision making about your healthcare and will take account of your preferences and values.”</i></p> <p>Carer involvement is continuing in the discharge planning process as identified in the HSE’s <i>Integrated Care Guidance: A Practical Guide to Discharge and Transfer from Hospital</i> published in 2014. Step 6 of the Guidance specifically identifies the need to involve service users and carers so that they make informed decisions and choices</p> <p>The HSE through the Hospital Groups and National Divisions is continuing to work in Partnership with Family Carers Ireland on improvement initiatives relating to discharge planning and patient partnership opportunities across hospitals and Hospital Groups. Proposed examples of this partnership include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating the use of FCI’s Freephone Careline number in hospital discharge letters • Acting as a source of support or referral for the PALS team / key staff as appropriate • Carer-proofing family and carer materials, e.g. discharge checklist • Providing a source of referral for young carers / young adult carers who may come into contact with the PALS staff or hospital staff • Information briefings, information stands within the hospital(s) for families and carers • Representing families / carers on HG committees, participating in Patient Experience Fair Day / having an information stand

Objective 1.3: Recognise the needs of carers by the provision of income supports

Action	Department	Update for 2017
<p>1.3.1 Provide regular benefits advice sessions and information through the application process</p>	<p>Employment Affairs and Social Protection</p>	<p>The Department provides information on carers' entitlements in respect of its income maintenance schemes through the Department's website and a range of alternative media. A full set of operational guidelines, including information on Carer's Benefit, Carer's Allowance and the Carer's Support Grant, is published for each scheme.</p> <p>Information on the website can be made available on request in different formats including braille and translated to different languages.</p> <p>Applicants who are disallowed on grounds other than medical are advised that they may have an entitlement to the Carer's Support Grant.</p> <p>Following discussions with carer representative groups, the award letter now includes the following statement, immediately after notifying the customer of their right of appeal: <i>Carer's allowance is a taxable source of income and should be advised to your local tax office.</i></p> <p>The Department continues to keep its processes at transition points under review and will continue to consult with sectoral representatives groups on the review process for Carer's Allowance.</p> <p>Information on carers' entitlements is available at each Intreo office.</p> <p>The Dormant Accounts Plan makes provision for the dissemination of resource information for carers and to provide supports to reduce social isolation.</p>
<p>1.3.2 Ensure that carers can access benefits advice as early as possible when their caring role begins</p>	<p>Employment Affairs and Social Protection</p>	<p>Information on carers' schemes and entitlements is available on the Department's website.</p> <p>Information on carers' entitlements is available at each Intreo office.</p> <p>A Link to Family Carers Ireland website is available on the Department's carers' webpage.</p>

<p>1.3.3 Publicise more widely that the Carer's Allowance can be shared by two carers providing care on a part time basis</p>	<p>Employment Affairs and Social Protection</p>	<p>An information page on care-sharing has been added to the Department's Rates Booklet (SW19) for 2017.</p> <p>Information on care sharing continues to be provided on the Department's website.</p>
<p>1.3.4 Continue to work to reduce waiting periods for processing of Carer's Allowance applications and appeals</p>	<p>Employment Affairs and Social Protection</p>	<p>The length of time taken to award a Carer's Allowance application at the end of 2017 had improved compared to the end of 2016.</p> <p>It is expected that processing times will improve further in the early part of 2018 as new staff and continuing business process improvements, including the redesigned application form, come on stream.</p>
<p>1.3.5 Review existing transition arrangements for carers at the end of their caring role.</p>	<p>Employment Affairs and Social Protection</p>	<p>Carers now qualify for Carer's Allowance for 12 weeks and Carer's Benefit for a period of six weeks following the loss of a loved one. The increase to 12 weeks for Carer's Allowance recipients was introduced in 2016.</p> <p>Budget 2017 provided that from January 2017, the Carer's Allowance will continue to be paid for 12 weeks where the care recipient is permanently admitted to a hospital/nursing home.</p> <p>The Intreo service is available to provide assistance for working-age carers who wish to return to work and this will be reflected in communications to individual carers (see also 4.2.5).</p>

National Goal 2: Support carers to manage their physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing

Objective 2.1: Promote the development of supports and services to protect the physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing of carers

Action	Department	Update for 2017
2.1.1 Raise awareness among health and personal social service providers of the physical and emotional health issues that carers may experience	Health Service Executive	<p>The HSE continues to progress the development of the Carers' Needs Assessment as part of the Single Assessment Tool which will identify and raise awareness of carers needs.</p> <p>Refer also to 1.1.6.</p> <p>CHO's report activity relating to this action. Awareness is raised through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary care teams, supported by the public health nursing service • Network Specialist Teams and Services, e.g. Children's Disability Teams • Health Area Specialist Teams and Services, e.g. home care package coordinators/managers • Staff training and ongoing professional development programmes and awareness campaigns • Development of area fora to raise awareness of carers' needs among statutory, community and voluntary providers • Individualised care and support plans • Carer support groups and information leaflets/newsletters • Alzheimer cafes and other dementia-specific initiatives in partnership with other organisations • "Little Things", a campaign to promote positive mental health awareness • Information on training courses for carers, working in partnership with FCI and other relevant organisations.
2.1.2 Encourage carers to attend their GP for an annual health check	Health	<p>In December 2017, the Government gave approval for additional funding to enable all carers in receipt of Carer's Allowance to qualify for a GP Visit Card. This measure will ensure that everyone who is a carer and in receipt of Carer's Allowance and who, up to then, had not qualified on means or age grounds will now be able to attend a GP free of charge. Detailed proposals on the scope of this measure are at an advanced stage and it is intended that this measure will be implemented in 2018, subject to the drafting and enactment of the necessary legislation.</p>

