

## Family Carers Ireland's Manifesto for the 2019 European Elections Building a Caring Europe

Europe's 100 million family carers provide over 80 percent of the care required by adults and children living with illness, disability, frailty or addiction and are critical to meeting the challenges posed by our ageing population. The economic value of this unpaid care is estimated to range from 50-90 percent of Europe's total long-term care costs. Ireland's 355,000 family carers alone save the State some €10 billion each year – almost two thirds of the total HSE budget. Despite the enormity of their contribution, carers across Europe continue to experience financial hardship, isolation and poor health and struggle to access to essential supports such as respite, homecare and training.

The European Elections on May 24th are an opportunity for candidates to pledge their commitment to building a more caring Europe that values, respects and supports carers. *Family Carers Ireland* calls on candidates to pledge that if elected to the European Parliament they will act as a champion for carers and will:

### **1 RAISE AWARENESS OF FAMILY CARERS AND SUPPORT THE PUBLICATION OF AN EU-LEVEL CARERS STRATEGY:**

A definition of informal care should be adopted in EU legislation and measures put in place to collect information about the number and type of carers and their specific needs across member states. Candidates are asked to support an EU-level Carers Strategy that will address the many policy challenges in relation to the provision and sustainability of informal care across Europe<sup>1</sup>.

### **2 PROMOTE WORK LIFE BALANCE INITIATIVES FOR WORKING CARERS INCLUDING CARERS LEAVE AND FLEXIBLE WORKING:**

1 in 9 workers in Ireland juggle paid employment with caring responsibilities. We are calling on candidates to support the EU Commission's Directive on Work-life Balance for Parents and Carers giving workers the right to a minimum five days

of Carer's Leave each year, as well as the right to request flexible work arrangements (telework, flexible schedules and the reduction of working time).

### **3 WORK TO MINIMISE THE IMPACT OF BREXIT ON CARERS AND PROMOTE THE POSITIVE OPPORTUNITIES IT PRESENTS:**

We are calling on candidates to work to minimise the impact of Brexit on carers by protecting access to cross border healthcare and diagnostics; medicine and pharmaceutical supplies; care products and appliances; protecting reciprocal welfare arrangements; minimising the impact of border controls and promoting the recognition of professional qualifications across jurisdictions. We also call on candidates to seek out the positive opportunities Brexit presents including sourcing Irish suppliers of goods and services, attracting migrant care workers and pursuing opportunities in the higher education and research sector.

### **4 RECOGNISE YOUNG CARERS AND SUPPORT THEIR INCLUSION IN THE EU YOUTH STRATEGY 2019-2027:**

An estimated 1 in 10 children across Europe provides care for a family member. These children are often excluded

from social activities with their friends, experience financial hardship, can fall behind in school and struggle to make the transition from school to further education. We are calling on candidates to provide a voice for young carers in Europe and work towards their inclusion in relevant EU legislation, consultations and strategies, including naming young carers as an identified group within the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027.

### **5 PROVIDE A VOICE FOR CARERS IN EUROPE BY JOINING THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT INTEREST GROUP ON CARERS:**

The European Parliament's Interest Group on Carers brings together MEPs from member states who support the development of carer-friendly societies. The Group aims to critically monitor EU policy development for its impact on carers and to advocate positive action in order to improve the day-to-day situation of Europe's carers. We are calling on candidates to join the Interest Group on Carers and collectively promote legislative and policy measures that advance the rights of carers.



# Why Carers Count - the Irish Perspective

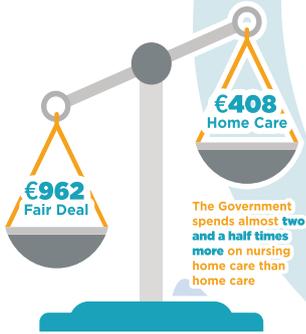


**€219**  
(Maximum Amount)  
Carers are the only welfare recipients required to work full-time, but receive just €16 more than the standard welfare rate.



Save the State  
**€10 BILLION**  
each year

**39%**  
of carers  
are male



Carers provide  
**15,868,500 HOURS**  
of unpaid care each week

**36%** increase in older population & **63%** increase in people with a disability since 2006.

**57%**  
of carers balance work & employment

**355,000**  
unpaid carers in Ireland  
(that's 1 in every 10 adults)

**2,789**  
receive Carers Benefit

**13,147**  
young carers  
under 25 years.

**954** Young Carers provide more than **43 hours** of care each week

**By 2030 1 in 5 people** will be a carer

**81,071** carers receive Carers Allowance

Only **one in five** carers

**2.2 million**

the number of hours care provided per year by children under 15.



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