

Development of the Carers Guarantee in Ireland

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Carers in Ireland



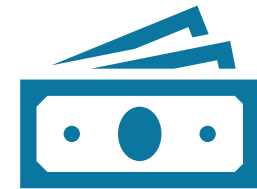
Growing number in growing population, 5.25M



Approximately 500,000 family carers (Irish Health Survey)



Providing nearly 20 million hours of care each week



Receiving €1.7Bn a year in income support

Strategic (Re)Thinking on Long- Term Care

EU Care Strategy (2022) – Access to affordable high quality LTC – for implementation at EU and national levels

International Foundation for Integrated Care – ICIC Belfast 2024 underlines recognition of contribution of informal caregivers

OECD (2020) – supporting caregivers helps to attract and retain LTC workers; better coordination between formal and informal carers is needed

WHO (2021) - Achieving an integrated continuum of LTC – includes activities of carers and care workers in different settings

Arguments for measures to support carers

Promote well-being and quality of life of carers as citizens
Improve quality of life and well-being of people they care for

Enhance effectiveness and efficiency of health and care services:

Delayed admission to hospital and nursing homes

Timely and safe discharge from hospital to community

Reduction in hospital readmission rates

Fewer cancelled health care appointments

Better medication compliance

Greater impact of community health and care services

Carers and access to quality services

European Pillar of Social Rights (2017) emphasises access for all to good quality services – when and where needed, without financial hardship

State of Caring Survey 2024: (online survey of 2,127 carers)

74% say the individuals they care for do not receive sufficient support

72% report that they have never received respite care

69% report difficulty due to lack of income

48% say they are severely lonely



FCI services and supports in 2023

Careline: 13,000 phone calls

In-person: 5,500 support sessions

Counselling: 4,926 hours to 496 family carers (mostly online)

Respite care: 50,000 hours

Free legal advice clinics (consistently fully booked)

Carer group meetings: 600 (peer support)

Membership of 11,000 carers but almost 90,000 carers engaged across the country



Development of a Carers Guarantee in Ireland

Programme of Government 2020: “a Carers Guarantee will provide a core basket of services to carers across the country regardless of where they live”

Estimated annual cost of €5M; first funding of €2M in September 2022; additional €3.3M a year expected from 2025 - but Department of Health budget provides only 540K.

Assessment and actions go beyond the caring role to address seven aspects of well-being: caring situation; health; domestic routine; self-care; emotional well-being; finances; and employment (the Carer Outcome Star)



Challenges and Dilemmas

Broader reform of health care (Slaintecare) is more politically significant than carers' issues and services

However, health reform shifts management of chronic care to local PHC and community services – and thus closer to carers

Legacy of uneven services and patchy supports (postcode lottery)

Adequacy of funding to develop universal and comprehensive services

Workforce supply of homecare workers and trained carer supports

Thank You

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