	Health Service Executive	<p>Using mechanisms across services in the HSE, carers are encouraged to look after their health and wellbeing and this includes visiting their GP when appropriate. These mechanisms include using disability fora, carer information sessions, carer support groups, and awareness raising during Carer's Week to encourage carers to look after their own health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Under Public Health and Health and Wellbeing Division programmes, 'Household contacts of at-risk persons' are a priority group for influenza vaccination. GPs and pharmacies are reminded of this by Public Health when information is disseminated at the start of the annual influenza vaccination campaign.</p>
2.1.3 Develop and roll out a single assessment tool for older people and ensure that the views of carers as well as the people they care for are taken into account	Health Service Executive	<p>Services for Older People are continuing to progress the Single Assessment Tool (SAT).</p> <p>Multidisciplinary staff in designated hospitals completed the SAT training programme and are completing SAT assessment for older people seeking access to NHSS and HCP schemes. Information from assessments helps integrate care and promote multidisciplinary working as information is available to all staff with SAT access for onward referral.</p> <p>Staff in the community areas surrounding the designated hospitals, in Dublin North, Galway and Dublin South West, have also commenced SAT implementation.</p> <p>See section 1.1.6 for information on the Carers' Needs Assessment.</p>
2.1.4 Continue to implement the recommendations of the Home Solutions Report (13) on telecare	Health Service Executive	<p>In 2016 and 2017, the National Office, Services for Older people was granted €600,000 in Dormant Accounts funding through the Department of Health to assist and facilitate the use of assistive technology for older people by establishing Memory Technology Resource Rooms.</p> <p>The project is using these funds to set up similar systems to the Assistive Technology Library in South Tipperary across all nine CHO's. The South Tipperary library was set up in 2011 to showcase equipment and provide "hands on" experience to facilitate learning and experience of the products and hence support people with dementia and their carers.</p> <p>Venues for Memory Technology Libraries have been secured in all CHOs, refurbishments have been completed, a national tender for</p>

		<p>assistive technology equipment was undertaken and the purchasing of equipment was completed in December 2017.</p> <p>Staff training was held in May 2017 and further training is planned for 2018. Part time Occupational Therapists will be recruited to the Resource Rooms for a twelve month period to assess clients, demonstrate suitable equipment, provide staff training and ensure integration of the AT service with other HSE and non-HSE services.</p> <p>Where Community groups are funded through Local Authorities to provide telecare initiatives, HSE staff members, usually public health nursing co-operate with these local initiatives, supporting a referral pathway to the service.</p> <p>Resources continue to be a challenge in this area.</p>
<p>2.1.5 Promote awareness of adult and child protection services that are in place</p>	<p>Health Service Executive</p>	<p>A National Safeguarding office was established in 2015 and continues to provide leadership, oversight and coordination for all aspects of policy and practice in relation to safeguarding vulnerable adults.</p> <p>Safeguarding teams are in existence to address issues relating to the protection of vulnerable adults.</p> <p>In excess of 18,574 people received safeguarding training in 2017. Information on safeguarding and a list of protection teams for each CHO is available on the HSE Website.</p> <p>The Children First Act 2015 was fully enacted on the 11th December 2017. From this date all professions and service employees mentioned in the schedules to the Act are obliged to report child protection concerns against a defined threshold.</p> <p>The HSE Children First National Office (CFNO) initiated a number of developments in 2017 to ensure all relevant staff were prepared, informed and equipped to comply with their statutory obligations. These actions are outlined below:-</p> <p>Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CFNO launched an e-learning programme on the Children First Website. This resulted in a significant escalation in take up of the programme from 2,600 on 1st January 2017 to 68,362 module completions on 31st

		<p>December 2017</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A programme of live briefings was organised for line managers throughout the service in order to supplement the e-learning programme with a more intensive course for those with additional line management responsibilities in relation to compliance <p>Information and Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CFNO revised information and guidance on its Children First website in order to fully incorporate the additional statutory obligations conferred on staff by the enactment of the Children First Act 2015. These include: the e-learning programme, Frequently Asked Questions and additional training videos <p>An intensive communications/information strategy was conducted. This included system wide broadcasts from the CFNO and the Director General, awareness raising days in Hospitals conducted by training officers from the CFNO, and the circulation of hard copies of the Tusla Guidance on mandated reporting and assisting.</p> <p>Policy developments required by the 2015 Children First Act</p> <p>Under the new Act, all relevant services i.e. services providing treatment directly to children and families, are obliged to develop a Child Safeguarding Statement for their service to be displayed on location, outlining their intention and responses in place to keep children safe while availing of their service.</p> <p>In order to assist funded and contracted agencies with their compliance as required in service level agreements and contracts, the CFNO has developed a compliance checklist.</p> <p>Governance and planning</p> <p>Implementation committees to progress the actions required of the HSE by the Children First Act were established in each CHO and Hospital Group and began to meet regularly.</p> <p>All HSE services work in partnership with TUSLA to address any child welfare concerns.</p>
2.1.6 Review the Fair Deal system of financing nursing	Health	The Nursing Homes Support Scheme is a system of financial support for those in need of long-term nursing home care. When the Scheme commenced in 2009, a commitment was made that it

home care with a view to developing a secure and equitable system of financing for community and long-term care which supports older people to stay in their own homes.

would be reviewed after three years. The report of the Review was published in July 2015.

The review identified a number of key issues for more detailed consideration across Departments and Agencies. An Interdepartmental/Agency Working Group has been established to progress the recommendations contained in the Review. This Group is chaired by the Department of Health and includes representatives from the Department of the Taoiseach, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, the HSE, the Revenue Commissioners, and when required, the National Treatment Purchase Fund (NTPF). These recommendations include:

- Examining the treatment of business and farm assets for the purposes of the financial assessment element of the Scheme;
- The implementation of administrative reforms to the Scheme (Chapter Four of NHSS Review);
- A review by the NTPF of present pricing arrangements in private residential facilities.

Work is on-going across the range of recommendations and many of these have been completed and put into operation. A number of the recommendations in the Review relate to the identification of specific areas of the Scheme that require further and considerable detailed analysis and review. One of these recommendations included a detailed review of pricing mechanisms by the NTPF, with a view to:

- Ensuring value for money and economy, with the lowest possible administrative costs for clients and the State and administrative burden for providers;
- Increasing the transparency of the pricing mechanism so that existing and potential investors can make as informed decisions as possible; and
- Ensuring that there is adequate residential capacity for those residents with more complex needs.

A Steering Committee has been established to oversee the review of the pricing system for private long-term residential care facilities. This Steering Committee is chaired by the NTPF and includes representatives from the Department of Health, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, and the NTPF, and work in this area is ongoing and well advanced.

The Review also recommended that a Value For Money (VFM) and Policy Review of the differences in the comparative cost of public

		and private long-term residential care be undertaken. Work on the scoping of this review began in late 2017. Detailed work on the VFM review will commence in 2018 and is expected to be completed in 2019.
2.1.7 Progress the development and implementation of national standards for home support services, which will be subject to inspection by the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA).	Health	<p>The Government is committed to establishing a new stand-alone, statutory scheme for the financing and regulation of home care, which is currently being developed by the Department of Health.</p> <p>Work on this initiative has included a review by the Health Research Board of how home care is regulated and funded in 4 comparable European jurisdictions which was published in April 2017. This review will help to inform the development of policy proposals for the regulation and funding of these services in Ireland.</p> <p>In a further step towards the development of the new scheme, a public consultation on the financing and regulation of home care was undertaken between July and October last year. The purpose of this consultation, to which approximately 2,600 submissions were received, was to enable the Department to find out about the views of service users, their families and healthcare workers, on current and future home care provision. A report on the findings of the consultation will be published shortly and will inform the development of the new scheme. Further consultation with service users will take place in 2018.</p> <p>The development of a regulatory and funding model for home care services is a complex undertaking involving very significant legislative, operational and financial resources.</p>
	Health Service Executive	<p>The HSE commenced a new National Tender for Enhanced Home Care Packages on 1st September 2016, which is still in operation.</p> <p>All successful tenderers had to demonstrate that they had reached Quality Standards in order to become HSE Approved Providers, and companies continue to be measured based on these quality standards. These standards support the HIQA National Standards for Safer Better Healthcare (June 2012). They are incorporated within the service agreements for all home care providers.</p> <p>The HSE is progressing the introduction of audit teams across all CHOs to inspect and measure the quality of home care services.</p> <p>The Department of Health commenced a public consultation on</p>

		<p>home care/support services in July 2017 to inform the development of a new statutory scheme and system of regulation for home support services. The Department also sought submissions from home support services provider organisations and from organisation representing those using these services. The HSE contributed to this consultation.</p> <p>Work was progressed during 2017 to bring together the home help service and the Home Care Package Scheme from 2018 so that Home Supports for Older People will operate as a single funded scheme.</p>
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Objective 2.2: Support children and young people with caring responsibilities and protect them from the adverse impacts of caring

Action	Department	Update for 2017
2.2.1 Raise awareness and understanding among education providers of the signs that children and young people have caring responsibilities and the impact of caring on them	Children and Youth Affairs	<p>The Government recognises in <i>Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures</i> that children or young people may experience difficulties maintaining friendships, education and employment due to the need for them to take on caring responsibilities within their families. The key Government activity in this area is to ensure children and young people are supported in their caring role.</p> <p>Tusla's <i>50 Key Messages</i> includes a message about children as carers and includes a brief guide for practitioners in the delivery of support services and links to the community for young carers. 104 Parenting Support Champions across Tusla and partners are being trained in dissemination of the 50 Key Messages.</p> <p>Tusla Educational Welfare Services (EWS) through the Home School Community Liaison Scheme (HSCL) and the School Completion Programme provide supports to young people in caring roles. HSCL co-ordinators have a unique role in the school community that enables the building of strong relationships between families and schools and with the wider service structure in the communities they work in. They provide insight and information that enables their school colleagues to better understand the impact of a caring role on the young person in order to provide appropriate supports for young carers.</p> <p>Where appropriate, the School Completion Programme also supports young carers if their caring role is putting them at risk of early school leaving or school dropout.</p> <p>The statutory EWS service always takes into account the stresses that families experience and take a supportive approach when they are</p>

		<p>aware that a young persons poor school attendance may be related to caring responsibilities while being cognisant of the right of every child to an education.</p> <p>As of December 31st 2017 - 57% of schools had submitted a <i>School Attendance Strategy</i>. TUSLA EWS has embarked on a follow-up campaign which has involved direct contact with schools where Strategies have not been submitted. These strategies outline all the steps the school takes to support and promote positive school attendance and well as the series of steps the school takes to intervene and support students where school attendance becomes a concern.</p> <p>The focus of the Department’s National Youth Strategy Lead Team in 2017 was on the <i>Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures</i> Advisory Council National Youth Strategy prioritised actions, through engagement with the Youth Constituency Subgroup.</p> <p>Discussions were initiated in 2017 with one of the larger Education and Training Boards to examine the potential of a local support system for young carers for development into a model which could be piloted on a national basis.</p>
	Education and Skills	<p>The development outlined above at Action 1.1.6 on the Junior Cycle Booklets and the Personal Safety resources provide information on raising awareness and understanding among education providers of the signs that children and young people have caring responsibilities.</p> <p>The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) has commenced the roll-out of Teacher training programmes in DEIS schools (Primary and Post-Primary) which promote social and emotional competence, resilience and school connectedness in children and young people, including those who may be carers.</p> <p>Student Support Teams are an effective, efficient means for post-primary schools to support students in an integrated and structured way. NEPS has completed a pilot project (2014-17) in this regard and developed training materials for schools and plans to extend the project to 20 Post-Primary DEIS schools in 2018. This project seeks to improve the school's capacity to support the wellbeing of all students.</p> <p>NEPS supports schools to promote the wellbeing and mental health of all students. In line with best practice, NEPS encourages schools to adopt a whole-school, continuum of support approach</p>

		<p>to providing for students' wellbeing needs. This involves three levels: Support for All, Support for Some and Support for Few. Support for All involves whole school support for wellbeing promotion. Support for Some and Support for Few are embedded within Support for All and involves identification and early intervention for learners at risk, including those who may have caring responsibilities and targeted support for those with more complex and enduring needs.</p> <p>The Department is reviewing its policy in relation to wellbeing and developing a framework of practice with regard to its promotion in schools and other centres of education to support all children, young people including those who may be carers.</p>
2.2.2 Encourage statutory agencies to review the way that they respond to children and young people with caring responsibilities	Children and Youth Affairs	<p>Some Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC) support work with young carers. This number can increase as good practice is established and knowledge and learning exchanged across the CYPSC network and with the interaction between Tusla and the Prevention, Partnership and Family Support Programme (PPFS) (See Action 1.1.1)</p> <p>The Child and Family Support Networks and the Meitheal Early Intervention National Practice Model are being developed by Tusla across the country to coordinate and deliver services in an integrated way to help improve outcomes for children and families with complex needs who need more than one agency involvement. It could be effectively used with young carers to identify their needs and to provide practical support and help.</p> <p>Tusla is putting in place coordinators to support agencies working with children, young people and families at local level to form into cohesive Child and Family Support Networks, to help access to services.</p>
	Education and Skills	<p>A key priority for the Department of Education and Skills is the aim of actively supporting and enhancing wellbeing within school communities to ensure that resilience and personal wellbeing are integral parts of the education and training system. Many actions are set out in the Strategy Statement (Action Plan for Education 2016-2019) aim to improve services and resources to promote wellbeing in school communities which include making the Wellbeing programme available to all Junior Cycle students, enhanced guidance counselling in second level including the requirement that schools' guidance plans include specified time allocation for guidance counsellors to be available for one-to-one guidance counselling for students and an increase in the capacity of the National Educational</p>

		<p>Psychological Service (NEPS).</p> <p>NEPS has commenced the roll-out of teacher training programmes in DEIS schools (Primary & Post-Primary) which promote social and emotional competence, resilience and school connectedness in children and young people, including those who may be carers.</p> <p>Student Support Teams are an effective, efficient means for post-primary schools to support students in an integrated and structured way. NEPS has completed a pilot project (2014-17) in this regard and developed training materials for schools and plans to extend the project to 20 Post-Primary DEIS schools in 2018. This project seeks to improve the school's capacity to support the wellbeing of all students.</p> <p>The Department is reviewing its policy in relation to wellbeing and developing a framework of practice with regard to its promotion in schools and other centres of education to support all children, young people including those who may be carers.</p> <p>NEPS supports schools to promote the wellbeing and mental health of all students. In line with best practice, NEPS encourages schools to adopt a whole-school, continuum of support approach to providing for students' wellbeing needs. This involves three levels: Support for All and Support for Some and Support for Few. Support for All involves whole school support for wellbeing promotion. Support for Some and Support for Few are embedded within Support for All and involves identification and early intervention for learners at risk, including those who may have caring responsibilities and targeted support for those with more complex and enduring needs.</p> <p>As part of the annual SOLAS/Education Training Board (ETB) business planning process SOLAS requested ETBs to set out how training needs for carer organisations will be addressed at local level.</p>
2.2.3 Identify support services needed by children and young people with caring responsibilities and create	Health Service Executive	<p>PCT members, in particular the Public Health Nursing Service, identify children in a caring role. Where they assess that a child is burdened by their caring role PCT members will review the client's Individual Care and Support Plan and mobilise resources in order to relieve the child of such burden. The PCT member will seek the advice from their Line Manager and consider child welfare and protection issues. Where this is deemed to be child welfare and protection issue a referral is made to TUSLA.</p>

mechanisms for young carers to contact service providers		The Child & Adolescence Mental Health Service (CAMHS) continued to provide services and address the number of children and adolescents on waiting lists to be seen by the Community CAMHS teams.
2.2.4 Investigate and analyse the situation of children and young people undertaking caring roles	Children and Youth Affairs	The Department will publish a data report analysing children aged 17 and under who reported that they undertook caring roles in both the 2011 and 2016 Census. This report is due for publication in 2018.

National Goal 3: Support carers to care with confidence through the provision of adequate information, training, services and supports

Objective 3.1: Promote the availability of user friendly and timely information and advice

Action	Department	Update for 2017
3.1.1 Ensure frontline staff in key 'first contact' agencies such as local authorities, local health offices and health and personal social service providers have the correct information to be able to sign post carers to other services as appropriate	Employment Affairs and Social Protection	<p>Information on carers schemes, policy, guidelines and legislation are all available on the website. The forms can be ordered or downloaded from the website.</p> <p>There is a link to the Family Carers Ireland website on the Department's Carers' webpage.</p> <p>Intreo centres provide information on the full range of the Department's income supports.</p> <p>The Citizens Information Board provides a network of local offices with information on carer supports.</p>
	Health	<p>A section on Carers is available on the Department's website, with links to the Carer's Strategy and fourth Annual Progress Report. There is also a link to the Family Carers Ireland website.</p>
	Health Service Executive	<p>All CHO report staff are enabled to provide information to carers through presentations by Family Carers Ireland, staff training, team meetings, information leaflets sharing of local knowledge of supports and services.</p> <p>HSE staff work in partnership with the Dementia Adviser service to support carers.</p> <p>The HSE reviewed and updated its dedicated carers' webpage on the HSE website in 2017. The site provides comprehensive information on health services and other relevant information for carers.</p> <p>The HSE provides telephone and email helplines for questions about health services, entitlements, or how to access HSE health or social services in local areas or to make a complaint or comment on HSE services.</p> <p>Mental Health services commenced a Peer Support Worker Initiative which represents the lived experience for families and carers in the care planning process.</p> <p>The Your Mental Health Website facilitated by HSE Communications provides information for all – and specifically if users search for 'carers' there are 10 results, such as 'Mental Health law and rights', 'Information needs of carers', 'Financial Supports for carers',</p>

	<p>Caring for the carer' and others. http://www.yourmentalhealth.ie/</p> <p>National Dementia Campaign</p> <p>The <i>Understand Together</i> campaign is a national public awareness and information campaign aimed at inspiring people from all sections of society to stand together with half a million Irish people whose families have been touched by dementia. See: www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/olderpeople/dementia/About-Understand-Together/partners/</p> <p>The aim is to help create an Ireland that embraces and includes people living with dementia, and which displays understanding, empathy and solidarity with them and their loved ones.</p> <p>The campaign is led by the HSE working with the Alzheimer Society of Ireland and Genio. It is funded by the HSE and The Atlantic Philanthropies.</p> <p><i>Understand Together</i> launched a TV campaign on 26th October 2017 featuring a series of stories told by people living with dementia. One of the adverts highlights the impact of caring for a loved one who has been diagnosed with dementia and the important role of family and friends.</p> <p>Website</p> <p>A new comprehensive website resource with new information points and tools (service finder) was launched in 2017. The new website (www.understandtogether.ie) provides a 'one stop shop' for people living with dementia and carers, providing information from diagnosis to help with care. Understand Together will be working with the Care Alliance, Family Carers Ireland and the Alzheimer's Association of Ireland to continue to improve the information available for carers on this website.</p> <p>Training</p> <p>The Understand Together campaign provides four dementia awareness training courses on the new website, including training for carers. This training was developed as part of the HSE/DCU National Dementia education programme and is to help Carers develop skills to help understand and support the person with dementia in their everyday life and assist carers to understand better their emotions and feeling on their dementia journey. Coping Skills for Carers Programme available free on www.dementiaelevators.ie</p> <p>Social media</p> <p>Understand Together launched a social media campaign during</p>
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		<p>2017. One of the content pillars and themes is around supporting carers, sharing personal stories, tips and advice.</p> <p>Resources</p> <p>Resources are available for organisations to order from www.healthpromotion.ie. Over 20,000 resources have been ordered since the campaign launched in 2016. Resources are also distributed by our key partners at events across the country. Campaign posters, infographics and leaflets were mailed to all residential care units, acute hospitals, primary care centres and GP surgeries in 2017.</p>
	Housing, Planning and Local Government	<p>31 Housing and Disability Steering Groups have been established, in every local authority administrative area. The groups have completed their Local Strategic Plans and are moving to the implementation phase. This will include annual reporting on the deliverables under the plans.</p> <p>Local authorities are in the process of making their plans available through their websites. A training session has taken place for the local authority representations that act as facilitators for the groups which also contributed to the setting of the agenda for 2018.</p>
3.1.2 Review material (paper and Internet based) available to carers and investigate (in conjunction with carer's representative organisations) how more comprehensive information materials dedicated to carers' needs can be developed and distributed to service providers likely to be a carer's first point of contact	Employment Affairs and Social Protection	<p>Annual Carers' Week is highlighted with a banner headline on the Department's Website.</p> <p>A link to the Family Carers Ireland website and to the National Carers' Strategy is now included on the Department's website. Advice is sought from carers representative groups and the National Adult Literacy Agency.</p> <p>The review of the Carer's Allowance application form (CR1) has been completed after consultation with the Policy, Operational and Medical Assessment areas of the Department and with a focus group arranged by Family Carers Ireland.</p> <p>The form is being re-designed and is expected to be ready to go to print in Q1 2018.</p> <p>In line with the changes to the application form, the operational guidelines will also be updated to reflect these and other processing changes.</p> <p>The Department is planning to develop a new web based guide for Carers in 2018.</p>
	Health Service Executive	This Action was completed in 2016.

		See response to 3.1.1.
3.1.3 Ensure that the information needs of sub-groups of carers, such as older carers, children and young people with caring responsibilities, carers in rural areas are addressed	Children and Youth Affairs	<p>The Department's website includes a link to the National Carers' Strategy, the Annual Progress Report and a link to the Family Carers' Ireland dedicated young carer page (www.youngcarers.ie)</p> <p>The Department follows the Young Carers Twitter page (https://twitter.com/youngcarersirl).</p> <p>Young people are more likely to seek support and information online than other age groups. The Department's National Youth Strategy Lead Team has sought to strengthen the provision of online support and information for young people, including those with caring responsibilities.</p> <p>Funding was provided in 2017 to SpunOut, the primary provider of online, as opposed to centre-based, youth information provision.</p> <p>The funding granted to SpunOut is contingent on SpunOut forming strong strategic partnerships with existing Youth Information Centres.</p>
	Education and Skills	<p>The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) continued to provide information leaflets for all children and young people on the NEPS service, with a view to ensuring a pupil participation approach in the service. This information explains how it operates in schools and the nature of its direct intervention with pupils, including those with caring responsibilities.</p> <p>The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) is finalising a new booklet for parents and carers on the implementation of the new model for resource teachers which will be published shortly</p> <p>Following on from the research project commissioned by SOLAS to examine barriers to participation in Further Education and Training (FET), which included an invitation to carer stakeholder groups to participate and contribute, SOLAS have now published the findings from the research.</p> <p>As part of the annual FET service planning process, funding applications from the Educational Training Board sector to SOLAS are required to provide details on existing and new initiatives to address barriers to participation in FET.</p>
	Employment Affairs and Social Protection	<p>Information on the Department's website can be made available on request in different formats including braille and translated to different languages.</p>

		A link to the Family Carers Ireland website now exists on the Department's website which provides details of local supports and services available to carers as promoted by the Family Carers Ireland website.
	Health	A section on carers is available on the Department's website, with links to the Carer's Strategy and fourth Annual Progress Report. There is also a link to the Family Carers Ireland website.
	Health Service Executive	<p>The information needs of carers living in rural areas continue to be addressed through a number of ways, sometimes service specific; for example child disability teams who support families.</p> <p>In the main information is provided through the HSE Helpline, the HSE's website including dedicated Carers page, Primary Care teams, the Public Health Nursing service, Network Specialists Teams, Health Area Specialist Teams, the Care and Support planning process, referral to the Family Carers Ireland and other relevant support organisations, carer support groups, presentations and workshops, provision of training courses, meetings with families, and the distribution of materials to youth groups and services, and school leavers.</p> <p>Through Mental Health Engagement Structures the needs of all carers of those living with Mental Health Challenges are gathered in a systematic way and responses provided via management structures.</p> <p>See response to 3.1.1 and 3.1.2.</p>
	Housing, Planning and Local Government	<p>Housing and Disability Steering Groups are now up and running in every local authority. They include local authority officials, HSE and local disability representative organisations, all working together to facilitate an integrated approach to the housing of people with disabilities.</p> <p>Each of these Steering Groups has prepared a draft local strategy for their own city and county areas to identify and meet the existing and emerging housing needs of people with a disability over a five year period.</p> <p>This integrated approach will ensure that there is a more responsive and targeted focus at local level on the housing needs of people with a disability. These are currently being considered by individual local authorities and will be published on their websites when finalised.</p>
	Justice and Equality	The new <i>National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017 – 2021</i> was launched in July 2017.

		The Strategy identifies a number of actions concerning the provision of, and enhancing the availability of information to persons that are caring for persons with disabilities.
3.1.4 Proactively collate and disseminate information about services and supports available at a local level for carers	Employment Affairs and Social Protection	<p>There is a link to the Family Carers Ireland website on the Department's carers' webpage.</p> <p>The Citizens Information Board provides a network of local offices with information on carer supports.</p> <p>The Department's 2014 Dormant Accounts Action Plan provided funding to 16 projects to provide information and supports to family carers. The Department's measure specific guidelines included a focus on projects providing information on local supports.</p>
	Health Service Executive	Information about services and supports that are available to carers at a local level is collated and disseminated by Primary Care teams including the Public Health Nursing service, Network Specialists Teams, Health Area Specialist Teams, carer support groups, HSE Carer's Support Departments, carer training courses provided by the HSE or by carer support groups, Health Centres, the HSE Helpline and the HSE's website including the dedicated Carers page.

Objective 3.2 Provide relevant and accessible carer training opportunities for carers

Action	Department	Update for 2017
3.2.1 Identify gaps in the content of current training programmes for carers (in conjunction with carer's representative organisations)	Education and Skills	<p>The 2017 National Skills Bulletin has been published and informs the SOLAS/ETB annual service plan to identify skills shortages and hard to fill vacancies. The 2017 Bulletin indicates that, care workers (including home carers) and childminders combined accounted for 70% of employment in the selected social and care occupations. These two occupations are characterised by high turnover rates, with 3,700 and 3,200 transitions respectively due to a change of employer in 2016. In addition, these are among occupations with the highest number of transitions between employment and economic inactivity.</p> <p>Further education and training (FET) provision within the Health, Family, and Social Services skills cluster was planned for over 44,000 beneficiaries in the 2017 FET Services plan. While the breakdown of figures for the final outturn for 2017 are not yet to hand, as at 30 September, 2017, providers reported that training provision for the caring sector (excluding childcare related provision) had been</p>

		<p>provided to approximately 10,500 beneficiaries and including childcare related provision to almost 18,000 beneficiaries.</p> <p>This data is based on an analysis of course titles in the Health, Family, and other Social Services Cluster.</p> <p>Following the second call for national apprenticeship proposals, among those approved for further development is the proposal for a Healthcare Assistant programme, which is a two year course leading to a level 6 NFQ.</p>
	Health Service Executive	<p>All CHOs report a range of training programmes delivered directly by the HSE, jointly with carers representative organisations or directly by carers’ representative organisations covering a range of topics.</p> <p>Genio supported programmes, and other programmes including, the EOLAS programme, Early Bird, Parents Plus, “What is Autism” CLASS project in conjunction with CHO mental health services.</p> <p>Training for carers/family carers is delivered through FCI.</p>
3.2.2 Enhance the accessibility of education and training courses through the use of face-to face, on-line and distance learning options	Education and Skills	<p>Work continued on the implementation of the first Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy in FET 2016-2019 to build on capacity and good practice in technology-enhanced learning, expand access and support increased flexibility for all learners, including those who are carers. Progress in 2017 included the development of <i>Technology Enhanced Learning Action Plans</i> in each Education and Training Board (ETB) to provide for infrastructure, pedagogy and CPD as well as the development of a content sharing and management infrastructure to facilitate sharing and development of learning resources among all teachers. The strategy creates a framework for ETBs to offer a greater number of training programmes online, supplementing those offered through eCollege, the national online learning service (www.ecollege.ie) which planned online provision for almost 9,000 learners in 2017.</p>
	Health Service Executive	<p>Across the country training courses are delivered in the local community to family carers by Family Carers Ireland and the HSE. Courses are mostly delivered through group work and one to one training where appropriate.</p> <p>Refer to 3.2.1.</p> <p>Online training is provided for carers of people with dementia – see 3.1.1.</p>

Objective 3.3: Promote the development of accessible living environments for all

Action	Department	Update for 2017
3.3.1 Prioritise funding for the operation of the suite of housing grants for older people and people with a disability and ensure that they can be accessed by families in a timely way	Housing, Planning and Local Government	<p>Funding is provided under the suite of Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with a Disability for private houses. The grants are 80% funded by the exchequer, with a 20% contribution from the resources of each local authority. There are three separate grants available and local authorities receive an overall allocation, with the responsibility for the apportionment between the three schemes being a matter for each authority. Funding for the grant schemes has increased year on year since 2014. In addition, some changes were introduced to the grants in January 2014 following a review carried out in 2013. These changes are spreading the benefits of the grants as widely as possible and improving fairness and value for money in their operation. This approach, combined with the additional funding being provided, saw over 9,000 households benefit from the grants in 2017 at a cost of over €60 million.</p> <p>The Department has worked closely with local authorities and stakeholder groups to review and streamline the application process for the Housing Adaptation Grants for Older People and People with Disabilities. A single application form to cover the three grant schemes as well as an Easy to Read Guide for its completion will be available shortly, which will make the application process easier to navigate for people with disabilities and older people.</p>
3.3.2 Identify good practice in implementing assistive technology and ambient assistive living technology to support independent living and telehealth opportunities	<p>Health Service Executive</p> <p>Housing, Planning and Local Government</p>	<p>Primary Care Physiotherapists / Occupational Therapists and Nursing personnel are involved in the assessment and provision of equipment and assistive technologies; however budgetary limitations exist for the provision of such / technologies.</p> <p>A limited number of areas provide telecare support within available resources.</p> <p>See response to 2.1.4</p> <p>Genio has carried out considerable research in this area and the Housing Agency is now working with them to identify and formulate good practice models which will include assistive technology.</p>
3.3.3 Review and up-date Transport Sectoral Plan under Disability	Transport, Tourism and Sport	<p>During 2017, responsibility for the accessible transport brief moved from the roads area to the public transport area in the Department, so as to provide a 'one-stop' shop for all public transport accessibility related matters. Furthermore, the <i>National Disability Inclusion Strategy (NDIS) 2017-2021</i>, was launched in July 2017 and it includes</p>

Act 2005		<p>a number of transport related Actions, for which the Department, the National Transport Authority (NTA) and/or passenger transport operators and Agencies, have lead responsibility for implementing. The NDIS' actions complement similar actions in a number of other "whole of Government" strategies, such as the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities. The Department is now considering how best to update its Sectoral Plan 'Transport Access for All' to integrate it with these other Government strategies. This work is being progressed in consultation with the Department's Accessible Consultative Committee and the Department will contact Family Carers Ireland in this regard in 2018.</p>
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National Goal 4: Empower carers to participate as fully as possible in economic and social life

Objective 4.1: Enable carers to have respite breaks

Action	Department	Update for 2017
4.1.1 Promote a better awareness of the existence of the Respite Care Grant	Employment Affairs and Social Protection	<p>The Carer's Support Grant (formerly known as the Respite Care Grant) is advertised via a banner on the Department's carer webpage and on the main page during and in the weeks leading up to Carers' Week.</p> <p>Applicants who are disallowed on grounds other than medical continue to be advised that they may have an entitlement to the Carer's Support Grant. The award letter has also been changed to include the line about Carer's Allowance being a taxable source of income in the main body of the award letter.</p>
4.1.2 Promote a range of person-centred and flexible respite options	Health Service Executive	<p>The HSE recognises the importance of flexible responsive respite services as part of the overall care package for individuals and their carers.</p> <p>Information on respite services is provided through Primary Care Teams, the Public Health Nursing Service, Network Specialist Teams and services, Health Area Specialist Teams and services, home help / home care package managers, carer support groups, carer organisations, training courses for carers, and day care centres.</p> <p>Respite service needs are addressed on an individualised case by case basis and can include planned and emergency respite care options in the home, community and residential settings including services provided by non-statutory organisations.</p> <p>The respite service is not a demand led scheme and the HSE must deliver services within budget.</p>
4.1.3 Identify gaps in existing services and establish performance indicators for the provision of respite services	Health	In December 2017, the Department announced an additional €10 million had been secured to enhance respite care in the disability sector. €8 million will be used to provide twelve new dedicated respite houses, which will come on-stream in 2018. One house will be located in each HSE Community Healthcare Organisation area, with an additional three in the Greater Dublin Area. In addition, a further €2 million extra funding will be used for innovative respite solutions, such as Home Sharing and extended day services.
	Health Service Executive	The HSE established a respite review group to achieve this action and an interim report was prepared during 2017.

		<p>The report made a number of recommendations in which included developing an agreed definition of respite across all services, the development of a standard referral pathway, an overview of the activity levels, the financial cost of the service, development of new data to allow greater national oversight of activity currently focused at local level only, and new KPI's for older persons services.</p> <p>The report will be discussed with the Department of Health prior to its finalisation and implementation.</p>
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Objective 4.2: Enable carers to remain in touch with the labour market to the greatest extent possible

Action	Department	Update for 2017
4.2.1 Promote existing carer friendly HR policies within Government Departments and Agencies	Business, Enterprise and Innovation	Carer's leave is one element of a range of family friendly work life balance measures promoted by the Department and its agencies to their staff.
	Children and Youth Affairs	<p>The Department operates family friendly policies such as flexi time (for specific grades), reduced working week, shorter working year, unpaid domestic leave, carer's leave and career breaks for staff in order to facilitate carers in so far as possible. Information (and application forms) on all non-annual leave, including carer's leave, is available to the Department's staff on the PeoplePoint Portal (the Civil Service HR shared service).</p> <p>Tusla staff policies for the Child and Family Agency have been managed through a consultation process and they are all available for staff on the Tusla Hub. Tusla are also working with staff on Diversity, Inclusion and Disability. Staff are supported by management in line with National Policy.</p>
	Employment Affairs and Social Protection	The Department supports and facilitates its staff in availing of carer's leave and other related entitlements.
	Education and Skills	The Department continues to facilitate staff who wish to avail of carer's leave in order to care for a family member in need of such care. We also advise staff of the most appropriate or advantageous form of leave to take depending on the individual circumstances of each case.
	Health	Staff in the Department can obtain information on, and apply for, carer's leave, through the PeoplePoint shared HR service for the Civil Service.
	Health Service Executive	The HSE operates family friendly policies such as flexi time (for specific grades), reduced working week, shorter working year, unpaid leave and career breaks for staff in order to facilitate carers in so far as possible. (Terms and Conditions of Employment)

		Details are available on the HSE website, intranet or from the HR department.
	Housing, Planning and Local Government	A full range of flexible working arrangements and family friendly policies, including the Carer's Leave Scheme, are available to staff to assist in combining work and caring responsibilities and are promoted on the Department's intranet.
	Justice and Equality	All applications for carer's leave are handled in accordance with the Carer's Leave Act 2001 and Department of Finance Circular 39/2005. Since 15 April 2013 applications are processed by PeoplePoint in consultation with the Department's HR Division. Every consideration is given to applications from staff members to allow them to take temporary unpaid leave to provide full time care and attention for a person who is in need of such care. The Department currently has three staff on Carer's Leave.
4.2.2 Promote awareness of the Carer's Leave Act 2001	Business, Enterprise and Innovation	Responsibility for the Carer's Leave Act transferred in 2015 from the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation to the Minister for Justice and Equality in line with proposals to consolidate all family friendly leave into a single statute under the Department of Justice and Equality.
	Children and Youth Affairs	The Department's staff handbook, which is available to all staff on its intranet, links to <i>Circular 39/05- Carer's Leave</i> which sets out the arrangements for carer's leave. Tusla have developed a Health and Wellbeing Department for staff that provides support and interventions for staff. This is available through training and staff information sessions and the staff hub. The staff handbook provides arrangements for implementation of carer's leave. New staff are also supported through an induction programme.
	Justice and Equality	The Government has approved the drafting of the Family Leave Bill 2017, which will consolidate all existing family leave legislation, including carer's leave, into one Act. Work is due to commence in 2018.
4.2.3 Encourage work-life balance provisions that are needed to ensure that working	Business, Enterprise and Innovation	The Department, through the information and support services for employees and employers available at the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC: www.workplacelrelations.ie) provides information to employers and employees regarding all employment rights including the Carer's Leave Act of 2001 and continues to encourage employers and employees to provide flexible workplaces that meet the needs of both employers and employees.

arrangements are carer friendly		The 2006 WRC code of Practice on Access to Part Time Work encourages best practice and promotes the development of HR policies to assist employers and employees to support access to part time work that could be of particular benefit to carers.
4.2.4 Explore how back-to-work and education training courses can be tailored to the needs of carers who wish to return to the workplace	Education and Skills	<p>Within the Further Education and Training (FET) Sector there is a broad range of flexible high quality programmes available to support the skill needs of all learners, including carers and former carers, offering opportunities to reskill and upskill that can lead to awards at levels 1-6 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). All programmes are delivered through the network of 16 Education and Training Boards (ETBs) and are made available in a wide range of venues including second-level Community Schools, Further Education Colleges, Youthreach and Adult Education Centres and Training Centres.</p> <p>SOLAS commissioned a research project to look at the barriers to participation in FET. As part of this process a comprehensive consultation process invited contributions from a diverse range of stakeholders groups which included an invitation to carer stakeholder groups to participate and contribute to the process. The research 'Barriers to Further Education and Training with Particular Reference to Long Term Unemployed Persons and other Vulnerable Individuals' was published by SOLAS in July 2017. As part of the annual 2018 FET Service Planning exercise ETBs will be requested to provide details of how they intend to further address the barriers to FET identified in the report.</p> <p>As part of the annual FET service planning process, funding applications from the Educational Training Board (ETB) sector to SOLAS are required to provide details on existing and new initiatives to address barriers to participation in FET. See also 1.1.2.</p> <p>Following the second call for national apprenticeship proposals, amongst those approved for further development is the proposal for a Healthcare Assistant programme, which is a two year course leading to a level 6 NFQ.</p> <p>The restructuring and consolidation of the further education and training sector and the reduction in the number of ETBs has made it an easier system for people of all ages to navigate. With the launch of the new FET website in 2016, www.fetchcourses.ie information is now available to all prospective learners on almost 5,000 FET programmes being provided throughout the country (part time, full time and online) making FET easier and more accessible to all</p>

		learners.
	Employment Affairs and Social Protection	Carers can currently work or engage in education or training for an aggregate of 15 hours per week or less.
4.2.5 Review access by family carers to labour market activation measures	Employment Affairs and Social Protection	<p>Intreo currently provide advice and information on activation measures. Carers who sign on the live register are included in group engagement and one to one “personal progression planning” sessions.</p> <p>Pathways to Work 2017 include an action to consider options to allow recipients of Carer’s Allowance to access activation services at the end of their caring role. This has been progressed through the measures outlined below.</p> <p>Budget 2017 provided that from January 2017, Carer's Allowance will continue to be paid for 12 weeks where the care recipient is permanently admitted to a hospital/nursing home.</p> <p>Communications have been revised to ensure that working age carers are advised that Intreo case officers are available to support carers in developing a personal progression plan following the end of their full-time caring role.</p>



An Roinn Sláinte
Department of Health

Services for Older People

Department of Health

01 635 4000

health.gov.ie

[@roinnslainte](https://twitter.com/roinnslainte)